



When should the U.S. government send troops to another region of the world?

GETTING ORIENTED

The weekly passage introduces the question of U.S. military involvement in other regions of the world. Here are four important issues that will help provide context for your class discussions.

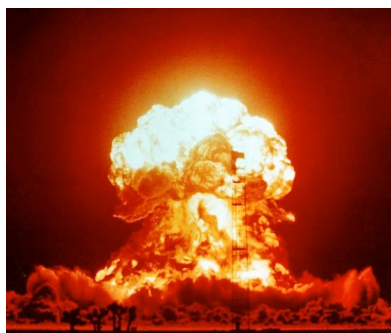
9/11

9/11 refers to a series of four attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001. Almost 3000 people were killed that day. Nineteen terrorists from the Islamist group called al-Qaeda hijacked 4 American jets. These were suicide missions. The pilots who hijacked or stole the planes flew two of them into the World Trade Center in New York City and one into the Pentagon in Virginia. The fourth plane was intended to crash into the White House in Washington D.C., but the passengers disrupted the hijackers and the plane crashed in a field instead. All the terrorists, airline passengers, and airline personnel died in the attacks.



Weapons of Mass Destruction

A weapon of mass destruction is a weapon that can kill and bring significant harm to many people and other living creatures. Although some international leaders had used the term in the past, it was not a common expression until the United States invaded Iraq in 2003. Since the leader of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, had used poisonous gas in his attack against Iranian and Kurdish civilians in the 1980s, there was reason to believe he had other weapons of mass destruction.



Oil in Iraq

International oil companies are very interested in Iraq because Iraq has a continuing supply of oil very close to the surface. Because the oil is not deep under the earth, the expense to get this oil is less than in many other places in the world. Some scientists believe that the quantity of oil in Iraq is far greater than what the present statistics show. American politicians are very aware of the oil potential in Iraq because American people are such heavy consumers of oil.



The Darfur Conflict

Darfur is a region in the western part of Sudan in East Africa. Approximately 6 million people live there. Some of the people are farmers and some are nomads, meaning that they live in no permanent place. The conflict in Darfur began in 2003 when some of these people took up arms against the central government of Sudan. Their main complaint was that the Sudanese government didn't protect the people who lived in the villages from the nomads. The Sudanese government sent forces to attack the villages of Darfur. At least 400,000 people have been killed and 2,500,000 have been forced to leave their homes. These people have mainly moved into Chad, a country west of Sudan.





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EVIDENCE AND PERSPECTIVES

	<i>Some may have this view:</i>	<i>But others may think:</i>
General American Public	Many people want the government to send troops to any place that feels threatening to the United States and also to countries that have internal conflict (meaning conflict inside that country). They believe that the U.S. is a world leader, and we should help other countries as well as protect all our own interests. They are willing to pay more tax money to support sending troops overseas.	Some people are against all this military action. They believe we spend too much taxpayer money trying to help other countries when our own country needs new roads, more teachers, and lower taxes. They believe that some kinds of internal conflict in other countries cannot be changed and that we are wasting money that could be used for other things. They believe other countries have to figure out their own conflicts. They also are against allowing our American soldiers to risk their lives unless doing so is absolutely necessary. Some people do not believe in war as a way of solving any problems.
Oil Investors	Oil investors are not particularly interested in what happens in countries where there are no oil fields. They supported American troops going into Iraq because they did not want other countries to have the opportunity to get ownership of the oil fields.	Oil investors may be against spending taxpayer money to go into areas where there is no oil. They would probably still support an invasion or attack if they saw the country being invaded as a national threat to American people.
Military Personnel	Most military people support war efforts because that is their job. That is what they are trained to do. They want to protect our country against any kind of threat. They believe a strong military shows our strength as the leader of the Western world. They understand when they join the military that they may be asked to risk their lives.	The majority of military people would support whatever invasions were determined necessary by the government. Some military people, however, might be opposed to or against invasions if they could not see a clear possibility of overcoming the enemy. They also might be opposed if they felt like the war efforts were not supported by the majority of the American people.

