

International Relations

Grades 11–12



Unit 1

Rules of International Relations

Essential Question

How do we organize the way the world interacts with each other?

Unit Summary

Students will study the development and purpose of the international system and the structures within.

Guiding Questions

Content

- What is international relations? (e.g., Global State System)
- What is a nation-state?
- Who is an “actor” in international relations? (e.g., governmental organizations: USAID, State Department(s), military, heads of state, international governmental organizations – UN, EU, World Bank, WTO, non-state: businesses, terrorist groups, NGOs – International Red Cross, Doctors’ without Borders, etc.)
- How have international relations changed over time? (e.g., Treaty of Westphalia 1648, Absolutism, Limited War, Age of Revolutions, Age of Total War, Cold War, Post-Cold War, etc.)
- What are different approaches to international relations? (e.g., imperialism, colonialism, neocolonialism, mercantilism, postcolonialism, global capitalism, nationalism, globalization, etc.)
- What technologies impact international relations? (e.g., technologies of WWI, technologies of WWII, nuclear proliferation, the internet, transportation, GPS, logistics, social media, etc.)

Process

- How do I analyze and explain how modern nation-states interact with one another? (e.g., nationalism vs. globalization, foreign policy tools, etc.)

- How do I analyze and evaluate how international structures affect international relations? (e.g., international monetary policy – trade, tariffs, IMF; international corporations, international organizations, etc.)
- How do I analyze how international relations have changed over time?
- How do I evaluate how technologies impact international relations?

Reflective

- What is your role in international relations? Who is included? Who is left out?
- How have the “rules” of international relations changed over time?

Power Standards

- The student will recognize and evaluate significant choices and consequences that have impacted our lives and futures. (1.1)
- The student will recognize and evaluate how societies are shaped by the identities, beliefs, and practices of individuals and groups. (3.1)
- The student will recognize and evaluate continuity and change over time. (4.1)
- The student will recognize and evaluate dynamic relationships that impact lives in communities, states, and nations. (5.1)

Supporting Standards

- The student will analyze context and draw conclusions of how societies are shaped by the identities, beliefs, and practices of individuals and groups. (3.2)
- The student will analyze the context and draw conclusions about continuity and change. (4.2)

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Unit 2

Tools of Foreign Policy

Essential Question

How do nation states interact with one another?

Unit Summary

Students will examine and evaluate the theories of international relations, different uses of power, and the tools of foreign policy.

Guiding Questions

Content

- What are the theories of international relations? (e.g., realism, liberalism, constructivism, alternative and developing theories such as postpositivism, etc.)
- What is power? (e.g., hard power, soft power, smart power)
- Who decides foreign policy? (e.g., actors)
- What are the tools of foreign policy? (e.g., diplomacy, proxy war, unilateralism, multilateralism, deterrents, foreign aid, trade policy, sanctions, etc.)

Process

- How do I analyze and explain the theories of international relations?
- How do I evaluate the causes and effects of the various uses of power?
- How do I recognize and analyze the influence and impact of actors on foreign policy?
- How do I recognize and evaluate the effectiveness of various tools of foreign policy?
- How do I evaluate the responsibility of international organizations in addressing global issues? (e.g., human rights, environmental security and sustainability, Global Commons, etc.)

Reflective

- What theories of international relations best describe how nations currently relate to each other?

- What policies should be prioritized?
- Which tools of foreign policy are effective?
- How do we balance effectiveness and ethical concerns?

Power Standards

- The student will analyze the context and draw conclusions about choices and consequences. (1.2)
- The student will recognize and evaluate the rights and responsibilities of people living in societies. (2.1)
- The student will analyze context and draw conclusions of how societies are shaped by the identities, beliefs, and practices of individuals and groups. (3.2)
- The student will analyze the context and draw conclusions about continuity and change. (4.2)
- The student will analyze the context and draw conclusions about dynamic relationships. (5.2)

Supporting Standards

- The student will analyze the context and draw conclusions about rights and responsibilities. (2.2)
- The student will investigate and connect dynamic relationships to contemporary issues. (5.3)

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Unit 3

International Relations in Play

Essential Question

How does a nation-state maximize security, peace, and prosperity?

Unit Summary

Students will build on foreign policy theory and tools to examine and evaluate historical and contemporary international relations.

Guiding Questions

Content

- What are significant historical and contemporary foreign policy challenges? (e.g., regional vs. global)
- What are 21st Century global issues? (e.g., climate sustainability, human rights, migration, resources, multinational corporations, democracy, etc.)
- What emerging actors are significant in the 21st Century? (e.g., artificial intelligence, non-traditional media, drug trade, etc.)

Process

- How do I identify foreign policy tools in historical and contemporary context(s)?
- How do I compare and contrast the use of foreign policy tools in the past to contemporary crises?
- How do I compare and contrast the use of foreign policy tools across contemporary issues?
- How do I evaluate the role of actors in historical and contemporary context(s)?
- How do I analyze the costs and benefits of foreign policy decisions?
- How do I analyze the impact of emerging actors?

Reflective

- To what extent is the current state system evolving?

- What is the responsibility of actors to solve international crises? (e.g., genocide, human rights, environmental, migration, etc.)
- How do we balance effectiveness and ethical concerns?
- How are nation-states' ideologies evolving or repeating?
- How does a nation-state balance national interests with global responsibilities?

Power Standards

- The student will investigate and connect examples of choices and consequences with contemporary issues. (1.3)
- The student will investigate and connect the rights and responsibilities of individuals with contemporary issues. (2.3)
- The student will investigate and connect how societies are shaped by the identities, beliefs, and practices of individuals and groups with contemporary issues. (3.3)
- The student will investigate and connect continuity and change to a contemporary issue. (4.3)
- The student will investigate and connect dynamic relationships to contemporary issues. (5.3)

Supporting Standards

- The student will use their understanding of how societies are shaped by the identities, beliefs, and practices of individuals and groups to make a claim or advance a thesis using evidence and argument. (3.4)
- The student will use their understanding of dynamic relationships to make a claim or advance a thesis using evidence and argument. (5.4)