



# When should the U.S. send troops to other countries?

## GETTING ORIENTED

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

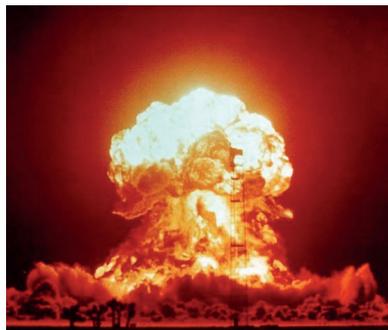
### 9/11

9/11 refers to a series of four attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001. Almost 3,000 people were killed that day. Nineteen terrorists from al-Qaeda, an extreme Islamist group, hijacked four 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 either the Capitol or the White House in Washington D.C., but the passengers disrupted the hijackers, and the plane crashed in a field in Pennsylvania instead. All the terrorists, airline passengers, and airline personnel died in the attacks, as well as many others in the World Trade Center buildings and the Pentagon.



### Weapons of Mass Destruction

A weapon of mass destruction is a weapon that can kill or 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. Saddam Hussein, the leader of Iraq, had used poisonous gas in his attack against Iranian and Kurdish civilians in the 1980s, and 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 in 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 six million people live there. Some of the people are nomads, meaning that they live in no permanent place. The conflict in Darfur began in 2003 when some people there 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. As of 2016, at least 480,000 people had been killed, and over three million people had 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>
<b>General American Public</b>	Some people want the government to send troops to any place that threatens the United States, as well as to countries that have internal conflict (meaning conflict inside that country). They believe that the U.S. is a world leader and should help other countries, as well as protect our own interests. They are willing to pay more tax money to support sending troops overseas.	Some people are against any avoidable military action. They believe the U.S. spends too much taxpayer money trying to help other countries when our own country needs new roads, more teachers, and lower taxes. They feel some kinds of internal conflict in other countries can't be changed and that other countries have to figure out their own conflicts. They don't want American soldiers to risk their lives unless doing so is absolutely necessary.
<b>Oil Investors</b>	Oil investors are more likely to care about U.S. involvement in other countries if oil fields are involved. Oil investors supported American troops going into Iraq because they did not want other countries to have the opportunity to get ownership of the oil fields.	In countries with no oil fields, oil investors may not have a specific opinion about the U.S. sending troops. In these instances, oil investors will probably have similar views as members of the general public.
<b>Military Personnel</b>	Military personnel may believe that a strong military shows our strength as the leader of the Western world. Thus, they may support the U.S. government sending troops to other countries to prevent threats, protect interests, or intervene in other countries. They understand when they join the military that they may be asked to risk their lives, and they train for situations where they could be sent to other countries.	Other military personnel may be opposed to invasions if they don't see a clear reason or a clear possibility of overcoming the enemy. They may not want to see fellow soldiers die or be injured if it can be avoided. They also might be opposed if they feel like the war efforts are not supported by the majority of the American people.

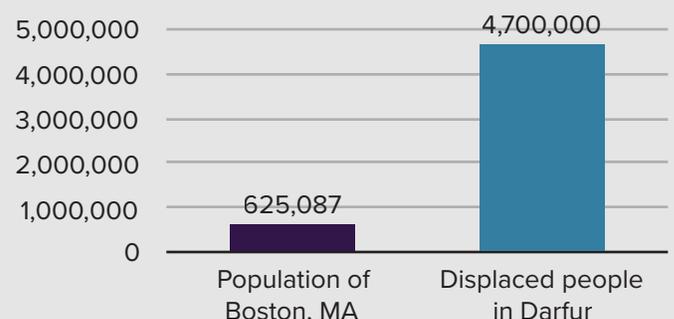
### Additional Information

- 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 September 2016, Iraq was producing more than four million barrels of oil a day.
- As of October 2016, more than 2,300 United States military personnel had 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 depend on humanitarian aid (food and general living products from other countries) for survival.
- Peace talks long failed to stop the attacks of the Sudanese government against the people in Darfur.
- The graph on the right shows that many more people have been displaced in Darfur than live in all of Boston, MA.

Study the Oil Issue in Iraq  
[topics.nytimes.com/topics/news/international/countriesandterritories/iraq/oil/index.html](http://topics.nytimes.com/topics/news/international/countriesandterritories/iraq/oil/index.html)

Genocide in Darfur  
[www.unitedhumanrights.org/genocide/genocide-in-sudan](http://www.unitedhumanrights.org/genocide/genocide-in-sudan)

Iraq and Weapons of Mass Destruction  
[www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB80](http://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 also 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 11th attacks, the U.S. military began a war in Afghanistan. This country had provided a safe place for the terrorists to plan and organize their attack on the United States. Because nearly 3,000 people died as a result of 9/11, most 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. As of June 2015, over 2,300 U.S. troops have died 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 over 4,400 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 in Afghanistan 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. 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 to leave their villages by their government.

Approximately 2.7 million people 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 no U.S. military action because this African country offered little economic benefit to America.

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 3,000 people died as a result of 9/11”?

#### 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.”

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## GENERATING WORDS

### Root Words and Meaning

A root word is the base part of the word that helps you figure out what the whole word means.

For example, the Latin word *minutia* means smallness. Most of us know the expression “mini”: A mini cupcake is a smaller than usual cupcake. The focus word **diminish** comes from the root word “mini,” which is why it means to make or become smaller or to make seem smaller. For example, if people start leaving a bad movie early, the audience has slowly **diminished** or gotten smaller.

**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 a man, they may **diminish** his feelings of self-worth. He may think less of himself.

 The following words also come from the root word “mini.” Use each one in a sentence. If you aren’t sure of their meanings, use a dictionary.

1. miniature \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. minimal \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Pronunciation and Parts of Speech

Another focus word is **estimate**. This word is used both as a noun and a verb.

The noun **estimate** means: 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 too difficult to count that many people.

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, a teacher might ask students to **estimate** the number of jellybeans in a jar. The students are guessing the number of jellybeans because it is impossible to count.

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

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 Syria, there has been a conflict between the country's **regime** and many of its people since March 2011. It is **estimated** that more than 400,000 people have died and that more than 10,000,000 people have been **displaced**, although many agree it is hard to estimate these figures. Countries like Turkey and Lebanon are now temporary homes to many of these people. The chances of Syria creating a stable government are **diminishing**. The U.S. has sent some supplies and troops to help the Syrian Democratic Forces. 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?

#### 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 4,500 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*?

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

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