

Lesson Plan

# The Americas

## Length

Two 45-minute periods

## Grade Level

High School

## Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to describe the political, societal, economic, and geopolitical systems that characterize the Americas.
- Students will understand how global powers wield influence on countries in the region.

## Worksheets

## Homework

Students will read the section entitled Modern History from The Americas and complete the worksheet below.

## Class One

1. **(5 minutes) Debrief Homework:** Have students share their homework responses in small groups.
2. **(10 minutes) Warm Up:** Give students the attached blank map of the Americas. Have students work in small groups to fill in as many country names as possible. When students have finished, show this map labeled with country names and ask students the following questions to activate prior knowledge.
  - *Referencing the map, what comes to mind when you think of the Americas? What do you associate with the region in terms of language, food, religion, climate, government, etc.?*
  - *What major historical events have taken place in the region?*
  - *What major current events are currently taking place in the region?*
  - *What questions do you have about the Americas?*
3. **(20 minutes) Group Work:** Have students use their assigned section from *Regions of the World: The Americas* to complete the corresponding section of the worksheet. When finished, students will share and write down other students' takeaways to complete their worksheets. Assign students to the following groups based on sections from *Regions of the World: The Americas*.
  - People and Society
  - Politics
  - Economics
  - Geopolitics
4. **(10 minutes) Discussion:** Lead a discussion that highlights positive trends in the region as well as some of the challenges that the region faces. Use the following questions as guidance.
  - *What are some positive trends seen in countries in the Americas?*
  - *How are the countries of the Americas working to improve the quality of life of their citizens?*
  - *What are the greatest challenges faced by the Americas?*
  - *How are governments responding to these challenges?*
  - Transition the class to tomorrow's topic by asking students to consider the challenges associated with democratic backsliding. Explain that the United States has a long tradition of intervening in the

Americas in order to guard against such challenges.

## Homework

- Have students briefly respond to the following: *Does the United States have a responsibility to involve itself with other countries in the Americas in an attempt to stop negative developments such as democratic backsliding? Why or why not? What values should guide United States foreign policy in the Americas?*

## Class Two

1. **(5 minutes) Debrief Homework:** Have students share their reflections from last night's homework with a partner and then to the class. As a class, discuss the values that drive United States foreign policy.
2. **(10 minutes) Group Work:** Have groups complete the attached worksheet using their assigned page of [The Americas: U.S. Foreign Policy](#). Assign students to the following groups:
  - Monroe Doctrine/Roosevelt Corollary
  - Good Neighbor Policy
  - U.S. Business Interests
  - Cuban Revolution
  - Communism in Latin America
  - War on Drugs
  - Iran-Contra Affair
  - NAFTA
  - Foreign Policy and Migration
3. **(15 minutes) Debrief:** Have each group share the example of United States foreign policy from their page with the class. Ask each group to explain whether or not they believe their assigned foreign policy lived up to United States values. As students share, have other students use their worksheets to write down other examples of United States foreign policy in the Americas. After groups have shared, pose the following to the class: Has the United States lived up to its values while pursuing its foreign policy interests in Latin America?
4. **(10 minutes) Worksheet:** Have students read the page *China Increases Influence Across Latin America* with a partner and address the following questions using the worksheet below.
  - *According to this graphic, how is China intervening in Latin America?*
  - *Why might China be pursuing this intervention?*
  - *What benefits might this intervention bring to Latin America?*
  - *Why might this intervention pose a challenge to countries in Latin America?*
5. **(5 minutes) Homework Prep:** As a class, use the attached worksheet to reflect on United States interventionism in the Americas.

## Homework

- Have students complete a reflection about United States interventionism in the Americas using the following prompts: *Should the United States pursue an interventionist foreign policy towards other countries in the Americas? What values should guide this interventionism? What benefits could United States interventionism bring to the region? If the United States does not intervene, how might other countries work to intervene instead?*