

# The Effects of Presidential Decision-Making

How do presidential decisions affect people directly and indirectly?

## Overview

Students review what they learned in the previous activities using the web-based interactive You Decide: Presidential Decisions. They then create a consequences web to graphically illustrate the cascading consequences of President Ford's decision to sign the Helsinki Accords.

For the complete activity with media resources, visit:

<http://www.nationalgeographic.org/activity/effects-presidential-decision-making/>

## Directions

### **1. Review students' discussion of stakeholder influences from the previous activity.**

Introduce students to the web-based interactive You Decide: Presidential Decisions. Divide them into small groups and have groups select and play through the Helsinki Accords scenario to review what they learned in previous activities. Ask students to recall which stakeholders they felt had the most influence and the least influence on Ford's decision to sign the accords. Ask how the maps and speeches they examined helped them reach their decisions. Explain that in addition to stakeholders' opinions, presidents also need to consider the consequences their decisions might have on those stakeholders.

## **2. Have students create a consequences web to show the consequences of President Ford’s decision on various stakeholders.**

Divide students into the same small groups they formed in Activity 1 and distribute each group’s copy of the case study they annotated in Activity 1. Have them re-read the case study in its entirety and highlight any consequences to stakeholders that they note. Next, model how to make a consequences web by drawing a square in the middle of the board and writing “Ford signs the Helsinki Accords” in the square. Then draw a circle and connect it to the square with a line. In the circle write “consequence 1.” Explain that students should draw as many circles as they need to list the consequences of Ford’s decision that were described in the case study. Then model how to illustrate additional effects of the decision. Draw a line from one of the circles to a new circle. In the new circle write “additional effect.” Have students work with their groups to draw a consequences web based on what they read in the case study and in the interactive and the cascading consequences they think the decision will create.

## **3. Use a historical perspective to add to the consequences web.**

Explain that since Ford’s decision happened over forty years ago, we can look at it with a historical perspective, which makes it easier to track the cascading effects of his decision. Have students read some of the provided secondary resources with a historical perspective on Ford’s decision and use the resources to refine their consequences web, adding new effects or removing or revising ones they predicted.

## **4. Have students reflect on the consequences of Ford’s decision.**

Have each group place their consequences web on their table or desk. Have students walk around the room and view other groups’ webs. Discuss with the class how the webs are similar and different. Ask:

- *Do you think groups captured all the intended and unintended consequences of Ford's decision? Why or why not?*
- *What effects might have been left out of the case study and/or the secondary sources you read online?*
- *Were consequences to all stakeholders represented in those resources? If not, which stakeholders are left out of these accounts? Why do you think this is true?*

Ask students to take notes on the discussion and collect their notes and consequences webs to use in the next and final activity in this lesson.

## Alternative Assessment

Use students' consequences webs as a formative assessment of students' thinking.

## Extending the Learning

Have students create a consequences web for an important decision currently being covered by the national or local media.

# Objectives

## Subjects & Disciplines

### **Geography**

- Human Geography

### **Social Studies**

- United States history
- World history

## Learning Objectives

Students will:

- identify the consequences of President Ford's decision to sign the Helsinki

Accords

- determine which consequences were intended and which were unintended

## Teaching Approach

- Learning-for-use

## Teaching Methods

- Cooperative learning
- Discussions
- Information organization
- Modeling
- Reading
- Simulations and games

## Skills Summary

This activity targets the following skills:

- 21st Century Student Outcomes
  - Learning and Innovation Skills
    - Communication and Collaboration
    - Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- 21st Century Themes
  - Global Awareness
- Critical Thinking Skills
  - Analyzing
  - Understanding

## National Standards, Principles, and Practices

# IRA/NCTE Standards for the English Language Arts

- **Standard 1:**

Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

# National Council for Social Studies Curriculum Standards

- **Theme 2:**

Time, Continuity, and Change

# National Geography Standards

- **Standard 13:**

How the forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of Earth's surface

- **Standard 17:**

How to apply geography to interpret the past

- **Standard 4:**

The physical and human characteristics of places

- **Standard 5:**

That people create regions to interpret Earth's complexity

# National Standards for History

- **Historical Thinking Standard 5:**

The student engages in historical issues-analysis and decision-making

- **U.S. History Era 9 (5-12) Standard 2:**

How the Cold War and conflicts in Korea and Vietnam influenced domestic and international politics

# Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.7:**

Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1:**

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

- **Reading Standards for Informational Text 6-12:**

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

- **Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6-12:**

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, RH.11-12.7

- **Speaking and Listening Standards 6-12:**

Comprehension and Collaboration, SL.11-12.1

# The College, Career & Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards

- **Causation and Argumentation: D2.His.14.9-12:**

Analyze multiple and complex causes and effects of events in the past.

- **D2.Civ.13.9-12:**

Evaluate public policies in terms of intended and unintended outcomes, and related consequences

- **D2.Civ.14.9-12.:**

Analyze historical, contemporary, and emerging means of changing societies,

promoting the common good, and protecting rights.

- **D2.Civ.3.9-12:**

Analyze the impact of constitutions, laws, treaties, and international agreements on the maintenance of national and international order

# Preparation

## What You'll Need

### Materials You Provide

- Paper
- Pencils
- Pens

### Required Technology

- Internet Access: Required
- Tech Setup: 1 computer per classroom, 1 computer per small group

### Physical Space

- Classroom

### Setup

Arrange the space so students can work in small groups.

### Grouping

- Large-group instruction

# Other Notes

In Activity 3, Step 2: Students will need to regroup into their original small groups from Activity 1 of this lesson.

In Activity 3, Step 4: Collect students' notes and consequences webs for use in the final activity.

## Resources Provided: Websites

- [U.S. Department of State: Office of the Historian—Helsinki Final Act, 1975](#)
- [Encyclopedia Britannica: Helsinki Accords](#)
- [The Boston Globe: How a Handshake in Helsinki Helped End the Cold War](#)

## Resources Provided: Interactives

- [You Decide: Presidential Decisions](#)

# Background & Vocabulary

## Background Information

## Prior Knowledge

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## Recommended Prior Activities

- None

## Vocabulary



Term	Part of Speech	Definition
unintended consequences	Part of Speech <i>noun</i>	results of an action or situation that are not deliberately brought about and/or anticipated.

## For Further Exploration

## Reference

- [National Geographic Education: Stakeholder Consequences Decision Making](#)

## Video

- [National Geographic Channel: Gerald R. Ford: A Test of Character](#)

## Websites

- [Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library & Museum](#)
- [Gerald R. Ford Presidential Foundation](#)
- [DeVos Learning Center at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum](#)

# Partner