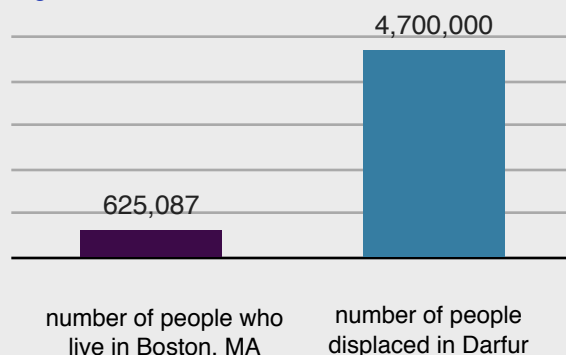
- ✓ The first use of the term “weapons of mass destruction” on record is by Cosmo Gordon Lang, Archbishop of Canterbury in 1937. He was referring to the aerial bombardment of Guernica, Spain.
- ✓ In August 2012, Iraq was producing 3 million barrels of oil a day.
- ✓ As of July 2012, 1,960 United States Military personnel have been killed in the war in Afghanistan.
- ✓ Janjaweed, which means “devils on horseback” were the Arab militias that were sent by the government of Sudan to quiet the rebel forces in the region of Darfur.
- ✓ The United Nations estimates 4.7 million people from Darfur are living in displaced person camps and are surviving on humanitarian aid (food and general living products from other countries).
- ✓ Six major rounds of peace talks have failed to halt the attacks of the Sudanese government against the people in Darfur.
- ✓ Both towers of the World Trade Center collapsed within an hour after being hit by the jets that crashed into them.

Additional Information for Teachers

Study the oil issue in Iraq.
<http://topics.nytimes.com/topics/news/international/countriesandterritories/iraq/oil/index.html>

Look into the problems in Darfur.
www.unitedhumanrights.org/genocide/genocide-in-sudan.htm

Gather more information on Iraq and the weapons of mass destruction.
www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB80





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ANNOTATIONS FOR TEACHERS

Features of Academic Text: *Statistics as evidence*

Academic texts will include statistics as evidence. Statistics such as these not only offer more precise evidence but make the writer seem more credible. A reader believes that the writer did his/her homework if there are precise statistics.

Less than a month after the September 11 attacks, the U.S. military began a war in Afghanistan. This country provided a safe place for the terrorists to plan and organize its attack on the United States. Because **nearly 3000 people died** as a result of 9/11, most of the people in the U.S. supported this war. They believed that military action was the only way to make sure that the terrorists could not plan more attacks against the U.S. More than ten years later, **nearly 2000 U.S. troops have died** while trying to make Afghanistan a **stable** country where terrorists can never plan another attack on the U.S.

In 2003, the United States also went to war in Iraq. Members of the U.S. government claimed that the Iraqi **regime** had weapons of mass destruction that could be used against Americans. Many people in the U.S. were not convinced that these weapons existed and did not support this war. Some people believed that the war in Iraq was more about protecting an oil supply to support the American economy. In the end, the weapons of mass destruction were never found and **4487 members of the U.S. military died fighting for this cause.**

Some people believe that the U.S. government should only send troops into a war when there is a clear threat to the safety and welfare of its people. They think that American men and women should only be asked to sacrifice their lives if there is a known threat, as was the case after 9/11. They think that wars that are not clearly protecting the safety of the American people are also too costly. They point to the

expense of the Iraq war. According to some **estimates**, the cost of this war to the U.S. government was **\$1 trillion dollars**. Many Americans think that this money should have been used for domestic issues, like improving American schools.

Other people think that the U.S. should consider military action when the safety of people from other countries is threatened by violent government actions. For example, during much of the time that Americans were fighting in Iraq, people in the Darfur region of Sudan were being murdered and forced by their government to leave their villages.

