

# World at War: Isolationism Op-Ed

## Overview:

Students will compose an op-ed article, citing historical examples, arguing for or against isolationism in U.S. foreign policy today.

## Length:

Two classes.

## Materials:

* [“Why Did World War II Happen?”](https://world101.cfr.org/historical-context/world-war/why-did-world-war-ii-happen) (World101)
* [“How Did the United States Become a Global Power?”](https://world101.cfr.org/historical-context/world-war/how-did-united-states-become-global-power) (World101)

## Instructional Plan

1. Assign students to read “Why Did World War II Happen?” paying particular attention to the section on isolationism, along with “How Did the United States Become a Global Power?”
2. 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.
3. 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 argument, ask students to cite a historical example.
4. For homework or the next day, ask students individually to 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.

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| Isolationism | Global Engagement |
| Argument: Historical example:  How this example supports the argument: | Argument: Historical example:  How this example supports the argument: |
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