

Lesson Plan from [Contemporary History](#)
Lesson Plan

Contemporary History World at War: United States As a Global Power

Length

One 45 minute period

Grade Level

High School

Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to explain how the United States became a global power.
- Students will understand the pros and cons of isolationism in U.S. foreign policy.

Essential Events Between 1900 and 1945

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How Did the United States Become a Global Power?

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Guided Reading Handout

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Homework

Students will complete Part 1 of the Guided Reading Handout related to *How Did the United States Become a Global Power?*

Class

1. **(5 Minutes) Homework Debrief**
2. **(15 Minutes) Jigsaw Timeline:** Break students into 5 groups and assign each a section of *Essential Events Between 1900 and 1945*. There are 25 events listed on the timeline so each group will look at 5 events. Students should jot down brief notes making a connection to how each event might be tied to the United States growing as a global power. These notes are meant to inform the activity during the second half of class as well as the homework. Note: In several cases, there is a clear connection to the United States. In others, it is indirect (i.e. Sykes Picot Agreement, Bolshevik Revolution).
 - **Group 1:** 1898 Spanish American War - 1914 Panama Canal
 - **Group 2:** 1915 Second Battle of Ypres - 1917/1920 World War I Influences Suffrage Movement
 - **Group 3:** 1918 Armistice Day - 1933 Hitler Named Chancellor
 - **Group 4:** 1935 Second Italo-Ethiopian War - 1941/45 The Holocaust

- **Group 5:** 1941 Pearl Harbor - 1945 Atomic Bombs
3. **(25 Minutes) Activity:** Students will recombine into heterogeneous groups (one member from each group listed above). Draw students' attention to the question raised at the end of "*How Did the United States Become a Global Power?*": What is the United States' place in the world today?
- Introduce the idea that the United States has typically moved back and forth along an axis from isolationism to global engagement in its response to that question.
 - Working in small groups using the attached graphic organizer, have students brainstorm potential arguments for a more isolationist stance and for a more globally engaged stance. For each argument, ask students to cite a historical example.

Homework

- Students will individually write a short op-ed article advising the president on what the United States' place in the world today should be. Whichever position they choose, ask them to cite historical examples supporting their argument.
 - In addition to material covered in class, they may also consider looking at "*Why Did World War II Happen?*" or *Isolationism Versus Engagement*

Vocabulary

alliance

an official partnership between two or more parties based on cooperation in pursuit of a common goal, generally involving security or defense.

bilateral

an agreement undertaken between two entities, generally countries.

civil war

a war among groups inside of one country.

gross domestic product

a measure of a country's economic output determined by the value of goods and services it produces in a given year.

insurgency

a rebellion, the primary goal of which is to overthrow or delegitimize a government.

multilateral

undertaken among three or more entities, usually countries. The term frequently describes organizations such as the United Nations (UN).