



A2

SEMINAR 9

Politics and International Relations

Task 1 – Match the following words to their definitions (a-j) below

Amnesty “Red herring” **Civil liberties** **Liberty** **International law**

Equal opportunities **Keynote** **Welfare** **Comity** **Internationalism**

- a) The rights of a person to do, think, and say what s/he wants if this does not harm other people.
- b) An act by which the state pardons political or other offenders, usually as a group.
- c) Rules of etiquette in international relations that do not have the force of law, but make international relations smoother.
- d) The main point in a lecture or discussion.
- e) The belief that the greatest possible co-operation between nations in areas such as trade, culture, education, and government is the best way to build peace. This is the opposite of isolationism and nationalism.
- f) The idea that opportunities in education, employment or any other field, should be freely available to all citizens, regardless of race, gender, religion, or country of origin.
- g) Something irrelevant that is used to confuse or take the attention away from something else.
- h) Rules, principles, and conventions that govern the relations between states.
- i) Public financial or other assistance (food stamps, for example) given to people who meet certain standards of eligibility regarding income and assets.
- j) The freedom to live as you wish and go where you want.

Discussion Questions

- 1) How important is it to follow current political events?
- 2) Do you take an interest in the international politics of your country? Can you name some recent events?
- 3) What about the international politics of other countries? Can you name some recent events?
- 4) Has the study of international politics become broader in recent years?
- 5) Do you think that international politics has direct relevance to everyone?



Task 2 – Choose one of the three following topics, read the YES / NO arguments, add your own arguments and then discuss in small groups. Take notes to present to the class.

1. Is EU membership a good idea?

Student 1 argues for EU membership:

- ✓ Countries' businesses gain unrivalled and unlimited access to a market of nearly half a billion *well-off consumers. Joining the 'eurozone' reduces costs even more.
- ✓ Poorer member states gain from the money redistribution from their richer *counterparts via 'structural funds' aimed at developing *backward regions. Richer ones benefit in the short term by being able to locate production in poorer counterparts where costs are lower. In the long term, redistribution produces more consumers with more money.
- ✓ Citizens gain the theoretically *unhindered and *legally-enforceable right to travel, live, work, set up businesses, and (to a limited extent) access social security in twenty-six other countries. As consumers, they benefit from competition legislation.
- ✓ Common standards – for example, on the environment – help promote the collective good and prevent 'free-riding'. They can also be used to spread best-practice.
- ✓ Many modern challenges – the environment, terrorism, immigration, organized crime and trafficking – make a nonsense of borders and are better *tackled in unison.
- ✓ For many states, being represented in foreign policy and trade negotiations by a large and powerful player gives them more influence than they would otherwise have.
- ✓ The EU helps lock in democracy, links economies and promotes cultural and diplomatic understanding and interchange – a recipe for peace as well as prosperity.

Student 2 argues against EU membership:

- The economic future is global not regional, with India and China rather than Europe being the markets of the future. The EU is *inherently protectionist, giving aid to the developing world instead of opening up trade. It also *subsidises inefficient businesses – particularly in agriculture – and backward, sometimes corrupt countries.
- Some citizens – affluent and mobile cosmopolitans – benefit more than others from all these freedoms, but all have to put up with legal obligations imposed by institutions that they have not elected and therefore cannot hold directly accountable.
- Common standards put up costs for businesses and prevent it competing globally. The EU is *biased towards a consensus model that *stymies liberal economic reform.
- Countries could still co-operate on transborder issues and form coalitions in international fora without surrendering their sovereignty on vital issues like immigration, currency, and foreign and defence policy. Why should larger, more powerful nations have their freedom of manoeuvre limited by minnows?
- To credit the EU with fifty years of peace and prosperity is to confuse correlation with causation: those who have stayed outside it, like Norway and Switzerland, have also avoided war and grown rich – in fact, even richer.



2. Should Turkey join the EU?

Student 1 argues for Turkey being a member of the EU:

- ✓ Turkey has played an integral part in European history and has grown closer to Europe in recent times. It is an officially secular state and increasingly stable democracy. By denying Turkey entry, the EU would send a signal to the Islamic world that ultimately its religion is a *sticking point.
- ✓ Turkey, a long-term and loyal member of NATO for half a century, would provide a *buffer zone against, and a *bridgehead into, potentially unstable (but also potentially lucrative) parts of the world. Turkish entry would be looked on favourably by the US.
- ✓ Incorporating Turkey into the EU would help consolidate democracy there and improve its economy, thereby reducing any potential risk to its European neighbours.
- ✓ Turkey's population is much younger than that of the current EU member states and would help with the demographic *crunch that is fast approaching.
- ✓ Turkey will have to meet EU-determined criteria before it can join. If and when it does join, institutional fixes and transition periods can, if necessary, be put in place.