Approximately 2.7 million people in Darfur were displaced by these actions, resulting in **nearly 300,000 deaths from disease and starvation**. Many Americans thought that U.S. military action in Sudan could have **diminished** the suffering of the Sudanese people. They claim that there was not U.S. military action because this African country offered little economic benefit to the American economy.

What do you think? When should the U.S. government send troops to another region of the world? Should we only get involved when our safety is threatened? Should we commit troops when our economic interests are threatened? Or should we engage in military action when the safety of others is threatened?

Sometimes a writer will use "nearly" or "close to" or "approximately" before using a statistic. Ask students why this writer said "nearly 2000 U.S. troops have died" in the first paragraph but gave the exact number (4487) in the second paragraph?

Pronunciation Practice:

Students may need help pronouncing some of these statistics. For example, students may benefit from hearing the teacher read "two-point-seven million people" in the fourth paragraph.



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GENERATING WORDS

Roots and Meaning

Diminish means to make smaller or to seem smaller. It can be used in a physical sense to mean to make the amount of something smaller. For example, if people start leaving a bad movie early, the audience has slowly **diminished**. The audience gets smaller and smaller as people leave the bad movie!

Diminish can also be used in the sense of making someone or something less important or valuable. For example: if people say mean things about someone, they **diminish** his feelings of self-worth. He will feel as though people don't like him or think less of him because of the things they say.

→ The Latin word *minutia* means smallness. Most of us know the expression “mini.” If we eat a mini cupcake, we eat one that is smaller than a regular cupcake. A mini dress is one that is shorter than usual.

 Use the following words in sentences. If you aren't sure of their meanings, use a dictionary.

1. miniature _____

2. minimal _____

This week we also have the word **estimate**. This word is used both as a noun and a verb. An **estimate** is a good guess about the amount of something. For example, during a big parade with huge crowds of people, the police will give an **estimate** of the number of people. The police officers don't know the exact number because it is impossible to count.

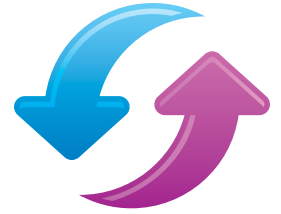
When we use estimate as a noun like this, we pronounce the last syllable like “mitt” instead of “mate.”

Can you think of other examples of when we use estimate as a noun?

The verb **to estimate** means to make a good guess. For example, some teachers ask students to guess the amount of something in a container. For example, *the students estimated the number of jellybeans in the jar*.

When we use estimate as a verb, we pronounce the last syllable like “mate.”

What are some other occasions when we need to estimate something?



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DEVELOPING DISCUSSIONS

Fortify a Conversation

Below is a conversation between two people. The casual conversation is the way two friends might talk. The fortified conversation uses school language that is more precise and academic.

Topic of Discussion: In the nation of Syria, there has been a conflict between the country's **regime** and many of its people. An **estimated** 19,000 people have died, and more than 100,000 people have been **displaced** since March 2011. Countries like Turkey and Lebanon are now temporary homes to many of these people. The chances of Syria creating a stable government are **diminishing**. In a case like this, should the U.S. send troops overseas?

Casual



I don't think it sounds like some place we should go to.

Me neither. Doesn't sound like any Americans are going to get hurt because of this.



But what if it was your family? Wouldn't you hope someone would help them?



With a partner, read these two versions of the same conversation. Fill in the missing boxes with either the casual or fortified response.

Fortified



In my opinion, committing troops to a place like Syria would be a mistake.



In addition to this, we must consider what occurred *as a result of* the Iraq war. Nearly 4500 troops died during that war.



On the other hand, imagine that members of your family were involved in this *conflict*. *From this perspective*, would you want a more powerful country to *intervene*?



Rehearse your fortified conversation. Share with another pair of students.