

Essay and Discussion Questions

South & Central Asia Higher Education Questions

Help students understand South and Central Asia through these essay and discussion questions.

Question 1

Why did the British employ a divide-and-rule practice during its colonization in India? To what extent does this model of colonialism affect the region today?

- How did European colonialism contribute to contemporary antagonisms between India and Pakistan?
- Why was India partitioned in 1947?
- Why is Kashmir such a strongly contested hotspot?
- How does the conflict between India and Pakistan affect Indian domestic politics today?

Question 2

To what extent was the United States able to achieve its stated goals during its involvement in Afghanistan during the 1980s? During the 2000s? What have been the short and long term effects of United States involvement in the country?

- Why did the United States involve itself in Afghanistan during the 1980s?
- Why did the Soviet Union and United States engage in proxy conflicts during the Cold War?
- Why did the United States involve itself in Afghanistan during the 2000s? What were the effects of this choice?
- Why did the United States leave Afghanistan in 2021? What were the effects of this choice?

Question 3

Compare and contrast contemporary South Asia and contemporary Central Asia by considering key aspects such as politics, geopolitics, economics, and society. Does it still make sense to think of South and Central Asia as a single region?

- What historical factors have contributed to divergences between South and Central Asia?
- What are the main goals of United States foreign policy in South Asia?
- What are the main goals of United States foreign policy in Central Asia?

Question 4

To what extent should the United States involve itself in the region in an attempt to limit international terrorism? To what extent have previous examples of United States counterterrorism in the region been effective?

- What drives terrorism in South and Central Asia?
- How does the potential threat of terrorist attacks influence governments in the region and around the world?
- How does the threat of nuclear war raise the stakes of terrorist attacks?

Question 5

To what extent is trade in the region being used as a foreign policy tool? What is unique about South and Central Asia that makes trade so important? How can South and Central Asian countries work to utilize trade most

effectively, both in an economic and geopolitical sense?

- How and why does Pakistan limit trade across the region?
- In what ways would free trade improve the economies of South and Central Asia?

Question 6

Assess the effectiveness of India's unique foreign policy. What does this foreign policy tell us about India's strength as a state? Evaluate the extent to which India's foreign policy supports the claim that India is a potential global superpower.

- Why is India able to pursue a foreign policy that defies traditional alliances?
- How effective has India been at pursuing similar foreign policy goals throughout its history?
- How are other governments (e.g., the United States, Russia, and China) aiming to shake India's position of neutrality? Why do they seek to end Indian neutrality?