



**MONTANA WORLD
AFFAIRS COUNCIL**

2025 Academic WorldQuest Study Guide

Sunday, March 2nd - Tuesday, March 4th

University of Montana, Missoula



The Montana World Affairs Council is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to fostering global understanding and awareness in Montana's communities and classrooms.

The Montana Academic WorldQuest program is widely recognized as one of the nation's best: being the largest in the country, the only multi-day conference, and completely free to all schools- offering scholarships to schools to help cover the cost of transportation, lodging, and substitute teachers.

The winning team in the competition will travel to Washington D.C. to represent Montana at the National AWQ Competition. While in Washington, teams are exposed to a variety of unique global experiences, such as being hosted at an embassy or receiving a tour of the State Department. This exciting program is generously sponsored and supported by The Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation.

All questions for the 2025 Academic WorldQuest Montana Competition will be drawn from the sources found in this document. The Academic WorldQuest Conference schedule will be posted on our website by February 1st. **For questions, contact Nikki Geiszler at ngeiszler@montanaworldaffairs.org.**

2025 Academic WorldQuest Categories

- 1.The United States & Foreign Languages
- 2.Space & National Security
- 3.Nontraditional Approaches to Foreign Policy
- 4.Music and Globalization
- 5.Indigenous Peacebuilding
- 6.Critical Minerals in Africa
- 7.Borders and Boundaries
- 8.Mexico: 2025 Focus Country
- 9.India: 2025 Focus Country
- 10.Current Events



Category One:

The United States and Foreign Languages

U.S. language education policy is focused on helping students improve their communication skills, understand different cultures, and be better prepared for a globalized world. In the past, schools mainly taught major languages like Spanish, German, and French. Now, there's more encouragement for learning a wider variety of languages to meet global needs. Recent policies highlight the importance of learning languages at a young age, using technology in language learning, and supporting bilingual education to help students succeed in a multilingual, connected world.

Sources:

- "How English's Global Dominance Fails Us" Time
- "Most European students are learning a foreign language in school while Americans lag" Pew Research Center
- "The Economic Benefits of Multilingualism" ELA
- "The Surprising Truth About American Bilingualism: What the Data Tells Us" America the Bilingual
- "The State of Languages in the U.S.: A Statistical Portrait" American Academy of Arts and Sciences
- "The United States is Rich in Languages" Share America



Category Two: Space and National Security

Space is now an important part of U.S. national security. As technology improves, there is more focus on protecting space-related assets from threats like cyber attacks, space debris, and hostile actions from other countries. The creation of the U.S. Space Force in 2019 showed America's commitment to keeping space safe as a key part of its national security. The goal is not only to protect space infrastructure but also to develop the ability to maintain the U.S.'s advantages in this growing area.

Sources:

- "The International Space Station retires soon. NASA won't run its future replacement." NPR
- "NASA Selects International Space Station US Deorbit Vehicle" NASA
- "Politicians must not ignore security threats in space" Politico
- "Happy 4th Birthday to the U.S. Space Force!" Council on Foreign Affairs
- "NATO's overarching Space Policy" NATO
- "National Security Space Strategy" Department of Defense & The Office of the Director of National Intelligence



Category Three:

Nontraditional Approaches to Foreign Policy

More and more political thinkers are studying ways to create policies that promote fairness by focusing on the needs and voices of marginalized groups. This includes making sure diverse perspectives are part of foreign policy decisions, understanding how different forms of discrimination and inequality are connected, and focusing on human well-being instead of just national security. These ideas have led to new approaches in diplomacy, development, and conflict resolution. However, there has also been criticism about how hard it is to turn these big ideas into real, effective policies.

Sources:

- ["Women's Power Index"](#) Council on Foreign Relations
- ["What is UNSCR 1325?"](#) United States Institute of Peace
- ["India's New Gender Quota Law Is a Win for Women—Mostly"](#) Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
- ["Why a Feminist Foreign Policy"](#) Council on Foreign Relations
- ["Sweden ditches 'feminist foreign policy'"](#) BBC



Category Four: Music and Globalization

Music has been a big part of globalization by going beyond cultural and national borders, allowing people from different backgrounds to connect and share ideas. Streaming platforms, social media, and digital downloads make it easier than ever for music to reach listeners all over the world. Music can also be a strong way to inspire social change and political expression, bringing up global issues, challenging cultural expectations, and starting important conversations. Globalization through music not only celebrates cultural diversity but also helps bring different cultures together, creating a more connected world.

Sources:

- "How much is a Taylor Swift live show worth to a country?" RTE
- "How K-Pop Conquered the West" Rolling Stone
- "5 Ways 'Despacito' Changed Latin Music Forever" Billboard
- Globalisation of Music: The Road to Cultural Diversity and Understanding? The ASEAN
- "More breakthroughs, less crossover: Afrobeats is here to stay, on its own terms" NPR
- "Pump up the Volume: Music Diplomacy as Soft Power" Lowy Institute
- "Regional Mexican music is having a moment on the world stage" NPR



Category Five:

Indigenous Peacebuilding

Around the world, Indigenous peoples often live in contested border areas on the front lines of violent conflict, insurgency and organized crime. And with limited employment opportunities, Indigenous peoples are disproportionately recruited into armed groups. Meanwhile, traffickers and criminals target their lands for natural resources, ranging from violence from extractive industries operating illegally to the poaching of protected species and land theft. Yet despite these many risks and obstacles, Indigenous communities have consistently drawn on their traditions, culture and religious practices to resolve violence and build local peace. While often highly successful, these efforts are underappreciated by the peacebuilding community or ignored entirely in formal peace processes.

