

Social Studies

Why Are We in Afghanistan?

Grades 10-12





Program Production

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Program Overview



Why Are We in Afghanistan?

Following the attacks on the U.S. on September 11, 2001, the United States under President George W. Bush, engaged in an invasion of Afghanistan. The stated goal was to stop the spread of terrorism and to bring those responsible for the attacks to justice.

However the U.S. soon lost focus in Afghanistan following the invasion of Iraq. The Iraqi invasion put the war in Afghanistan on the back burner. The U.S. found itself fighting two wars. The Iraqi invasion became bogged down in a quagmire consuming all of the attention of the U.S government and the American people. As the U. S. struggled to secure its tenuous victory over Saddam Hussein the goal of bringing the leadership of Al Qaeda to justice soon became a distant memory.

As the war in Afghanistan continues many have begun to question the mission of U.S. troops in the country, the benefits of U.S. interventionism and whether it will ever be possible for the U.S. to be successful in completing the stated goals of the Afghan mission.

Viewing Objectives

After viewing the Video and engaging in the activities provided, students will be able to:

- Evaluate the reasons for U.S. intervention in Afghanistan.
- Explain the difference between the Afghan Taliban and Al Qaeda.
- Evaluate how the strategic location and natural resources of Afghanistan play a key role in U.S. foreign policy decisions.
- Understand the effect of U.S. foreign policy in Afghanistan on the people of that nation.
- Differentiate between the stated rationale for the Afghan war and the geopolitical, economic and strategic reasons for U.S. involvement.

Standards

N.Y. State Social Studies Standards Covered by this Guide and Video



Standard 1: History of the United States and New York

use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in the history of the United States and New York.

Key Idea 2: Important ideas, social and cultural values, beliefs, and traditions from New York State and United States history illustrate the connections and interactions of people and events across time and from a variety of perspectives.

Key Idea 4: The skills of historical analysis include the ability to: explain the significance of historical evidence; weigh the importance, reliability, and validity of evidence; understand the concept of multiple causation; understand the importance of changing and competing interpretations of different historical

Standard 2: World History

use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.

Key Idea 4: The skills of historical analysis include the ability to investigate differing and competing interpretations of the theories of history, hypothesize about why interpretations change over time, explain the importance of historical evidence, and understand the concepts of change and continuity over time.

Standard 3: Geography

use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the geography of the interdependent world in which we live—local, national, and global—including the distribution of people, places, and environments over the Earth's surface.

Key Idea 1: Geography can be divided into six essential elements which can be used to analyze important historic, geographic, economic, and environmental questions and issues. These six elements include: the world in spatial terms, places and regions, physical settings (including natural resources), human systems, environment and society, and the use of geography. (Adapted from The National Geography Standards, 1994: Geography for Life)

Standard 4: Economics

use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of how the United States and other societies develop economic systems and associated institutions to allocate scarce resources, how major decision-making units function in the U.S. and other national economies, and how an economy solves the scarcity problem through market and nonmarket mechanisms

Key Idea 1: The study of economics requires an understanding of major economic concepts and systems, the principles of economic decision making, and the interdependence of economies and economic systems throughout the world.

Standards

NCSS Standards Covered by this Guide and Video



II. Time, Continuity & Change

Description: Human beings seek to understand their historical roots and to locate themselves in time. Knowing how to read and reconstruct the past allows one to develop an historical perspective and to answer questions such as: Who am I? What happened in the past? How am I connected to those in the past? How has the world changed and how might it change in the future? Why does our personal sense of relatedness to the past change? This standard expects candidates to be familiar with the history of the United States, western civilization, and non-western society.

III. People, Places and Environments

Description: The study of people, places and human-environment interactions assists students as they create spatial views and geographic perspectives of the world beyond their personal locations. Students need the knowledge, skills, and understanding provided by questions such as: Where are things located? Why are they located where they are: What do we mean by "region"? How do landforms change? What implications do these changes have for people? This standard expects candidates to understand the basic scholarly concepts of geography.

