

2010 World Affairs Challenge

CountDown to 2015 : Shaping the Future

2010 WAC Tournament Dates:
Saturday, April 17th – Middle School
Saturday, April 24th – High School

What is the World Affairs Challenge?

The World Affairs Challenge (WAC) is an issue and creativity-based academic program for middle and high school students that culminates in a day-long tournament at the University of Denver. Its broad thematic structure encompasses a variety of global topics, allowing virtually any student or teacher to find a topic of interest on which to focus their research.

Hosted by the Center for Teaching International Relations (CTIR), the WAC poses essential questions that allow teachers to help students discover the issues that are most important to them, select a topic of study, and then prepare for tournament day.

“[The WAC] is awesome. You get to meet new people, learn new things about the world and its problems, and you get to, in general, think differently about how you spend every day and how it's affecting those around you.”
2008 high school WAC participant

2010 WAC Thematic Structure: The Millennium Development Goals



1 This year, the World Affairs Challenge will be built around the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). There are eight goals to be achieved by 2015 that respond to the world's main development challenges. The MDGs are drawn from the actions and targets contained in the Millennium Declaration that was adopted by 189 nations-and signed by 147 heads of state and governments during the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000.

The MDGs break down into 21 quantifiable targets and include:

- Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education
- Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women
- Goal 4: Reduce child mortality
- Goal 5: Improve maternal health
- Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability
- Goal 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development

This year, teachers and teams will study a global problem that falls within one of the UN Millenium Development Goals. First, teachers and students will work together to determine a goal (“MDG”) on which they would like to focus their research. (For example, “Provide primary education to every boy and girl”.) Next, participants will discuss specific global issues or problems that fall under their goal, and select one issue on which to prepare a presentation. (for example, “Challenges to young girls obtaining an education in Chad.”) As part of their presentation, students must propose concrete next steps, or solutions, to addressing their problem—thereby contributing to the world-wide effort to pursue these goals!

Below is not a comprehensive list of ideas, but rather some thought starters to get you thinking. Feel free to put your own spin on it and make it a topic you really care about!

Provide Primary Education for every boy and girl

What kinds of challenges prevent children around the world from receiving a basic education? Students may wish to explore issues related to:

- The role of limited government resources and schools (“infrastructure”) in specific countries
- The value placed on education by certain cultures
- How views on gender impact who attends school
- Effects of family roles and duties on the ability of children to attend school

Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

What challenges do women around the world face in achieving equal opportunities or rights as men? What are some barriers to women achieving equality or success in their home, work or social lives? Students may wish to consider:

- Links between access to education and professional success
- Cultural or religious views of gender
- Laws or traditions that treat men and women differently (for ex, land ownership rights; inheritance rules; etc.)
- Informal structures that may lead to inequality (for ex., the ‘glass ceiling’)
- How traditional family roles (for ex., child-raising) effect women’s opportunities in other areas
- Cultural marriage practices and rights of spouses
- Issues related to having children

End Poverty and Hunger

What are the causes of global poverty and hunger? Students may wish to explore:

- Environmental factors in food production
- Government roles in economic development (developing infrastructure, etc.)
- Food prices
- Effects of conflict on food production and availability
- Distribution of food (or wealth) within a country or region
- International trade practices
- How regional relationships between countries effect development
- Role of natural resources in determining a country’s wealth
- Transfer of technology across countries

Develop a Global Partnership for Development

*This goal outlines steps **developed** countries should take to contribute to global development—including practices and policies toward poorer countries. Students may wish to consider:*

- Pros and cons of foreign development aid, including the effects of “conditions” placed on development aid.
- Effects of trade practices of developed countries on citizens in poorer countries (for example, tarriffs, trade barriers, etc.)
- Pros and cons of ‘relieving’ debt owed by developing countries to others
- Factors that influence or discourage people from investing in developing countries
- Role of developing country governments in attracting or discouraging aid and investment

Improve **Global Health** (3 goals)

The 3 MDGs related to health will be judged as part of one category. What are the causes and different effects of global disease? Students learning about the MDG health goals may wish to consider:

- Maternal health issues, including a mother's health during and after pregnancy
- Healthcare as a human right
- Cultural views of medical care & indigenous medical practices
- Preventive healthcare
- Economic effects of disease
- Government policies related to healthcare
- