



United States
Diplomacy Center



Discover Diplomacy:

Diplomatic Simulations in the Classroom



Teaching Guide



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Introduction to Diplomacy

Teaching Diplomacy in the Classroom

The U.S. Diplomacy Center's Diplomatic Simulation Program exposes students to diplomacy as both a concept and a practical set of 21st-century skills that can be applied to global issues. Working in teams, students build rapport with others, present clear arguments, negotiate, find common ground, and compromise to find solutions to a shared problem such as international migration, energy security, arms control or counter-terrorism. These 21st-century skills include:

- **Critical thinking:** Researching and defining a position on a foreign policy issue and adjusting this position as the negotiation evolves
- **Collaborating:** Prioritizing goals and objectives, defining responsibilities within the group
- **Problem-solving:** Creatively negotiating, compromising, and resolving conflict
- **Communicating:** Active listening, team and alliance building, weighing different perspectives and points-of-view, articulating a position, and persuading others
- **Global Competence:** Investigating worldwide issues, appreciating different perspectives on those issues, finding opportunities to improve situations, and taking practical action

What is Diplomacy?

Diplomacy is the art or practice of conducting international relations, such as negotiating alliances, treaties and agreements, and exercising tact and skill in dealing with people of varied backgrounds to advance a country's national interests and security. Diplomatic skills can be used in a variety of individual or organizational situations, from negotiating the hourly rate you will be paid at your job to deciding what movie to see with your friends.

How does a Diplomatic Simulation work?

A diplomatic simulation is a collaborative learning experience during which students step into the role of a real-life diplomat. The U.S. Diplomacy Center's Diplomatic Simulations are designed for 15-30 participants. Students receive a scenario related to a global issue, which could be real world or hypothetical, current or historic. Within each simulation, there are five to six stakeholder groups (e.g., foreign ministries, NGOs, and international organizations), each with different perspectives and priorities. Students role-play these stakeholders in small teams of three to five. Under set time constraints, the groups are challenged to negotiate a peaceful solution to a crisis in the scenario. Students use the information provided in the simulation packet to develop their group's

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policy positions and defend or modify their choices in real time.

The simulations have no right or wrong actions or end point because it is the process (rather than the result) that holds the most value for the students. The learning experience develops organically as students engage in the simulation. Once the simulation has been completed, students are encouraged to express how their views on diplomacy have evolved as a result of the experience and to contemplate how they can apply diplomatic skills to their everyday lives.

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Simulation Strategies

Introductory Videos: These videos complement the written directions and demonstrate techniques or approaches for teachers who are new to diplomatic simulations or are interested in expanding their use in the classroom.

In these videos, teachers and students share their experiences with diplomatic simulations. Teachers discuss what worked in their classrooms, what they learned, and how they adapted materials to fit their students' needs and interests. Students discuss what they learned and how they engaged as participants. Additionally, there are video clips of simulations in action that provide a visual guide on how to run a diplomatic simulation.



Video 1:

Introduction to the Diplomatic Simulation Program



Video 4:

Informal Negotiations



Video 2:

Facilitating a Simulation



Video 5:

Instructor Tips



Video 3:

Formal Negotiations

All videos include captioning and transcription for accessibility.

Warm-up activities: The following optional activities will reinforce the negotiation skills needed in diplomacy and will introduce students to the skills required for role-playing diplomatic simulations.

1. a) Turn to your partner in class and ask your classmate to tell you the most significant experience they have had today. **Listen** to their story and ask them if you have understood it correctly by summarizing the main parts of their experience. Now switch roles between the person who first asked the question and the person who explained their significant experience first.

b) To practice communicating, thinking critically, and discussion, now ask your classmate a question that gives you further insight about their story. For example, if they told you about dropping their book bag in the rain water on the way to the bus stop this morning, you might ask, "Did the water damage any of your papers"

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inside?" or "Is your bag now dry?" or "Is there anything else in the bag?" Ask more questions with the goal of trying to understand greater details of the story or potentially offer solutions. Switch roles.

c) Lastly, to analyze your negotiation, decide which of you will be the one person to explain to the rest of the group the nature of your communication during your conversation. Was it successful? Why? If not, why wasn't it?