VI. Power, Authority & Governance

Description: Understanding the historical development of structures of power, authority, and governance and their evolving functions in contemporary U. S. society and other parts of the world is essential for developing civic competence. In exploring this theme, students confront questions such as: What is power? What forms does it take? Who holds it? How is it gained, used, and justified? What is legitimate authority? How are governments created, structured, maintained, and changed? How can individuals' rights be protected within the context of majority rule? This standard expects candidates to understand the basic scholarly concepts of political science.

IX. Global Connections

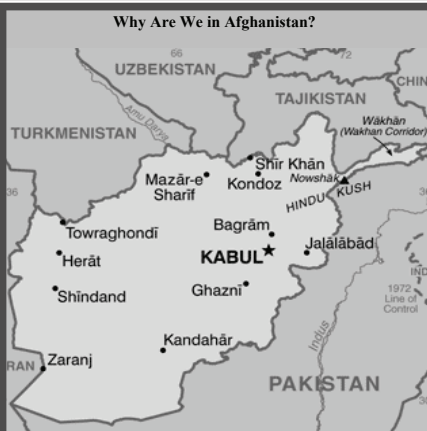
Description: The realities of global interdependence require understanding the increasingly important and diverse global connections among world societies and the frequent tension between national interests and global priorities. Students will need to be able to address such international issues as health care, the environment, human rights, economic competition and interdependence, age-old ethnic enmities, and political and military alliances. This standard expects candidates to understand that our planet has been exposed to an ever-increasing human interdependence in a world made smaller by improvements in communication, transportation, and trade.

Fast Facts



- The U.S. invaded Afghanistan in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.
- The main objective was to prevent the spread of terrorism and bring to justice those responsible for the September 11th attacks.
- The U.S. lost focus in Afghanistan after the invasion of Iraq.
- The U.S. and the NATO allies are now engaged in nation-building in Afghanistan by directly supporting the government of Hamid Karzai against the former Taliban regime.
- The rise in power and economic influence of India and China has led to the U.S. viewing Afghanistan and the Central Asian region as strategically vital to U.S. national interests.
- The growing global demand for oil and natural gas has made the geographic region around Afghanistan economically important to U.S. business interests.
- New elections in Afghanistan have been seen by many in the country and around the world as illegitimate.
- Afghanistan continues to be ruled by a coalition of the Karzai government and Afghan warlords.
- Throughout history no foreign power has been successful in trying to occupy or nation-build in Afghanistan.
- Terrorists have moved many of the terror training bases in Afghanistan to border area of Pakistan and other countries.
- The Iraq and Afghan wars have cost hundreds of billions of dollars (detailed cost information is available @ <http://nationalpriorities.org/>)
- Although it was hoped that Afghan women would benefit from the overthrow of the Taliban they continue to be oppressed by the Karzai government, tribal warlords, and Taliban militia.
- Although the Taliban provide sanctuary for Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, the groups are not the same.
- A recent study by the Rand Corporation (<http://www.rand.org/news/press/2008/07/29/>) concluded that a military solution to the problem of terrorism is improbable.
- There is a broad peace movement in the U.S. that includes various groups seeking a different solution in Afghanistan.
- There is a history of U.S. interventions globally conducted by both the military and CIA.

Vocabulary



Terrorism

The unlawful use or threatened use of force or violence by a person or an organized group against people or property with the intention of intimidating or coercing societies or governments, often for ideological or political reasons.

Al Qaeda

A radical Sunni Muslim organization dedicated to the elimination of a Western presence in Arab countries and militantly opposed to Western foreign policy: founded by Osama bin Laden in 1988.

Taliban

A fundamentalist Muslim group that controlled much of Afghanistan from 1995 until U.S. military intervention in 2001.

Geopolitical

The study of the relationship among politics and geography, demography, and economics, especially with respect to the foreign policy of a nation.

Warlord

A military commander exercising civil power in a region, whether in nominal allegiance to the national government or in defiance of it.

