



2027 Academic WorldQuest Study Guide Topics and Descriptions

- 1. Current Events** - This yearly dive into the news tests your knowledge of what is happening around the world while helping you identify larger trends across current events. The required sources below are designed to help you think more critically about the information you encounter. Understanding the broader narratives shaping current events can help you make more informed decisions, participate in important discussions as young leaders, and consider how you can contribute to your community.
- 2. Region in Focus: The European Union** - The European Union is one of the world's most ambitious experiments in regional integration, bringing together 27 countries through shared institutions, economic policies, and political cooperation. Through this topic, you will explore the history and institutions of the European Union, how its member states make decisions and pursue common policies, and the challenges facing European integration in a changing geopolitical landscape. Lithuania, as a member state holding the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2027, provides a contemporary case study of how individual countries participate in and shape the EU.
- 3. Great Decisions 2027** - Foreign Policy Association's annual *Great Decisions Briefing Book* provides the resources for America's largest discussion program on world affairs. This year's Academic WorldQuest focuses on two Great Decisions topics from the 2027 Briefing Book: *American Foreign Policy and the Future of Multilateralism* and *American Options in the Middle East*.
- 4. The Impact of AI on International Relations** - Artificial intelligence is increasingly becoming a question of international power and national security. Nations and companies compete to develop advanced AI systems, while governments confront new challenges involving cybersecurity, information warfare, terrorism, and the governance of emerging technologies. This topic examines how AI is reshaping global competition, from media landscapes to nuclear challenges.
- 5. The Tug of War Over Natural Resources** - Water and mineral resources are essential to human societies, economic development, and the global transition to new energy technologies. These unevenly distributed and increasingly contested resources present opportunities for cooperation and sources of conflict. Through this topic, you will explore why natural resources have become increasingly important to international and economic security, how countries manage scarce resources, and how resource extraction affects communities and the environment.
- 6. Global Health and Pandemic Preparedness** - The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated that health crises rarely stop at national borders. Health infrastructure, humanitarian assistance, and international cooperation around global health issues can affect the prosperity of our global community. This topic explores various global health challenges, from healthcare inequities to humanitarian emergencies, as well as the obstacles facing international health cooperation.
- 7. Gen Z Political Preparedness** - Members of Generation Z (people born between 1997 and 2012) are changing how political information is consumed, how movements organize, and how young people engage with governments around the world. Social media allows political movements to spread rapidly across borders while creating new challenges in the forms of misinformation and political polarization. This topic explores how Generation Z participates in politics and how digital platforms are reshaping young people's political involvement.
- 8. International Relations at the Movies** - As a tool of cultural diplomacy and soft power, cinema wields the ability to influence international audiences. Some governments censor or restrict films that challenge political narratives, while filmmakers and distributors navigate increasingly important international markets. Through this topic, you will explore the relationship between cinema and international relations, including the ways that movies can shape a country's image abroad.
- 9. Powering Up Energy Security** - Access to reliable and affordable energy is a matter of national security. Oil and gas supplies, energy infrastructure, transportation routes, electricity grids, and emerging technologies can all become sources of geopolitical leverage or vulnerability. Through this topic, you will explore the relationship between energy and national security, the geopolitical importance of oil and gas, strategic energy chokepoints, and the ways changing energy systems are reshaping international relations.
- 10. Debt and Assistance** - Governments and international institutions play important roles in helping countries manage financial crises and pursue economic development. At the same time, soaring debt burdens have raised questions about debt sustainability, economic sovereignty, and the changing balance of financial power. This topic explores the mechanisms of international lending and foreign assistance, the challenges facing developing economies, and the evolving roles of the United States and China as notable lenders.

Source: World Affairs Councils of America, Global Education. September 15, 2026.