

Essay and Discussion Questions

Europe Higher Education Questions

Help students understand Europe through these essay and discussion questions.

Question 1

How did the Peace of Westphalia establish the norms of the world's contemporary political system? Evaluate the extent to which the values enshrined by the Peace of Westphalia continue to influence the world's political system today.

- What is sovereignty, and what are some historical examples of sovereignty being infringed upon? What was the result of these occurrences?
- What are some contemporary examples of sovereignty being infringed upon? What was the result of these occurrences?

Question 2

Evaluate how effectively regional associations like the EU and its precursors have responded to economic and political challenges. What are the most significant benefits of European regional organizations? What are the most significant drawbacks?

- How have regional associations affected the economies of European countries throughout history? How do regional associations affect the economies of European countries today?
- How have regional associations affected the political systems of European countries throughout history? How do regional associations affect the political systems of European countries today?
- How have Europe's regional associations changed over time? What has caused these changes?
- What drove Brexit in the United Kingdom, and what does it reveal about the success of the European Union?

Question 3

To what extent are discussions over membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) causing tensions in Europe? Are the benefits provided by NATO membership worth these tensions?

- When and why was NATO formed?
- How has the purpose and role of NATO changed over time?
- How have European countries responded to expanding NATO membership? Why do different countries respond in different ways?

Question 4

To what extent is Europe still shaped by the legacy of the Cold War? Assess how effectively Europe, as a whole, has been responding to the challenges associated with this legacy.

- How did the Marshall Plan establish the contemporary economic and political structure of Europe?
- How does the "rainbow curtain" affect citizens of Europe?
- What explains the relationships between major European powers and Russia today?

Question 5

Assess the extent to which the European Union and individual European governments are effectively responding to the challenges that accompany freedom of movement in the region.

- Why is freedom of movement important to Europeans?
- How does freedom of movement pose a challenge for European governments?
- What are the root causes of these challenges and what effects do these challenges have on life in Europe?

Question 6

In what ways is Russia an outlier when compared to other European countries? How should European countries respond to Russia's military incursions and growing influence?

- How has Russia played a role in shaping the economic and political structures of modern Europe?
- How effective has Russia been at its attempts to wield influence in Europe in the present-day?
- What seem to be Russia's geopolitical goals and what steps is it taking to pursue them?