

Research
Based
Curricula



**What is the Biggest
Danger That We Face?
International Relations**

Key Stage 4
Citizenship Studies
Resource 1

2019



Resource One Overview



Topic	What is International Relations?
GCSE Modules	Rights and responsibilities.
Objectives	<p>After completing this resource you should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Be able to define 'international relations'✓ Be able to discuss key questions or issues that international relations is concerned with✓ Start thinking about the diversity within international relations✓ Be able to explain why international relations is important
Instructions	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Read the data source2. Complete the activities3. Explore the further reading
Context	<p>This Resource provides an introduction to the subject and practice of international relations where it asks 'what is international relations?'</p> <p>The Resource will explore different areas which international relations covers and key issues and activities in international relations.</p> <p>The Resource will also provide an introduction to what the United Nations (an important organisation in international relations) is and focus on one area in international relations: climate change.</p>

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Section A The importance of international relations

Shahibul Islam, 'The Importance of International Relations',
http://www.academia.edu/30648166/The_Importance_of_International_Relations.pdf



International Relations, also known as IR, is the study of conflict and cooperation by international actors, as furthered by the development and testing of **hypotheses** about international outcomes. The field of international relations concerns the relationships among the various governments of the world. These relationships linked with other actors such as international organisations (IOs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), transnational corporations (companies) (TNCs) – companies which work in more than one company- and powerful individuals make them **interdependent**. It has become difficult arriving at a **universally acceptable** definition of the subject. However, scholars have persisted in their attempt to define international relations.

Trevor Taylor defines IR "as a discipline that tries to explain political activities across states boundaries." Another scholar, Seymon Brown, describes that international relations is "the investigating and study of patterns of actions and reactions among **sovereign** states as represented by their governing elites (state rulers, such as prime ministers)."

Quite often, IR **scholars** view international relations as a mix of conflict and cooperation in relationships among states/nations. There is no escaping from world affairs, yet we cannot shape them totally to our will. The discipline of international relations is concerned with the factors and the activities which affect the external policies and power of the basic units into which the world is divided.

International relations are an **exceptionally** important aspect of citizenship in a global society. As our world becomes smaller and smaller through communication technology, rapid air transportation, international economy, and trade, the value of peaceful and cooperative relationships between nations is increasingly important. There are key areas in international relations. These include:

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Peace: Historically, one of the oldest expressions of international relations was the establishment of treaties and agreements between states/nations. Maintenance of these treaties (keeping these treaties) ensured that ordinary people could go about their everyday tasks of earning a living and raising their families rather than dedicating themselves to armed conflict with neighbours. This function of international relations remains just as relevant today.

Economy: Positive international relations also promotes effective trade policies between states, such as importing natural resources and finished products not available in one country and gaining access to the larger market afforded by exports to foreign countries. International relations define the requirements and limitations of cross-border trade (trade across the borders of different countries/ states).

Immigration: Besides the transport of goods over international borders, people also migrate between countries, looking for opportunities to improve their lives. This travel may be temporary or permanent, but in either case it must be regulated (have rules) to ensure the rule of law.

Criminals must be kept out of the country while legitimate business, tourist and immigrant travel is allowed. International relations plays a key role in determining border control policies.

Global Concerns: States often face global issues that are larger than any specific country or even continent, such as concerns over the environment, the spread of diseases and terrorism. Effective international relations are required for states to cooperate effectively to meet these challenges, allowing states to share relevant information quickly and contribute resources needed to benefit all.

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Culture: International relations are not only about regulating and controlling the flow of goods and information, they are also advantageous for promoting the advancement of human culture in a general way. The diversity of world cultures can be promoted and shared through international relations policies, allowing programs such as student exchanges and cultural exhibitions to enhance our understanding of the variety of human culture worldwide.

The scope of international relations

The study of IR is very diverse. The study of IR also involves the mastery of some basic concepts. Some of these concepts are: international politics, international system, foreign policy, domestic politics, defence policy, national interest, sovereignty, diplomacy, international law, international order, security, conflict and conflict resolution.

As a field of study, IR cuts across different boundaries and areas. International Relations has connections with other subject areas, such as international politics, economics, sociology, history, geography, and other subjects.

