



African Empires

Historical Issues Today

Does trade strengthen nations?

Is it in a country's best interest to trade freely and openly with other countries? There are many perspectives on this issue. Use the following two perspectives and additional information from pages 72–73 of *The Nystrom Atlas of World History* to complete the task below.

Global trade benefits the people in all nations.

- Trade strengthens nations. In China, liberalized trade policies have contributed to an average annual GDP increase of about 10 percent for nearly four decades.
- International trade stimulates economic growth, creates more and better jobs, and increases productivity. It also drives down poverty. For example, since 1990, trade has helped decrease the number of people living in extreme poverty by over 50 percent.
- Countries that have recently adopted protectionist policies—like taxes on certain imports, quotas restricting exports, or bans on trade with certain nations—have hurt global markets and their own economies. For example, it is estimated that the taxes on imported Chinese goods introduced by the United States in 2018 will cause a loss of \$148 billion and will cost more than 460,000 jobs.

Global trade benefits certain groups living in developed countries at the expense of those living in developing nations.

- Global trade benefits more developed countries at the expense of stripping developing countries of their agricultural and mining products. Whatever growth that is achieved in these developing nations is not sustainable, and they lose whatever ability they might have had to compete in the global marketplace.
- Free trade forces businesses in developing countries to compete with their more efficient and productive counterparts in developed nations.
- Trade has been brisk in the last four decades, but evidence suggests that global trade is slowing. Already some nations, like the United States, are beginning to turn away from free trade in favor of policies that protect their own economies.
- Free trade is only one part of the equation. In poor countries, like those in sub-Saharan Africa, what's needed is a reliable infrastructure to get goods to market.

Working with a small group, create a scripted debate about this issue.

1. In your own words, write down arguments to support each column. You can add your own ideas in addition to the bullet points provided.
2. Write three questions that a moderator would ask both sides in a debate.
3. Write answers to the three debate questions. Each question will have two answers: one answer representing the perspective in the first column; a second answer representing the perspective in the second column.
4. Perform a scripted debate for the class. Members of the group will represent the two perspectives and the moderator role.



Take notes on the presentations of other groups. For each debate, identify one point that stands out as being the most interesting or compelling and explain why.