Student 2 argues against Turkey being a member of the EU:

- The first obstacle is Turkey's *sheer size: in under a decade its population will match Germany's, and is already bigger than the combined population of the ten states that joined the EU in 2004. This would give Turkey a big say in EU institutions.
- Turkey's poverty (its unevenly distributed per capita income is only around a quarter of the EU average) would see it swallow up large amounts of EU regional funding.
- Imagine Europeans' anxiety if Turks, of whom there are already millions in Germany and elsewhere, are granted free movement and the right to work in Europe? The EU's absorption capacity is not infinite; better a deal that stops short of full membership.
- Turkey's Islamic culture means that it simply does not belong to Europe, which has its roots in Christianity and a more secular enlightenment tradition of respecting the rights of the individual. And what about the danger of importing Islamic terrorism?

3. Should we have more referendums?

Student 1 argues for more referendums:

- ✓ Direct democracy bypasses an unpopular and disconnected class which is either too ideologically *blinkered or too 'politically correct' to deliver common-sense solutions in accordance with the views of ordinary people.
- ✓ Referendums can encourage lively debate and informed issues on a decision on an issue which may not only cut across party lines but are also too important to be decided at general elections when voters have to take into account a whole *host of topics.
- ✓ Direct democracy can help decide questions that would otherwise cause ongoing division and distract the country from other important matters.
- ✓ Referendums ensure that constitutional issues that will affect the political 'rules of the game' are not decided by those who play - and, indeed, only temporarily play – it.



- ✓ Governments and parliaments that know any legislation they produce may be *overturned by a referendum will tend to ensure that such legislation is in accord with the will of the people. And – in the case of citizens' initiatives – allowing the people to recommend or even *compel politicians to act on certain issues means they can never *drift too far out of touch close their eyes to a vital matter of public concern.
- ✓ Improving technology will allow us to vote instantly – think of TV's *Big Brother*.

Student 2 argues against more referendums:

- *Boiling down a complex issue into a straightforward question that everyone can understand will encourage dangerous oversimplification; it also rips particular issues out of context. People may end up voting for something that, for instance, will impact negatively on other programmes that they value or for policy that, given wider constraints, can be neither implemented nor afforded.
- Turning issues into either/or questions provides a field day for populists and a dumbed-down media – forces that will encourage voters to make irrational and prejudiced decisions when they might be better off leaving things to politicians who, when all is said and done, have been elected to do just that job and have more time and resources to do it properly.
- Low *turnout is a problem: getting less than, say, half of the electorate to vote will throw the legitimacy of a referendum result into question and can even mean the result is not *binding; this can encourage campaigners for the status quo to call for mass abstention – not what we need in a democracy.
- Even a 'respectable' turnout will be unrepresentative, given that older, better-off and better-educated people are more likely to vote.
- Referendums don't always bring closure – what is to stop the losing side calling for another vote on the same question at a later date?

Adapted from: European politics : a comparative introduction / Tim Bale. -- 2. edit.. -- Basingstoke : Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Task 3 – Collocations

Exercise 1 - Fill the gaps with words from the list below.

Russia Must Become a Western Democracy, Medvedev Institute Says

By Lucian Kim

Feb. 3 (Bloomberg) -- Russia's economic modernization depends on political reforms that will transform the country into a (1) _____ **democracy** and U.S. ally, said a research institute headed by President Dmitry Medvedev.

Russia needs to establish a competitive (2) _____ **system** led by two main parties, *disband existing law enforcement agencies and go over to a (3) _____ **army**, the Moscow-based Institute of Contemporary Development said in a report published today.



“We’re talking about the very survival of Russia, at least within its geostrategic parameters and as a (4) _____ **nation**”, according to the report, which was sent to “all relevant (5) _____ **agencies**.”