The core concepts of international relations are foreign policy, International Law, international organisation, international conflicts, international economic relations, military thought and strategy. IR also covers such areas as state sovereignty, ecological sustainability, nuclear proliferation, nationalism, terrorism, economic development, organised crime, foreign intervention, human security and human rights.

Similarly, IR covers other areas like gender studies, peace studies, globalisation, feminism, collective security, diplomacy, crisis management, democracy, integration, and international development.

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Concepts in international relations

Sovereignty: Before the concepts of [interdependence](#) and dependence, International Relations relies on the idea of sovereignty. Sovereignty as being a state, that the sovereign power(s) have absolute power over their territories.

Power: The concept of power in international relations can be described as the degree (amount) of resources, capabilities, and influence in international relations or international affairs. It is often divided up into the concepts of hard power and soft power, hard power relating primarily to coercive power, such as the use of force, and soft power commonly covering economics, diplomacy and cultural influence.

Conclusion: Our world is large and complex. International relations is an interesting topic because it concerns peoples and cultures all over the world. The scope (lor level) and complexity of the interactions among these groups make international relations a challenging subject to master. Indeed, there is always more to learn.

Section B

Mike Sheehan and Helen Brocklehurst, 'Why international relations is the key to all our futures', *The Independent*, 29 July 2006.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/student/magazines/why-international-relations-is-the-key-to-all-our-futures-409792.html>

It was said a few years ago that if the human race is wiped out in the next 50 years it will not be because of disease or an asteroid hitting the earth, but because of foreign policy and international relations. In a world where thousands of nuclear weapons exist and more countries are trying to acquire (get) them, where suicide terrorist strikes come without warning, and thousands die each day from poverty caused by the way the international system operates, we need to know about and understand international relations.

This is what makes international relations such an exciting and interesting - not to mention important - subject to study. It is not usually taught at school, but is a subject that you

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already know something about. Do you remember where you were on 9/11? How you felt? You are already part of international relations because of the choices you make, such as whether you buy Fairtrade, or fast food; because of your identity, religion and cultural background; because of the news you watch (whether that's Sky News, News at Ten or Big Brother's Little Brother); because of the resources you possess, the place you live and so on. Put simply, international relations is about war and peace, conflict and cooperation, wealth and poverty, power and change, and understanding patterns of behaviour between the actors in the world – from states, to presidents, to corporations (companies).

There is no "ideal" type of international relations student. Many issues may inspire your interest in international relations. You may have studied politics or citizenship, history, geography, or sociology for example. You might even be studying science and have now changed direction. You do not need to have the answers to the world's problems, such as terrorism, nuclear proliferation, debt, climate change, the spread of global diseases, and poverty. But you may have lots of questions. Why is international relations important? Is it all about war? Is it really about poverty and big business? Is the United States all powerful or are other states, institutions (like the World Bank and the European Union (EU)), or even ideas (religious ideas or political ideas) crucial in deciding what happens in the world? How should we cope with global issues? Does it really make a difference to have Angelina Jolie as a United Nations goodwill ambassador? Courses in international relations look behind the headlines to the key players in world politics, asking what are the important ideas and how can we solve conflict or achieve cooperation.

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Section C

The United Nations (UN)
General Assembly

Photo accessed
<https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/04/1007852>



Section D

The United Nations (UN)
and international
relations

<http://www.un.org/en/sections/about-un/overview/index.html>

Overview: The United Nations is an international organization which was founded in 1945. It is currently made up of 193 member states from around the world. With its unique international character, the United Nations can take action on the issues confronting humanity in the 21st century, such as peace and security, climate change, [sustainable development](#), human rights, disarmament (removing weapons/ arms), terrorism, humanitarian and health emergencies, gender equality, governance, food production, and more.

The UN also provides a forum for its members to express their views in the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, and other bodies and committees. By enabling discussion between its members, and by hosting [negotiations](#), the Organization has become a mechanism for governments to find areas of agreement and solve problems together.

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Main Activities: The main activities of the United Nations include: maintaining international peace and security; protecting human rights; delivering humanitarian aid (such as food supplies); promoting [sustainable development](#); and upholding International Law.

The United Nations came into existence in 1945, following the devastation of the Second World War, with one central mission: the maintenance of international peace and security. The UN does this by working to prevent conflict; helping parties in conflict make peace; peacekeeping; and creating the conditions to allow peace to hold and flourish. These activities often overlap and should reinforce one another, to be effective. The UN Security Council has the primary responsibility for international peace and security.