NOTE: The teacher will only call on a few students to share with the class in order to conserve time.

2. In addition to listening effectively, students must also learn to **communicate**, **think critically**, and **discuss** an issue without special preparation. In this exercise, students will receive (or find on their own) an article about a current event that involves an international dispute. Each student will present their article to the group. Other students will then ask analytical questions about the article (for example: What interests are involved in this dispute? What does each side want? What is at stake? What are some possible solutions?). This activity reinforces the importance of clearly articulating a problem to others, analyzing the problem critically, and responding to the concerns of others with little or no preparation.
3. One way to teach students **negotiation** skills is to work together to negotiate a class rule. If you choose this activity, be sure to choose a rule that you, as a teacher, see as negotiable. An important negotiation skill is to focus on interests rather than positions. For example, your position on late homework might be a reduced letter grade, but your interest is to get students to turn their work in on time.

Negotiation activity: What should be the policy on late work? You may want to start with an extreme position such as no work will be accepted late. This is an opportunity to have students think critically about the difference between a position and an interest. State your position first. Then explain your reasons (your interest) for getting students to hand in their work on time. Have students state their interests as well and write them on the board. Gather from the students 5 possible solutions or compromises that address both teacher and student interests. Write them on the board. Add one or two of your own. Decide as a class which possible solution would satisfy everyone's interests.

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Mini Simulation: “School Budget Crisis: Which Extra-Curricular Activities Will Be Affected?”

Tell students that before they begin a diplomatic simulation they will practice their negotiation skills with a mini-simulation. The purpose of the activity is to practice generating solutions and coming to consensus in a productive manner.

1. Divide the students into groups of four or five. Present the topic: “School Budget Crisis: Which Extra-Curricular Activities Will Be Affected?”
2. Tell students that in this mini simulation, the school board has decided that the budget for extra-curricular activities must be reduced by 35 percent. Give the students a few minutes to write down what they see as the key points.
3. Students will then share these ideas in their small groups, come to consensus as a group, and select a student to speak. As they discuss their views, remind them of good negotiation techniques like focusing on the problem rather than the people, and interests rather than positions. Encourage them to come up with a variety of possibilities: should some activities be cut entirely or should each activity share in the budget cuts? Are there possibilities to make up the budget cuts with fundraising or a bond issue? Can some activities share resources to reduce costs? Creative brainstorming of possibilities is a valuable negotiation skill.
4. After each group presents its views, the floor opens and discussion continues with the goal of reaching large group consensus. Remind students that the goal of the simulation is not to “win” but to come to a decision together.

Alternatively, the teacher could assign roles to specific groups. One group, for example, would advocate cutting funding for the music program while maintaining the athletic budget or vice versa. Another group might advocate additional resources for technology programs or new activities such as lunchtime yoga.

Through this process, students begin to master the skills required to complete a full simulation, including research, assessing the situation, listening, persuasion, negotiation, and compromise.

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Diplomatic Simulation Preparation and Materials

Group size: The simulation activity works best with a group size of 15-30 participants (i.e., stakeholder group size of four to six). However, you can run the simulation with as few as 12 students.

Space: The simulation will flow between formal negotiations (which take place at the main table) and informal negotiations (which take place away from the table), so it is helpful to have a space where students can move around easily. For the formal sessions, seat students around a circular or oval table, or arrange the desks in this fashion.

Display: “Tools for Negotiating Effectively” on the board or on a PowerPoint slide (see below)

Simulation materials: Provide students with background, scenario, stakeholder fact sheets, worksheets, and map. **Stakeholder groups should receive individual profiles for only their group.**

Other Materials:

- Pens or pencils and paper for notes;
- Tent cards identifying each delegation;
- Name tags indicating stakeholder group for each participant;
- Clock or watch to keep time;
- Computer and video projector if you choose to run an introductory PowerPoint presentation.





Procedure

Teacher's role: You are the facilitator and moderator. The discussion should be fully student driven. You will guide the negotiation, making sure that it stays on topic, moves forward, and is completed in the allotted time (determined by the teacher).

You may wish to periodically summarize the current position of each stakeholder for the group in order to keep the discussion on track, but avoid expressing your own opinions or suggesting alternative options. If it appears that a group is struggling to frame their position or goals, provide guidance to the group during the informal negotiation phase.

