

# U.S. Humanitarian Interventions

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<b>Created:</b>	07/12/2016	<b>Type of Contribution:</b>	Lesson/Project
<b>Last Modified:</b>	02/10/2018	<b>Technology Needed:</b>	Other
<b>Class Time:</b>	30 minutes-full class period		

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## Summary:

Students consider humanitarian interventions on the part of the U.S. government. Why, for example, did the U.S. do nothing in some cases while it intervened in others? A discussion centers on the question of moral imperative vs. interests.

## Teacher Instructions:



1. This lesson is ideal for a U.S. History class, or can be adapted to make it more from a global perspective. A good time to use this lesson might be during an imperialism unit or when teaching more current periods like the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan.

2. If the instructor finds it to be meaningful and relevant, have students read Chapter 20 "You Choose, You Lose" from **The 60 Second Philosopher** by Andrew Pessin. It is very brief and will stir debate and curiosity among the students later on. The chapter centers around the question weighing the interests of the many vs the few, and the tough decisions that are often required.

After reading the passage, solicit feedback from the class and spend about 5-10 minutes debriefing and discussing the chapter. Explain that in a world of limited resources, a government might only be able to do so much to aid others, but how and why does a government determine who is helped/saved.

**TIP: It is possible that this discussion might last longer (or even span the period!) In that case the instructor might just want to continue and, if possible, extend the activity to the following day.**

3. Students will explore American decisions to launch humanitarian interventions through two historical examples, the Rwandan Genocide and the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999. In the former, the U.S. chose not to intervene while in the latter it did (along with its NATO allies).

4. In groups of three, students are assigned one of the two articles below. (Note: the articles have been provided for your convenience and can be replaced with others, they were chosen for their length and readability).

#### US Chose to Ignore Rwandan Genocide

#### NATO's Role In Relation To the Conflict In Kosovo

They should read it and summarize it (using the handout provided) then prepare to discuss the question: Is the United States, as the world's super power, morally obligated to intervene in global humanitarian crises?

Go around the room asking groups to summarize their reading aloud, writing the information down on the board so they can copy it into their handout.

5. The discussion should begin with reminding students of The 60 Second Philosopher passage read at the beginning of class. As students explore the question, the teacher should encourage participation and play devil's advocate as necessary.

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#### Teacher Resources:

None

#### Student Handouts:

Humanitarian Intervention and Moral Obligations.docx

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#### Credits