

Essay and Discussion Questions

Approaches to Foreign Policy Higher Education Questions

Help students understand the critical debates behind foreign policy strategy through these essay and discussion questions.

Question 1

Compare idealism and realism in foreign policy. What are the major strengths and challenges of each? Should U.S. foreign policy be more idealistic or realistic? Reference specific examples to back your decision.

- What is idealism in foreign policy?
- What is realism in foreign policy?

Question 2

Compare and critically assess isolationism and engagement. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each? Should U.S. foreign policy tend more towards isolationism or engagement? Reference specific historical examples to support your decision.

- What is engagement in foreign policy?
- What is isolationism?
- What are the challenges of isolationism?

Question 3

Compare and critically assess unilateralism and multilateralism. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each? Should U.S. foreign policy tend more toward a multilateral or unilateral approach to foreign policy? Reference specific historical examples to back your decision.

- What is unilateralism in foreign policy?
- What is multilateralism?

Question 4

In what ways was the U.S. response to the Tiananmen Square massacre in China a reflection of idealist foreign policy? In what ways was it realist? Why did the George H.W. Bush administration's response to the Tiananmen Square massacre shift over time?