Sources:

- "Indigenous Pathways to Peace" United States Institute of Peace
- "Peaceful societies are not utopian fantasy. They exist." Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists
- "Guatemala: Indigenous Leaders Take Democracy Campaign Nationwide" United States Institute of Peace
- "Indigenous Peoples Must Be Equal Participants in Peace Plans, Conflict Resolution, Chairs Says as Permanent Forum Opens" United Nations
- "Conversations on Indigenous and Decolonial Approaches to Environmental Peacebuilding: Interview with Dr. Elaine (Lan Yin) Hsiao" War Prevention Initiative



Category Six: Critical Minerals in Africa

The United States is seeking to diversify its critical minerals supply chains to strengthen its economic and national security. Meanwhile, many African countries are aiming to develop critical mineral industries, taking economic advantage of the growing demand for their natural resources. The mining sector in Africa presents many challenges, however, including the potential for environmental destruction, labor abuses and even violent conflict due to weak governance. USIP experts are focusing on how the U.S. and its allies can better forge mutually beneficial critical mineral partnerships with African governments in the face of competition with China, which has been growing its presence on the African continent for decades.

Sources:

- "Statelessness Around the World" Council for Foreign Relations
- "Internally Displaced Persons: Migrants Who Do Not Cross a National Border" Council for Foreign Relations
- "In Congo, Peace Means a Halt to 'Brutal, Illegal Mining'" United States Institute of Peace
- "Rare Earths Supply Chains and Confrontation with China" The Heritage Foundation
- "Illicit Chrome Mining Economy Thriving in South Africa" Organized Crime and Corruption
- "Executive Summary" IEA



Category Seven: Borders and Boundaries

When international borders don't line up with cultural boundaries, it can cause problems with identity, government, economics, social unity, and human rights. Some of the effects include people feeling out of place, political and administrative difficulties, economic inequality, and social tensions or conflicts. Solving these problems requires careful approaches that take both the political and cultural sides of the affected areas into account.

Sources:

- ["Statelessness Around the World"](#) Council for Foreign Relations
- ["Who are the Kurds?"](#) BBC
- ["The Kurds' Long Struggle with Statelessness"](#) Council for Foreign Relations
- ["Partition: Why was British India divided 75 years ago?"](#) BBC
- ["North Korea Has Lost the 'Unification Competition'"](#) United States Institute of Peace
- ["Ukraine: Conflict at the Crossroads of Europe and Russia"](#) Council for Foreign Relations
- ["Defending Ukraine"](#) Council for Foreign Relations



Category Eight:

Mexico: 2025 Focus Country

The relationship between the U.S. and Mexico is influenced by both political and cultural factors. Important political issues include trade, immigration, and security, while cultural aspects like shared history, cross-border communities, and cultural exchange also play a big role. As both countries held Presidential elections in 2024, their foreign and domestic policies continue to be closely connected, affecting not only regional stability but also global interests.

Sources:

- "NAFTA and the USMCA: Weighing the Impact of North American Trade" Council for Foreign Relations
- "Why U.S. Imports From Mexico Surpassed Those From China" Council for Foreign Relations
- "The Man Who Made Mexican Water a Hit" Queen's University
- "Mexico's Trade Outlook" Economic Bilateral Affairs
- "The Power of Youth Cultural Exchange" National Endowment for the Arts
- "Mexico" Britannica



Category Nine:

India: 2025 Focus Country

India is a vast and diverse country located in South Asia, known for its rich history, cultural heritage, and significant global influence. In 2023, India surpassed China to become the world's most populous country with nearly 1.45 billion people, becoming the world's most populous democracy and the seventh-largest country by land area. India is a significant player in global trade, exporting goods and services to markets in Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and the Americas. While India has strong trade ties with China, it also seeks to reduce trade imbalances and strengthen economic cooperation with other countries.

Sources:

- ["India"](#) Britannica
- ["India Between Superpowers: Strategic Autonomy in the Shadow of a Pacific Conflict"](#) Council for Foreign Relations
- ["Why a nation of 1.45 billion wants more children"](#) BBC
- ["The Future of Democracy in India"](#) Council for Foreign Relations
- ["What Is the BRICS Group and Why Is It Expanding?"](#) Council for Foreign Relations
- ["Youngest world chess champion Gukesh returns to hero's welcome in India"](#) The Guardian

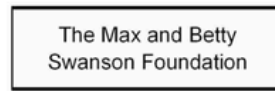


Category Ten: Current Events

This round will consist of questions on world news and events. The emphasis will be from October 2024- February 2025. In general, we recommend reading a variety of reputable national and international news sources. Most news sources (Wall Street Journal, BBC, CNN, PBS, NPR, FOX, Al Jazeera, Washington Post, United Nations, New York Times, etc.) can be obtained free online.

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The Council offers high school and college students internship opportunities. Please consider joining our team!

Questions?

Please contact Nikki Geiszler at
ngeiszler@montanaworldaffairs.org