Medvedev, who chairs the institute’s *board of trustees, last year called on a new generation of Russians to modernize the country, departing from the oil-fueled nationalism of his predecessor, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin. During his eight years as president, Putin abolished (6) _____ **elections** for governors and strengthened (7) _____ **control** over mass media.

Russia must embark on (8) _____ and political **reforms** simultaneously if the country is to stand a chance in the 21st century, the institute said. The state must reduce its presence in the economy, taking on the role as a neutral arbiter of business disputes, according to the report.

Abuse, Corruption

A key to reducing the state role is fostering (9) _____ **pluralism** with two leading parties and dozens of smaller ones represented in (10) _____, (11) _____ and federal **assemblies**, the institute said. The (12) _____ **Ministry** and (13) _____ **police**, *plagued with reports of abuse and corruption, should be disbanded and reorganized, the report said, as should the Federal (14) _____ **Service**, which Putin once headed.

Relations with the European Union should be raised to a level that could eventually lead to Russian membership in the (15) _____ **bloc**, the institute said. The U.S. should become “(16) _____ **partner**” with Russia as a member in a “substantially transformed” North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The army should become a professional force of no more than 600,000 soldiers, the report said.

The institute gave no specific dates for its recommendations in the report, which was entitled “21st Century Russia: The Shape of the Tomorrow We Seek.”

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|-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| security | interior | leading | trade | government |
| economic | political | strategic | local | western-style |
| regional | traffic | electoral | volunteer | state direct |

Exercise 2 – Now fill in the gaps with words in bold from the text above.

1. It’s a simpler tax, and one of our goals is a simpler tax _____.
2. If Mr Schroder is right, he should stand a better-than-even chance of winning the next general _____ in 2002.



3. Neither the Russian gay movement, nor the _____ of Justice, has statistics on exactly how many men are in jail for gay offences.
4. He volunteers for the Red _____, but then deserts and escapes from the Soviet Union.
5. He was told I was from an Eastern _____ country, and that my family were famous political activists and my parents had been executed.
6. His military _____ crystallized his intellectual interests in politics and international relations and he earned his Masters in Political Science in 1951 from Vanderbilt.
7. Conservative in their political and religious beliefs, Blue-Collar Nurseryites are against abortion and birth _____ and would rather see government funds go for defence than for social welfare programs.
8. The electorate is being asked to vote 'yes' for continued one party rule and 'no' for the introduction of multi-party _____.

Task 4 – Pre –Listening Tasks

1. Which of these organizations do you know about? Match them to the descriptions below.

1. The United Nations
 2. Trade Unions
 3. International Monetary Fund
 4. World Trade Organization
 5. Friends of the Earth
 6. International Aid Organizations (such as Oxfam)
-
- a) The international organization that controls trade between countries.
 - b) Campaigns on environmental issues such as the greenhouse effect.
 - c) An international organization that works to balance and manage the world's economy and to help countries with weak economies to develop
 - d) An international organization that encourages countries to work together in order to solve world problems such as war, disease and poverty.
 - e) Charities that raise money for famine and disaster relief.
 - f) Organizations of workers that aim to improve pay and conditions of work.

2. Are these organizations pro-globalization or anti-globalization? What do you think?



Task 5 – Listening. You are going to listen to a lecture in three sections. Before each section spend half a minute reading the questions and underlining key words.

Section 1 - Look at questions 1 – 6 and listen to the first section.

Questions 1 and 2

Which of the following areas does the lecturer say she will cover? CIRCLE TWO ANSWERS.

- A Global inequalities
- B Poverty in the developing world
- C The history of globalization
- D The key arguments for and against globalization
- E Trade and economics
- F The World Trade Organization

Questions 3 – 5

Complete the following sentences using NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS OR A NUMBER.

- 3 Many people feel globalization is about the economy or
- 4 An example is the export of Japanese
- 5 Globalization began approximately

Question 6

Which of these is NOT mentioned as important to the development of globalization?

- A the telephone
- B the fax
- C the postal service
- D air travel

Section 2 - Look at questions 7 – 11 and listen to the second section.

Questions 7 – 11

Complete the following notes using NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS.

Anti-globalization groups – e.g. Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth. These are (7)..... organizations. They feel globalization causes global warming, and depletion of oil, gas, (8) and sea life. Some organizations representing developing countries think that the WTO should make it easier for poor countries to (9) their own industries. Many businesses in developed nations are against globalization because of competition from (10) Poor countries can provide effective competition with imports of cheap goods in the (11) industries.