Repress

To put down by force, usually before total control has been lost; quell: *repress a rebellion*.

Interventionism

the policy or doctrine of intervening, esp. government interference in the affairs of another state or in domestic economic affairs.

Imperialism

The policy of extending a nation's authority by territorial acquisition or by the establishment of economic and political hegemony over other nations.

Osama Bin Laden

Saudi Arabian-born leader of al-Qaeda who established training camps in Sudan and later Afghanistan where Islamist militants were trained to carry out attacks to disrupt the economies and influence of Western nations.

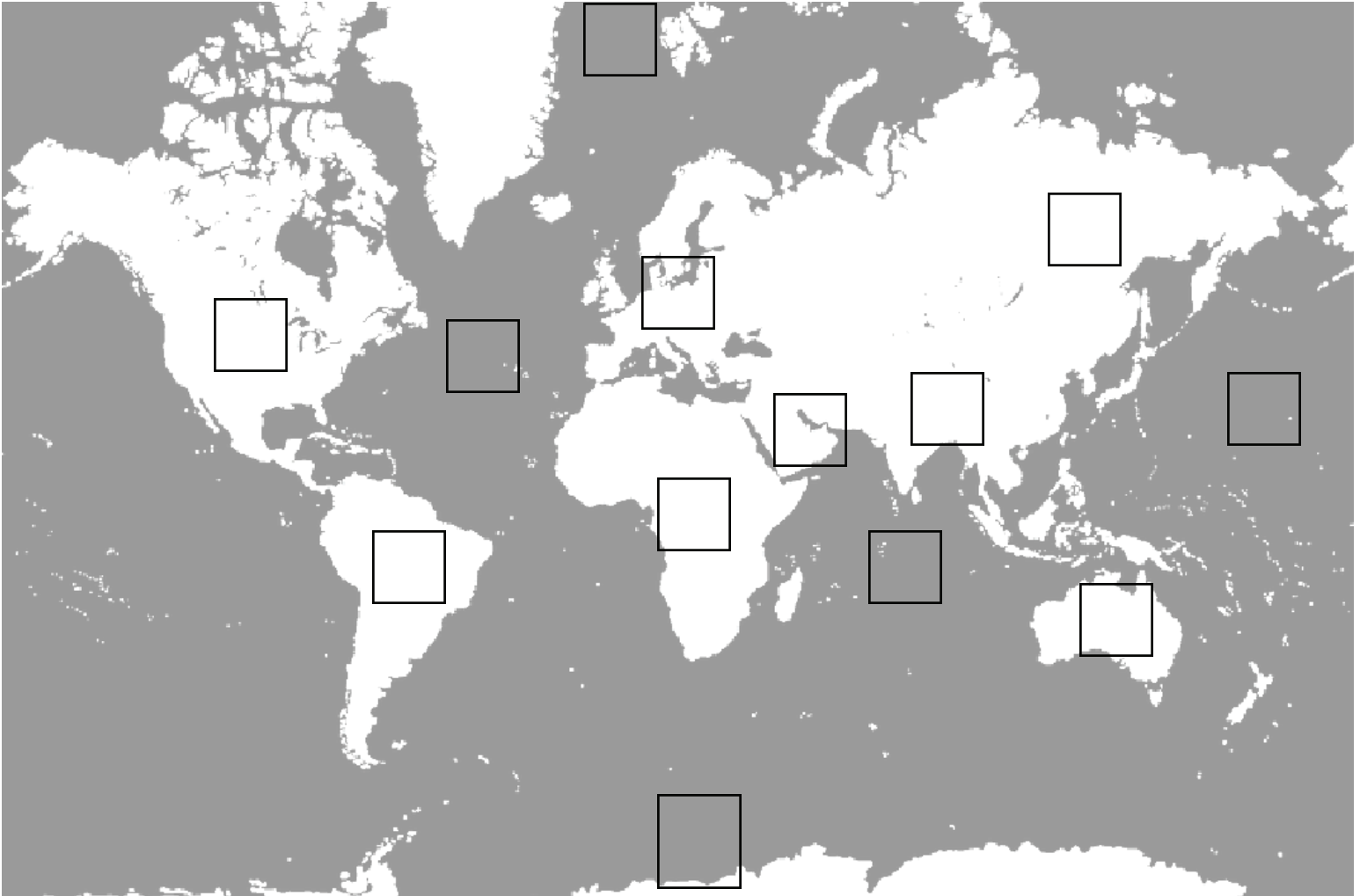
Collateral damage

Unintended damage, injuries, or deaths caused by an action, especially unintended civilian casualties caused by a military operation.

Mapping Skills

Directions: 1. Using the outline map below label the following continents and geographic regions with the appropriate number.

- | | | | | |
|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Asia | 2. Africa | 3. North America | 4. South America | 5. Arctic Ocean |
| 6. Antarctica | 7. Europe | 8. Australia | 9. Middle East | |
| 10. Central Asia | 11. Pacific Ocean | 12. Atlantic Ocean | 13. Indian Ocean | |



2. Label with the appropriate number the countries that surround Afghanistan on the map to the left. Use a textbook or other resources to identify the nations closest to Afghanistan.

- | | | |
|----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Iraq | 2. Iran | 3. Pakistan |
| 4. India | 5. China | 6. Turkmenistan |
| 7. Tajikistan | 8. Uzbekistan | 9. Kyrgyzstan |
| 10. Kazakhstan | 11. Saudi Arabia | 12. Yemen |



Why Are We in Afghanistan

Cooperative Learning Think-Pair-Share

Directions: Have students think about the War in Afghanistan and the War on Terror. Students will work with an assigned partner using three index cards. Together they will work to write down three questions that they have on the topic. When finished have the students rank their questions in order of importance from most to least important. Finally have the students take an educated guess at an answer to the question they chose. In the graphic organizer below have the students record the question they feel in the most important and the answer they agreed upon. After watching the video have the students place the answer to their question in the appropriate box on the organizer. After they have completed the graphic organizer have them discuss how the video has changed their thinking.

Question:

