

**2020-2021 Student Debate Series**

***Isolationism or Internationalism: How Should the United States React to COVID-19?***

Thursday, October 15, 2020

3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. (EST) - Zoom

***Given the current state of the COVID-19 pandemic, should the United States primarily focus on taking an isolationist approach and combating the virus at home, or should the United States take an internationalist approach and coordinate with allies and international organizations to fight the spread of COVID-19?***

In response to the debate prompt, students will be divided and assigned to one of two teams. In preparation for the debate, students should take note of their assigned team and read through the general background resources, as well as all team-specific resources. Students are encouraged to take notes on the resources provided and may do additional research if they choose in order to help strengthen their arguments during the debate.

- **Group 1: Affirmative Group**  
*“Based on our studies and research, YES, the United States should take an isolationist approach and focus on combating the virus at home.”*
- **Group 2: Opposing Group**  
*“Based on our studies and research, NO, the United States should **NOT** take an isolationist approach, but should adopt an internationalist approach and coordinate with allies and international organizations to fight the spread of COVID-19.”*

**Agenda (all times listed are in EST)**

- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>3:20 p.m.</b>        | <b>Recommended log-on time for student participants</b>   |
| <b>3:30 – 3:45 p.m.</b> | <b>Welcome Remarks (Main Room)</b><br>Council staff will welcome students and review the virtual debate agenda and program logistics before sending the two groups of students into their first breakout session to work collaboratively on their opening statements. |
| <b>3:45 – 4:00 p.m.</b> | <b>Prepare Opening Statement (Breakout Rooms)</b><br>Students work together in an assigned group to draft an opening statement defending their position. Students will receive a reminder to take the last 5 minutes to synthesize their group’s opening remarks as a |

whole. Each group elects 1-2 representatives to present the entire group's opening statement.

**Opening Statement:** *Introduce the topic in a way that supports your position. Provide supporting evidence. The last sentence of the introduction should be your "thesis" or main objective.*

**4:00 – 4:10 p.m.**

**Present Opening Statement - 5 min. each (Main Room)**

Each group's elected representatives present their entire group's opening statement to the at-large plenary. Fellow group members take notes on opposing groups' arguments for use during the rebuttal period. Council staff will have a virtual countdown timer on screen to keep track of time.

**Presentation Order:**

- 1) *Affirmative Group*
- 2) *Opposing Group*

**4:10 – 4:20 p.m.**

**Prepare Rebuttal (Breakout Rooms)**

Students representing the "Affirmative Group" finalize a rebuttal representing the group as a whole. Moreover, students representing the "Opposing Group" finalize one rebuttal representing the group as a whole. Each group elects 1-2 new representatives to present their rebuttal.

**Rebuttal:** *Respond to and criticize the arguments presented by the opposing side. Prove that the other side's logic and arguments do not make sense. Provide sound counter-arguments.*

**4:20 – 4:30 p.m.**

**Present Rebuttal - 5 min. each (Main Room)**

Each group's newly elected representatives deliver a rebuttal to the at-large plenary. Once again, fellow group members take notes on opposing groups' rebuttal for use during closing arguments. Council staff will have a virtual countdown timer on screen to keep track of time.

**Presentation Order:**

- 1) *Opposing Group*
- 2) *Affirmative Group*

**4:30 – 4:40 p.m.**

**Prepare Closing Argument (Breakout Rooms)**

Students work in their respective groups (Opposing or Affirmative) to prepare a closing statement that reaffirms their position. Each group elects 1-2 new representatives to present their rebuttal.

**Closing Argument:** Summarize your team's main arguments. Emphasize the strongest points made throughout the debate. Make sure to include facts to support your position and address any counter arguments.

**4:40 – 4:50 p.m.**

**Present Closing Argument - 5 min. each (Main Room)**

Each group's newly elected representatives deliver a closing argument to the at-large plenary. Council staff will have a virtual countdown timer on screen to keep track of time.

**Presentation Order:**

- 1) *Affirmative Group*
- 2) *Opposing Group*

**4:50 – 5:00 p.m.**

**Closing Remarks / Evaluations (Main Room)**

Council staff congratulate students on a job well done and deliver closing remarks and information about upcoming programs and the next debate date and topic. Judges deliberate, select and announce the winner of the debate as well as confer awards for excellence in debate performance.

## Debate Resource Guide

### Questions to Consider:

- What is Isolationism and what is Internationalism? Give instances of American Isolationism and instances of American Internationalism (or globalism)?
- Why would a public health emergency benefit from either an Internationalist approach or an Isolationist approach? How is this similar or different than other global crises such as the Climate Emergency?
- In the Brookings opinion article linked below, the author labels the interconnectedness of the world as more 'fragile'. Do you agree with this assertion? Is an interconnected world more fragile or more robust? Why?

### General Background Resources:

**TIPS FOR STUDENTS:** We have provided a number of general background resources, as well as team specific resources in this document. Please read and review these resources as preparation for the program. You may conduct additional research outside of these resources, but we ask that you practice good digital literacy, and utilize vetted resources from reputable news or analysis organizations. Are you not sure if a site is vetted and reputable? Discuss with fellow debaters or talk to your faculty adviser about finding reputable online sources.

#### (Definitions)

<https://www.dictionary.com/browse/isolationism>

<https://www.dictionary.com/browse/internationalism>

#### (Article) "After Virus, how will Americans' view of the world change?" - AP News, Analysis

<https://apnews.com/891557b7dba137c9f8ef5c454cb5515d>

- This article addresses the ways many countries, including the United States, have been drawing inward since the virus has begun to spread.

#### (Article) "What Covid-19 means for international cooperation" - Brookings, Opinion

<https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/what-covid-19-means-for-international-cooperation/>

- This opinion piece from the Brookings Institute argues one of two trends may result due to Covid-19, either the pandemic will reduce global connectedness or we will see an increase in global cooperation.

#### (Video - 5:38) "COVID 2025: Changing the rules of International Organizations" - The University of Chicago <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B9UI-ZBXvtc> -

- Video summarizes how Covid-19 has changed and will continue to change international relations.

**(Video - 12:57) “Covid-19: how it will change the world” - The Economist**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XsArdIXgRTU>

- Video explaining the economic and political effects of the coronavirus

**(Article) “Will Covid-19 Have a Lasting Impact on Globalization?” - Harvard Business Review**

<https://hbr.org/2020/05/will-covid-19-have-a-lasting-impact-on-globalization>

- This article discusses how Covid-19 may affect globalization long term and the arguments for and against it. The source then goes into detail about five key factors that will drive globalization during the pandemic and beyond.

**(Interview/Podcast - 47:04) “International Relations in the Covid-19 Era: Richard Haass on what comes after the pandemic” - WBUR**

<https://www.wbur.org/onpoint/2020/04/22/international-relations-coronavirus-richard-haass>

- This talk discusses an expansion of foreign policy and national security to include possible pandemics as well as the way that the virus could usher in either global cooperation of international distrust.

## **Group 1: Isolationist Group Resources**

*“Based on our studies and research, **YES**, the United States should be taking an isolationist approach when addressing the Covid-19 pandemic”*

Major ideas to focus your debate statements on:

- What are the United States strategic objectives? How does an isolationism policy advance those policy goals?
- The United States isn’t the only country putting itself first. In the past six months, more than 46 nations put export restrictions on medical supplies, including masks, gloves, disinfectants and ventilators.

**(Article) “The Evolution of American Isolationism” - The Thought Company**

<https://www.thoughtco.com/the-evolution-of-american-isolationism-4123832>

- This article gives a brief history/background of American isolationism and the back and forth relationship the United States has had with it. While this source specifically focuses on the U.S., it does a nice job of explaining isolationism and what it looks like in practice.

**(Video - 1:53) “A Brief History of Isolationism in the United States” - The Washington Post**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pMtqj8u64qI>

- The video offers a brief background to isolationism in the US as well as a look into the general opinions by the political parties in recent times.

**(Opinion) “How the global system will be shaped after the Covid-19 pandemic” - TRT World**

<https://www.trtworld.com/opinion/how-the-global-system-will-be-shaped-after-the-covid-19-pandemic-35614>



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- This opinion article argues that the Covid-19 pandemic will cause countries to have more “sovereign policies” and to become more isolationist.

**(Opinion) “Isolationism in the Trump Era of ‘America First’” - New America**

<https://www.newamerica.org/weekly/isolationism-trump-era-america-first/>

- This addresses what isolationism has meant for America and what it means under our current presidency. It addresses different types of ‘isolationism’ and reasoning for these ideas in our current climate.

**Group 2: Internationalist Group Resources -**

*“Based on our studies and research, no, the United States should **NOT** take an isolationist perspective when addressing the Covid-19 pandemic but should coordinate with their allies and international organizations to fight the further spread of the virus.”*

Major ideas to focus your debate statements on:

- What are the United States strategic objectives? How does a policy of internationalism advance those policy goals?
- What are some successful outcomes of an internationalist approach to global issues?

**(Article) “Vaccine nationalism threatens global coronavirus effort” - USA Today**

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/health/2020/07/12/vaccine-nationalism-threatens-global-effort-s-race-stop-coronavirus/5384850002/>

- This article discusses whether countries will take an isolated approach or coordinated approach to making a vaccine, which could in turn determine how fast a vaccine gets created, and who does and does not get access to it when it is created.

**(Opinion) “Isolationism is not the way forward during coronavirus” - Al-Jazeera**

<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/isolationism-coronavirus-200406074443291.html>

- This opinion piece gives examples of ways countries have been helping and supporting each other during the pandemic (such as Germany bringing Italian covid patients to German hospitals) and discusses the benefits and power of internationalism over isolationism.

**(Opinion) “Now’s Not the Time for Isolationism” - Politico**

<https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2020/04/08/coronavirus-time-not-isolationism-173682>

- This opinion piece discusses possible implications of having isolationism in the wake of Covid-19.

**(Opinion) “Toward a new internationalism” - Keough School of Global Affairs**

<https://keough.nd.edu/toward-a-new-internationalism/>

- This opinion argues that the pandemic will lead us to more internationalism as countries realize that the virus “knows no borders” and a virus that affects the globe should be addressed by the globe.