Section 3 - Look at questions 12 – 19 and listen to the final section.

Questions 12 – 19

Complete this table using ONE OR TWO WORDS OR A NUMBER.

| <u>Organization</u> | <u>Established</u> | <u>No. of member states</u> | <u>Role</u> |
|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| (12) | (13)..... | 123 | Prevents members favouring (14) |
| IMF | (15) | (16) | Provides temporary (17) |
| (18) | 1946 | ----- | Promotes shared values between UN and the (19) |

Task 6 – Signposting Language

Throughout the lecture, the lecturer uses certain words and phrases to signal or signpost key stages in the lecture. Recognizing these can help you to understand and follow her argument. Look at these 'signposts' and divide them into these categories.

Introduction Sequencing Changing topic Concluding/Summarizing

1. Turning now to ...
2. Now let us look a little at ...
3. Lastly, ...
4. In the first part of today's lecture ...
5. I would like to ...
6. Having looked at ... let's now consider ...
7. I will start by considering
8. So, we've seen that
9. I'd now like to move on to ...
10. Secondly, I will explain ...
11. So, let's begin with
12. Finally, I intend to ...

Listen to the lecture again and number the signposts in the order in which you hear them.

Tasks 4 – 6 adapted from: Roberts, Rachael, Joanne Gakonga, and Andrew Preshous. IELTS Foundation Student's Book. Oxford: Macmillan, 2004.



Task 7 – Grammar – Conjunctions and Linking Words

Choose the best answer; sometimes both forms are possible.

- 1) We are planning a series of conferences; *however* / *therefore* there will be a weekend devoted to International Relations in the 21st Century.
- 2) I failed my exam precisely *although* / *because* I didn't have time to study.
- 3) There is no record of the transaction in our files, *but* / *so* there is no proof that it ever took place.
- 4) The speaker is ill and will *therefore* / *because* be unable to lecture today.
- 5) John, *as* / *although* you speak French, I wonder if I could ask you about some words?
- 6) Some people believe that the politician died *because* / *since* he was poisoned.
- 7) Jerome Smith has ambitions in politics; *or* / *consequently* he is interested in the media.
- 8) *Since* / *Because* we have not heard from you, we assume that you have no objections to the proposal.
- 9) Everyone had arrived, *because* / *consequently* the meeting could begin.
- 10) *Since* / *However* everyone agreed, we went ahead with the proposal.
- 11) The talks broke down *in spite of* / *despite* the effort.
- 12) The parties did not reach an agreement *because* / *because of* their mutual suspicion.
- 13) *Because* / *Though* diplomatic relations were restored six months ago, ambassadors have not been exchanged yet.
- 14) *Due to* / *Since* widening differences the two countries broke off relations.
- 15) We did not agree on certain issues. In the end we made concessions, *though* / *however*.

Vocabulary

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. well-of | zámožný, bohatý |
| 2. gain | získat, nabýt |
| 3. counterpart | protějšek, doplněk |
| 4. backward region | zaostalý region |
| 5. unhindered | bez překážek |
| 6. legally-enforceable | právně vymahatelný |
| 7. tackle in unison | jednohlasně se vypořádat |
| 8. inherent | základní, podstatný |
| 9. subsidise | subvencovat, dotovat |
| 10. biased | neobjektivní, zkreslený |
| 11. stymie | zhatit, zmařit |
| 12. sticking point | kámen úrazu, mrtvý bod |
| 13. buffer zone | nárazníková zóna |
| 14. bridgehead | předmostí |
| 15. crunch | kritický moment, zlomový okamžik |
| 16. sheer | pouhý, čirý |
| 17. to blinker | nasadit klapky na oči |
| 18. a host of | spousta, hromada, velké množství |
| 19. overturn | zvrátit, změnit, svrhnout |



| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| 20. compel | přinutit, donutit |
| 21. drift | odklánět se, odchylovat se |
| 22. boil down | zestručnit, zkrátit, zredukovat, zjednodušit |
| 23. turnout | účast |
| 24. binding | závazný, povinný |
| 25. to disband | rozpadnout se, rozejít se |
| 26. board of trustees | dozorčí rada, správní rada |
| 27. embark | pustit se do něčeho, začít |
| 28. plagued | zamořený, zaplavený |