The promotion and protection of human rights is a key purpose and guiding principle of the Organization. The Organization has protected human rights through legal instruments and on-the-ground activities.

One of the purposes of the United Nations is "to achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character." The UN first did this in the aftermath of the Second World War on the devastated continent of Europe, which it helped to rebuild. The Organization is now relied upon by the international community to coordinate humanitarian relief operations due to natural and man-made disasters in areas beyond the relief capacity of national authorities alone (national authorities are unable to provide the level or amount of aid or assistance or help needed).

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Improving people's well-being continues to be one of the main focuses of the UN. The global understanding of development has changed over the years, and countries now have agreed that sustainable development – development that promotes prosperity and economic opportunity, greater social well-being, and protection of the environment – offers the best path forward for improving the lives of people everywhere.

The development of, and respect for International Law has been a key part of the work of the Organization. This work is carried out in many ways – by courts, tribunals, treaties – and by the Security Council, which can approve peacekeeping missions, impose sanctions, or authorize the use of force when there is a threat to international peace and security, if it deems this necessary.

The United Nations has different parts to it, for example the General Assembly (GA) and the Security Council (SC). The General Assembly is the main discussion, policymaking and representative part of the UN. All 193 Member States of the UN are represented in the General Assembly, making it the only UN body with universal representation. Each year, in September, the full UN members meet in the General Assembly Hall in New York for the annual General Assembly session, and general debate, which many heads of state (presidents, prime ministers, or monarchs) attend and address. Decisions on important questions, such as those on peace and security, the inclusion of new members, and the UN's economic budget, require a two-thirds majority of the General Assembly. Decisions on other questions are by simple majority. The General Assembly, each year, elects a GA President to serve a one-year term of office.

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The Security Council has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It has 15 Members (5 permanent and 10 non-permanent members). The 5 permanent members of the Security Council are: The United States, China, Russia, the United Kingdom, and France. Each Member has one vote. All Member States are obligated to follow the decisions which are made in the Security Council. The Security Council takes the lead in determining the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression. It calls upon the sides to a dispute to settle it by peaceful means and recommends methods solving the dispute. In some cases, the Security Council can resort to imposing sanctions or even authorize the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security. The Security Council has a Presidency, which rotates, and changes, every month.

Section E

The United Nations and Climate Change

United Nations, 'Global Issues: Climate Change', <http://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/climate-change/index.html>



Climate change is a key area and challenge which the United Nations focuses on. The United Nations urges all states to take actions to protect the environment and reduce harmful actions which contribute to climate change. The UN website discusses climate change:

"Climate Change is the defining issue of our time and we are at a defining moment. From shifting weather patterns that threaten food production, to rising sea levels that increase the risk of catastrophic flooding, the impacts of climate change are global in scope and unprecedented (historic) in scale. Without drastic action today, adapting to these impacts in the future will be more difficult and costly."

At a conference in Paris (France) in 2015, most states around the world agreed to **combat** climate change and to speed up and intensify the actions and investments needed for a

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sustainable future. This is known as 'The Paris Agreement.' The Agreement was historic. For the first time, the Paris Agreement "brought all nations into a common cause to undertake take ambitious efforts to combat climate change and adapt to its effects, with enhanced support to assist developing countries to do so." As such, it charts a new course in the global climate effort. They do not have any responsibilities historically speaking.

The Paris Agreement's central aim is to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by keeping the global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

On Earth Day in 2016, 175 world leaders signed the Paris Agreement at the United Nations. This was by far the largest number of countries ever to sign an international agreement on a single day. There are now 184 countries that have joined the Paris Agreement.

Section F

United States withdraws from Climate Change Agreement, 2017

CNBC News, 'US withdrawal from Paris agreement many affect climate change: former UN chief Ban Ki-Moon,' 11 July 2018, <https://www.cnn.com/2018/07/10/i-sincerely-hope-that-the-us-will-come-back-says-ban-ki-moon.html>

The withdrawal of the United States from the Paris Agreement in 2017 may make it hard to raise the money to fight climate change, former United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon warned on Tuesday.

Speaking to CNBC at the Singapore International Water Week, he said: "Now with the United States pulling from this Paris agreement, I'm concerned now how to mobilize the necessary financial support for many developing countries who do not have the capacity to address this climate change issues.