Answer Before Viewing the Video

Answer After Viewing the Video



Why Are We in Afghanistan

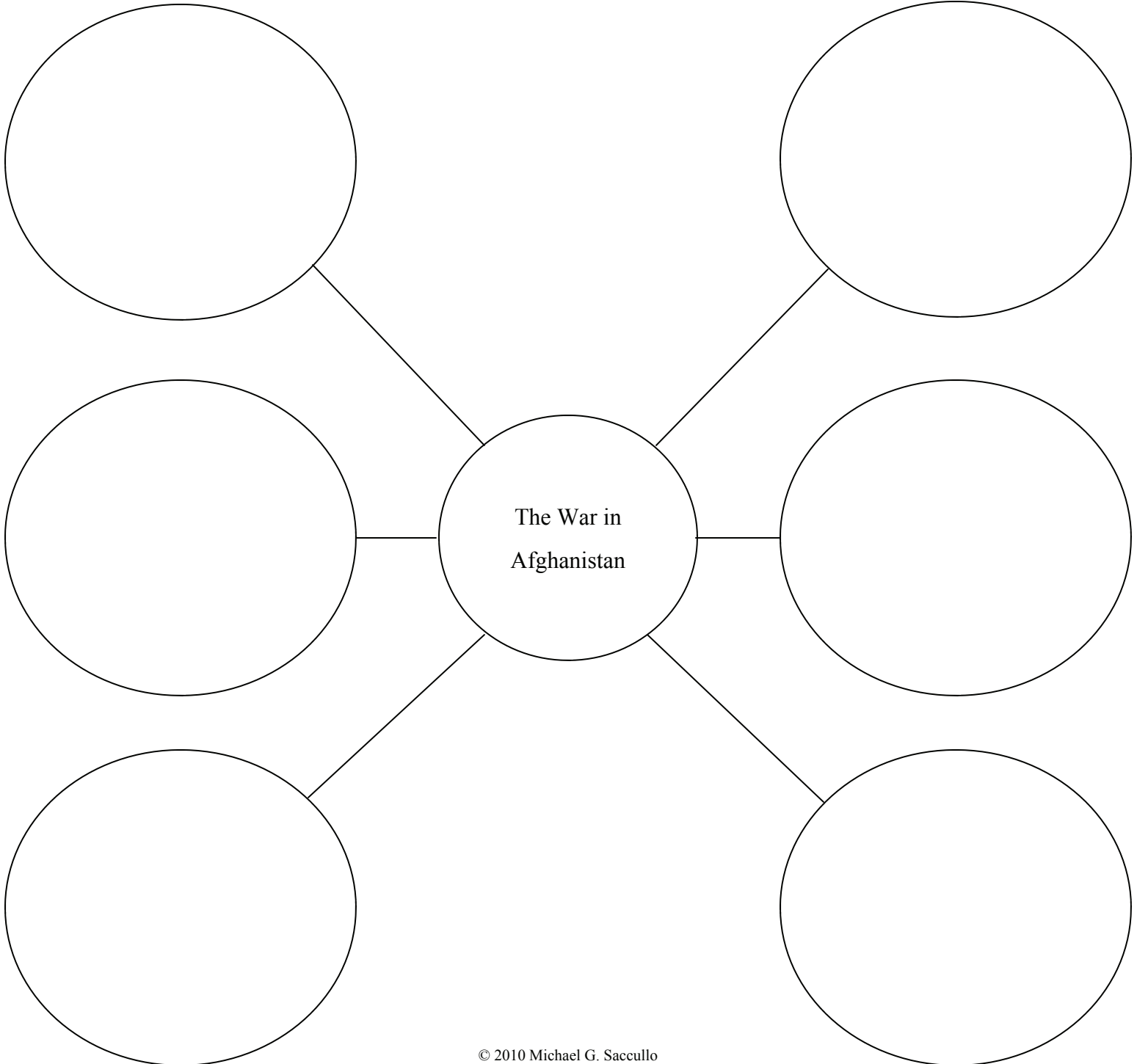
During Viewing
Activity 1

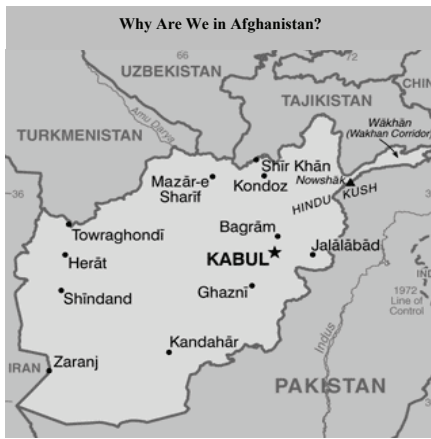
Cause and Effect

Directions: In the graphic organizer below chart the causes and effects of the U.S. War in Afghanistan. The causes should focus on the reasons the U.S. invaded Afghanistan and the goals it hoped to achieve. The effects should focus on the nation of Afghanistan, the citizens of Afghanistan and the U.S. as well as the economy of both nations.

Causes

Effects





Why Are We in Afghanistan

The Presidential Debate

Directions: Using the first two debate worksheets the teacher should organize and facilitate a debate using the structure outlined below or any debate structure they are comfortable with.

Structure for Debate

A formal debate usually involves **three groups**: one **supporting a resolution** (affirmative team), one **opposing the resolution** (opposing team), and those who are **judging** the quality of the evidence and arguments and the performance in the debate. The affirmative and opposing teams usually consist of three members each, while the judging may be done by the teacher, a small group of students, or the class as a whole. In addition to the three specific groups, there may be an audience made up of class members not involved in the formal debate. A specific resolution is developed and rules for the debate are established.