Steps

- Divide the class into stakeholder groups as described in the simulation (i.e., five or six different groups). Try to keep each group roughly the same size.
- You may want to divide students into mixed ability groups based on learning modalities or levels.
- Make sure everyone in the class knows which group they are in and how to identify the members of the other groups by distributing tent cards and name cards.
- Distribute the background information, scenario, worksheet, and map to all students. Students in the same stakeholder group may share materials.
- Distribute the individual stakeholder fact sheets to the appropriate groups. Each group should receive **only** its specific fact sheet, which has the name of that group at the top of the page. Students may share materials within their group, but should not show their fact sheets to other groups.

15
minutes

Introduction

The introduction to the simulation is important. It describes how the simulation will flow and outlines the key goals and expectations. Students will:

1. critically think about a topic and define a specific goal and viewpoint;
2. collaborate together to set goals, effectively communicating to achieve the best possible outcome; and
3. solve real world problems by formulating and considering practical solutions.

You can also explain your role and alert students that they will be discussing the exercise as a group once the simulation is completed. Before students read the materials and prepare their positions, explain how the simulation will be structured and how long each session will last.





Explain the difference between formal and informal negotiations:

Formal negotiations take place between diplomatic representatives of different nations as well as official representatives of international organizations or other groups. They often take place during meetings, summits, and diplomatic visits and often produce written documents summarizing the negotiations and the agreements reached. A committee chairperson or discussion leader usually moderates formal diplomatic negotiations at summits to keep conversations and debate organized and to ensure agreed upon rules of engagement are observed.

Informal diplomatic negotiations occur on the sidelines of official meetings or between official meetings when diplomats and/or representatives from the social activist groups, non-governmental organizations, the press and even the public talk about the topic or problem at hand in a less structured, and sometimes private, off-the-record manner in an effort to build support for their government's or their organization's position. This can build important common ground before engagement in formal negotiations and lay the groundwork for constructive problem solving in the formal sessions.

Ask each stakeholder group to select one person to deliver a brief opening statement laying out that group's view of the situation. This step provides all groups with a succinct summary of the other stakeholders' positions. The person who gives the opening statement is neither the head nor spokesperson of that stakeholder team. Emphasize that once opening statements are delivered, all students are encouraged to participate in the formal discussion.

20
minutes

Pre-session Preparation

Students read the materials and prepare their positions and opening statements. Have them complete the worksheet and consider the list of possible actions. Tell students that they are not limited to the possible actions listed on the sheet. They are welcome to create their own.

15
minutes

Session One: Formal Negotiations

To begin the simulation, ask each stakeholder group in turn to deliver its opening statement. The stakeholder group that called the meeting within the scenario speaks first, followed by the other groups in no set order. Opening statements should be short, only about one minute. After opening statements, invite the groups to engage in a roundtable discussion. All stakeholders should listen closely to each group, pose questions, and express initial reactions to the solutions proposed. Students should take

PROCEDURE





notes during the discussion. Anyone within a group may address the room, but only one person at a time. Make sure no individual or group dominates the discussion and that no group is left out. At the end of the formal negotiations, briefly summarize the current position of each group without providing your own opinion or suggesting other options.

15
minutes

Session Two: Informal Negotiations

Immediately after formal negotiations, group members should determine internally the stakeholders with whom they want to speak and what solutions they want to pose or suggest. Stakeholders should then have private discussions with members of other groups that take place away from the main table. Students should be encouraged to maximize their time by sending members to different groups for simultaneous discussions, rather than clustering together in one conversation with only one other stakeholder team.

15
minutes

Session Three: Formal Negotiations

Invite the students back to the table for another 15-minute round of formal discussions.

15
minutes

Session Four: Informal Negotiations

Students will move into their second and final round of informal discussions.

15
minutes

Session Five: Formal Negotiations

Return to the table for the final formal discussion.

10
minutes

Post-simulation Debriefing

Discuss answers to the following questions.