Therefore it is absolute necessary that the international community uses its political will to work on this matter." He

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added, "I sincerely hope that the U.S. will come back as it realizes it has a global moral political responsibility ...the U.S. is the only country now who is stepping back from this global agreement."

In 2016, the United States and China issued a joint statement confirming that both countries would sign the Paris Climate Agreement, which aims to tackle global warming, among other targets. But U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew from the agreement in 2017, saying the Agreement would have cost America trillions of dollars, killed jobs, and hindered the oil, gas, coal and manufacturing industries.

Ban told CNBC's Oriel Morrison that there may be a need for \$4 trillion annually to cover all 17 sustainable development goals to be reached by 2030. "It is not the amount of money that is at stake," he said. "If there is a political commitment by the important industrialized countries including European Union and also of course United States, then we can mobilize this money."

President Trump received strong criticism from other states, state leaders, and environmental groups for going back on the commitment made by the United States in the Paris Agreement, for not fulfilling a responsibility of global leadership, and for putting the future of the climate and the world at risk.

Section G

Flooding in India

Photo accessed

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-45205516>



Resource One Activities



- Activities**
1. Read Section A. Provide an example of how our world has become smaller (aim to write 2-3 sentences here).
 2. In Section A, list another actor within international relations other than states.
 3. Fill in the blanks to complete definitions of International Relations:

International Relations is the study of C_____ and C _____ by I _____. A _____. It also involves the development and testing of H _____ about I _____ O _____. The field of international relations concerns the R _____ among the V _____ G _____ of the W _____.

4. Match each term to the correct definition below. One of these terms is missing a definition. Read Section A to find the missing definition for the term without a definition:

- Terms:

- Immigration; Power; Economy; Global Concerns; Sovereignty; Culture

- Definitions:

- states face global issues that are larger than a specific country or continent, requiring cooperation to meet these challenges
- people frequently migrate between countries, looking for opportunities to improve their lives. International relations plays a key role in determining border control policies
- states have absolute power over their territories
- trade policies between states, such as cross-border trade

Resource One Activities



Activities

- the degree of resources, capabilities and influence in international relations
 - diversity in the world can be promoted and shared through international relations policies, such as student exchanges
 - an expression of international relations has been the creation of treaties and agreements between states or nations, allowing people to go about their everyday tasks
5. Section A discusses that international relations involves lots of different areas or concepts. Which of these areas do you think is the most important for studying International Relations? Explain your answer. Try to write 2 paragraphs or more. If you want to challenge yourself, do some independent research and extend your answer to a short essay of 5–6 paragraphs.
 6. Section B asks a number of important questions. Choose one of these questions and write your thoughts on it. Try to write 2 paragraphs or more. If you want to challenge yourself, do some independent research and extend your answer to a short essay of 5–6 paragraphs.
 7. Read Section D. How many member states does the United Nations have?
 8. Read Source D. How many permanent members does the Security Council have? List these members (states).
 9. Read Source D. Identify what is the main mission of the United Nations is (write 1–2 sentences).

Resource One

Activities



- Activities**
10. After reading sections A-D, identify in what ways the United Nations is important in international relations. Try to write 2 paragraphs or more. If you want to challenge yourself, do some independent research and extend your answer to a short essay of 5-6 paragraphs.
 11. What do you think is the most important issue, area or activity for the United Nations to focus on in international relations? Compile a letter to the United Nations to convince them why this issue, area or activity is important. Try to write 2 paragraphs or more. If you want to challenge yourself, do some independent research and extend your answer to a short essay of 5-6 paragraphs.
 12. Assess Sections E and F. Do all states have a responsibility to act together to address climate change? Or, should state leaders act for their state's own interests first? Provide reasons to support your viewpoint. Try to write 2 paragraphs or more. If you want to challenge yourself, do some independent research and extend your answer to a short essay of 5-6 paragraphs.
 13. Return back to question 1). After reading all of these sources and completing the questions, have your views changed on what 'International Relations' is or what the term 'International Relations' means? If so, in what ways have your views changed? For your answer, try to write 2 paragraphs or more.

Resource One Further Reading



Explore



1. John Baylis and Steve Smith, Patricia Owens (ed.), *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, 2016.
2. United Nations website-
<http://www.un.org/en/index.html>
3. <http://www.un.org/en/climatechange/#>



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