Debate Preparation:

- The topic of this debate involves whether the U.S. should continue the war in Afghanistan or withdraw.
- Organize the teams.
- Establish the rules of the debate, including timelines.
- Research the topic and prepare logical arguments. (Use debate handouts 1 and 2)
- Gather supporting evidence and examples for position taken.
- Anticipate counter arguments and prepare rebuttals.
- Team members plan order and content of speaking in debate.
- Prepare room for debate.
- Establish expectations, if any, for assessment of debate.

Conducting Debate:

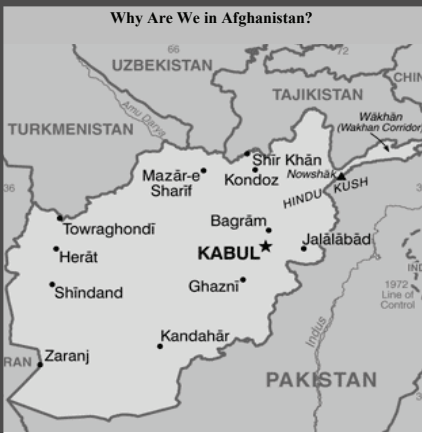
Debate opens with the affirmative team (the team that supports the resolution) presenting their arguments, followed by a member of the opposing team. This pattern is repeated for the second speaker in each team. Finally, each team gets an opportunity for rebutting the arguments of the opponent. Speakers should speak slowly and clearly. The judges and members of the audience should be taking notes as the debate proceeds. A typical sequence for debate, with suggested timelines, is as follows:

- the first speaker on the affirmative team presents arguments in support of the resolution. (3 – 6 minutes)
- The first speaker on the opposing team presents arguments opposing the resolution. (3 – 6 minutes)
- The second speaker on the affirmative team presents further arguments in support of the resolution, identifies areas of conflict, and answers questions that may have been raised by the opposition speaker. (3 – 6 minutes)
- The second speaker on the opposing team presents further arguments against the resolution, identifies further areas of conflict, and answers questions that may have been raised by the previous affirmative speaker. (3 – 6 minutes)
- The rules may include a short recess for teams to prepare their rebuttals. (5 minutes)
- The opposing team begins with the rebuttal, attempting to defend the opposing arguments and to defeat the supporting arguments without adding any new information. (3 – 5 minutes)
- First rebuttal of the affirmative team (3 – 5 minutes)
- Each team gets a second rebuttal for closing statements with the affirmative team having the last opportunity to speak. (3 – 5 minutes each)
- There cannot be any interruptions. Speakers must wait their turns. The teacher may need to enforce the rules.

Post-debate Discussion and Assessment

When the formal debate is finished, allow time for debriefing and discussion. Members of the audience should be given an opportunity to ask questions and to contribute their own thoughts and opinions on the arguments presented. Members of the debate teams may also wish to reflect on their performance and seek feedback from the audience, including the teacher. If some form of assessment was part of the debate plan, it would be conducted at this time. Assessment could be conducted by the teacher, the judging team, or the entire class.

Additional Resources



Internet Resources

Rand Corporation reports	http://www.rand.org
Center for International and Strategic Studies	http://www.csis.org
U.S. State Department	http://www.state.gov/countries
U.S. Department of Defense	http://www.dod.gov
National Priorities Project	http://www.nationalpriorities.org
Institute for Policy Studies	http://www.ips-dc.org
<i>Why Are We in Afghanistan?</i>	http://www.WhyAreWeInAfghanistan.org

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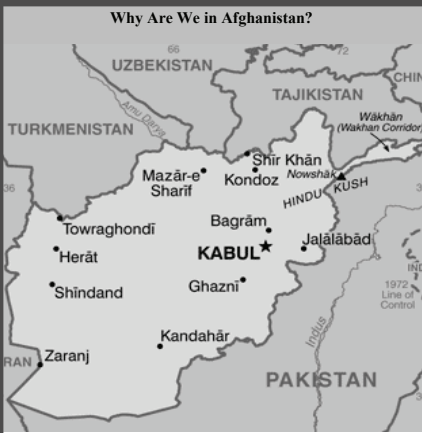
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