- What are the roots of the conflict?
- How do politics impact the issue? The economy? The culture?
- What diplomatic solutions were proposed?
- What attitudes were effective or not effective in negotiating a diplomatic solution?
- What did you learn about the topic?
- What did you learn about the interactions of people in this simulation?
- How did diplomatic skills play a role in this simulation?
- Why is this topic important to consider?
- What do you think the U.S. role should be in this issue?
- What is the best possible outcome?
- What is the most likely outcome?
- How could you use diplomatic skills in your everyday life?

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Tools for Negotiating Effectively

Clearly Determine Your Position And Agree On Your Strategy

- Clarify or restate your position if it is misrepresented by one of the other stakeholder groups.
- If you think your group should change its position during informal discussions, discuss it with the other group members as soon as possible.

Realistically Evaluate Possible Actions Before You Propose Them

- Are the proposals **possible**?
- Will they **achieve** the results you want?
- Watch for **unintended consequences**.

Analyze Other Groups' Positions

- Why do they **hold** that position?
- Why do they **oppose** or support your proposals?
- Can you apply **pressure** to make stakeholders re-evaluate their positions?
- Can you offer any **incentives** to encourage stakeholders to re-evaluate their positions?

Build Alliances

- **Identify** which stakeholders share your position and which do not.
- Do not spend all your time trying to persuade others. **Listen** carefully to other delegates and absorb what they are saying.
- Try to identify **common interests** and concerns you share with other stakeholders.
- Even if your end goal is different, what can you agree on with others?

Incentives and Disincentives (“Carrots and Sticks”)

- Consider what incentives you can safely offer to other groups
- Explain to other stakeholders the negative consequences (either direct or indirect) that may follow if they oppose your position





Differentiation

Options for Simplifying the Simulation

- Devote class time to describing what a simulation is and exactly what will happen in this simulation.
- Examine and discuss the global issue from the simulation (e.g., environment, health, human rights) in general terms over the course of one or more class sessions.
- Provide more time in class for each formal and informal session or divide the simulation into more sessions.
- Augment the **Glossary of Terms**, as appropriate. Add fuller definitions and examples. Discuss the terms as a class to confirm student comprehension.
- Give students some or all of the following in advance as homework: Background, Scenario, Glossary, and Tools for Negotiating Effectively. Do **not** assign students to specific delegations or hand out Stakeholder Fact Sheets until the group is about to begin the simulation. Have students complete Worksheets 1 and 2 together with the rest of their team during the pre-simulation preparation.
- Once students have read the Background, Scenario, Glossary, and Stakeholder Fact Sheets, confirm their understanding of their role and objectives. Have the whole class discuss the situation from a neutral perspective as outsiders **before** you assign students to specific stakeholder roles and begin the simulation.
- Assign students to specific stakeholder groups **in advance**. Give them the Background, Scenario, Glossary, Stakeholder Fact Sheets, Worksheet 1 (“Questions to Think Through”), Tools for Negotiating Effectively, and the Stakeholder Fact Sheets as homework. Have them complete Worksheet 1 the night before the simulation by writing about the problem that needs to be resolved, their role, and the needs and wants of the other groups. Have students use Worksheet 1 – which they have completed at home – as the basis for completing Worksheet 2 as a team with the rest of their delegation during the simulation.
- Divide the students into mixed ability groups based on learning modalities or levels.

DIFFERENTIATION





Options for Extending the Simulation

- Students create a digital timeline about their simulation scenario. Using [TimelineJS](#), students construct a timeline of important dates or events related to their simulation. For each date, they can describe the significance of the event and add primary sources to go along with the event.
- Students create a digital map about their simulation scenario. Using [StoryMapJS](#), students create a map of the concerned area with points of interest that are important to the scenario. For each point of interest, students can add text about the importance of that place and add media to supplement student descriptions.
- For simulation scenarios that are based on fictional situations, students can find real-world examples that closely mirror the issues brought up in their simulation. Students can present their examples to the class and help to tie together the process of the simulation with content that is relevant to the course curriculum.
- Based on a diplomatic issue covered in the course curriculum, students can create their own diplomatic scenarios, either fictional or nonfiction. Students can draft the background information and identify the interests of various stakeholders.
- Teachers can extend the timeline of the scenarios over the course of a number of class periods, weeks, or even a marking period by assigning each step of the preparation as either homework or a portion of class time. At the end of the designated preparation time, the teacher can specify a special day that students will participate in one of multiple simulations.
- Teachers can make simulations more dynamic by crafting scenario “developments” that alter the conditions of the original scenario. These developments can either be pre-planned or in reaction to teacher observations of negotiations. Students must then discern how the stakeholders they represent will react to new developments and decide how to account for the developments in their negotiations.
- Once an agreement to the diplomatic crisis has been negotiated, a member from each stakeholder group will be appointed to hold a press conference to report on the conclusion of the talks. The group would work together to create the press statement. Students not acting as spokesperson for each stakeholder group would act as the press corps and ask questions to ensure that each position has been fully explained.

