

American Government & Politics: A Christian Worldview.
Washington & Adams: Stay Out or Step In? (20–25 Minutes)

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

Goal

Applying the foreign-policy principles of George Washington and John Quincy Adams, students determine whether Washington and Adams would support or oppose various foreign-policy proposals.

Instructions

1. Students work in pairs or small groups; allow 10–12 minutes.
2. Discuss as a class.

Suggested Key

1. Washington, Adams: oppose (America should avoid becoming involved in the quarrels and conflicts of other nations.)
2. Washington, Adams: oppose (Washington warned against permanent alliances and “entangling” foreign commitments.)
3. Washington, Adams: approve (Showing friendship and goodwill is different from military intervention or political involvement. **BUT this is not a job for the U.S. government.** It’s one thing for individuals to *voluntarily* give aid to a nation, but it’s another thing to increase taxes to pay for aid; this is legal plunder and unconstitutional.)
4. Washington, Adams: oppose (The United States should remain independent of foreign rivalries and wars whenever possible.)
5. Washington, Adams: oppose (Adams said America “goes not abroad in search of monsters to destroy.”)
6. Washington, Adams: oppose (America should not be drawn into wars that do not involve its own liberty, security, or independence.)
7. Washington, Adams: oppose (Even when Americans sympathize with a cause, military intervention creates foreign entanglements.)

Debrief/Wrap-Up Questions

- What is the difference between humanitarian aid and military involvement?
- Why did Washington (and other Americans) fear permanent alliances?
- What did Adams mean when he said America should not go abroad “in search of monsters to destroy”?
- Which scenario would be most controversial today? Why?
- Do Washington’s and Adams’s principles still make sense in the modern world? Explain.

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Open your book to the section titled “Washington and Adams on Foreign Relations.” For each scenario, decide (using the addresses in that section):

- Would George Washington likely approve or oppose the action?
- Would John Quincy Adams likely approve or oppose the action?
- Which principle from the reading best supports your answer?

A. A civil war breaks out in a distant country. The U.S. Congress proposes sending 30,000 U.S. troops to help one side win.

Washington: Approve or Oppose? Adams: Approve or Oppose?
Supporting Principle:

B. Several nations propose a permanent military alliance. The United States would be obligated to help them whenever they go to war.

Washington: Approve or Oppose? Adams: Approve or Oppose?
Supporting Principle:

C. A foreign country suffers a devastating earthquake. The U.S. government considers sending food, medicine, and emergency supplies.

Washington: Approve or Oppose? Adams: Approve or Oppose? Supporting Principle:

D. Two European nations go to war. Congress wants to provide weapons, money, and military advisers to one side.

Washington: Approve or Oppose? Adams: Approve or Oppose? Supporting Principle:

E. A dictator rules another nation harshly. Congress proposes invading to overthrow him and install a new government.

Washington: Approve or Oppose? Adams: Approve or Oppose? Supporting Principle:

F. A longtime ally asks America to join a war that does not threaten the United States.

Washington: Approve or Oppose? Adams: Approve or Oppose? Supporting Principle:

G. A colony seeks independence from its parent nation and asks the U.S. to send troops to assist its revolution.

Washington: Approve or Oppose? Adams: Approve or Oppose? Supporting Principle:

