

American Government & Politics: A Christian Worldview.
Sam's Neighborhood Disaster, Part II (20–25 Minutes)

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

Goal

Applying the lessons of Washington, Jefferson, and John Quincy Adams to the “Sam’s Neighborhood Disaster” book section, students write a realistic follow-up story that demonstrates understanding of why the Founders warned against foreign entanglements and why refusing to meddle is not the same thing as “isolationism.”

Instructions

1. Students may work alone or with a partner.
2. Read the instructions together.
3. Have students complete the handout (allow 20 minutes or so to complete this part).
4. **Tell students that in your next class they will read their follow-up “Sam’s Neighborhood Disaster, Part II” stories.**
5. If you want, you may have a contest/vote for the best story (and award bonus points?).

Debrief/Wrap-Up Questions (AFTER Students Read Their Stories)

- Which actions in your story reflected Washington’s advice?
- Which actions reflected Jefferson’s phrase “peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations”?
- How did your story show that neutrality is different from isolation?
- Why do some people benefit when Sam gets involved in conflicts?

Strong responses should show that students understand:

- America’s Founders generally favored friendship, trade, diplomacy, and peaceful relations with other nations.
- They opposed permanent entanglements, alliances, and intervention in conflicts that did not directly threaten America.
- Refusing to join a dispute is not the same as isolation.
- Sam can still help others through voluntary aid, trade, friendship, and cooperation without becoming involved in their conflicts.
- Some people who profit from disputes may pressure Sam to become involved again and may falsely label neutrality as “isolationism.”
- Sam’s family, finances, safety, and liberty generally improve when he minds his own affairs and avoids unnecessary entanglements.

American Government & Politics: A Christian Worldview.

Sam's Neighborhood Disaster, Part II

Read the scenario below. Then, working individually or with a partner, write a one-page follow-up story describing what happens next in Sam's neighborhood. Your story must:

- Show that Sam learned lessons from his earlier mistakes.
- Include three actions Sam takes that reflect the principles taught by Washington, Jefferson, and Adams.
- Show the difference between:
 - refusing to join disputes, and
 - completely isolating oneself from everyone else.
- Include at least two people who accuse Sam of being “selfish,” “uncaring,” or “isolated.”
- Show how Sam responds to those accusations.
- End by explaining whether Sam's family is better off or worse off because of his new approach.
- Include some humor!

Follow-up Scenario:

Several months have passed. Sam has stopped taking sides in neighborhood disputes. His family is beginning to recover financially, and his children are happier than they have been in years.

One afternoon, a new conflict erupts. Several neighbors demand that Sam become involved again. They argue that because he is influential and respected, he has a responsibility to help them settle their disputes—and, if necessary, to fight alongside them.

At the same time, other neighbors ask Sam for help rebuilding a playground that was damaged during one of the neighborhood conflicts. A few families also need food after a storm passes through the area.

Some residents insist that helping with the playground or storm relief is impossible unless Sam also agrees to join their side in ongoing neighborhood feuds. Sam must decide what to do.

Requirements Checklist

Your story must include:

- ☐ Sam refuses to take sides in at least one neighborhood dispute.
- ☐ Sam remains friendly with neighbors.
- ☐ Sam participates in peaceful trade, cooperation, friendship, or charitable aid.
- ☐ Someone falsely accuses Sam of the “i” word.
- ☐ Sam explains why neutrality is not the “i” word.
- ☐ The ending clearly reflects one of the principles from the reading.

Use the space below, the back of the page and/or notebook paper to jot down ideas and write your story!