DIFFERENTIATION





Additional Resources

- **Diplomatic Dictionary, U.S. Department of State, U.S. Diplomacy Center**
An online dictionary with more than 50 terms related to diplomacy.
<https://diplomacy.state.gov/discoverdiplomacy/references/169792.htm>
- **Discover Diplomacy**
A website explaining the people, places, and issues involved in diplomacy.
<https://diplomacy.state.gov/discoverdiplomacy/diplomacy101/>
- **Frontline Diplomacy: The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training**
A website with interview transcripts from the oral history archives of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training (ADST). These transcripts present a window into the lives of U.S. diplomats and the major diplomatic crises and issues that the United States faced from the 1950s to today.
<https://www.loc.gov/collections/foreign-affairs-oral-history/about-this-collection/>
- **Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training (ADST)**
This independent nonprofit organization advances understanding of American diplomacy and supports training of foreign affairs personnel through programs, publications, and activities. The site contains moments in diplomatic history, country and subject readers, and oral histories of former U.S. diplomatic corps employees.
<http://adst.org/>
- **U.S. Diplomacy: An Online Exploration of Diplomatic History and Foreign Affairs, Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training**
The site provides information on U.S. diplomatic history, dimensions of contemporary diplomacy and the domestic and foreign activities of the State Department.
<http://www.usdiplomacy.org/>
- **Historical Documents, U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian**
The *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) series presents the official documentary historical record of major U.S. foreign policy decisions and significant diplomatic activity.
<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments>
- **Regional and Country Profiles. United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics**
A website with up-to-date country data for education, literacy, science, technology and innovation, and culture.
<http://www.uis.unesco.org/DataCentre/Pages/regions.aspx>



Diplomatic Simulations

The U.S. Diplomacy Center offers educators immersive programs that explore the goals and practice of diplomacy, teach diplomatic skills, build global competence, and illustrate how the critical work of American diplomats impacts people's everyday lives. Lesson plans emphasize 21st century skills: creativity and innovation; critical thinking and problem solving; and communication and collaboration. These skills are keys to success for the next generation of global citizens.

The Diplomatic Simulation Program is the Center's premier educational tool. In a collaborative learning environment, students step into the shoes of real-life diplomats. The diplomatic simulations are designed for 15-30 participants, plus a teacher/moderator. Students receive a scenario related to a global issue, which could be real-world or hypothetical, current or historic. Within each simulation, there are five to six stakeholder groups (e.g., foreign ministries, NGOs, and international organizations), each with different perspectives and priorities. Students role-play these stakeholders in small teams of three to five. Under set time constraints, the groups are challenged to negotiate a peaceful solution to the crisis in the scenario. Students use the information provided in the simulation packet to develop their group's policy positions and defend or modify their choices in real time.

The simulations have no right or wrong actions or solutions because the process, rather than the end result, is the goal. The learning experience develops organically as the students engage in the simulation. Once the simulation has been completed, students are encouraged to express how their views on diplomacy have evolved as a result of the simulation, and to contemplate how they can apply diplomatic skills to their everyday lives.

Contact our Education Office at USDC@state.gov
for more information.

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About the U.S. Diplomacy Center



The U.S. Diplomacy Center is a public-private partnership, an apolitical and non-partisan museum and education center dedicated to telling the story of American diplomacy. The Diplomacy Center is located at the Department of State's historic headquarters, the Harry S Truman building in Washington, D.C. The Center will invite visitors to explore the history, practice and challenges of American diplomacy through interactive exhibits, artifacts, hands-on education programs, diplomatic simulations, and the expertise of foreign affairs specialists.



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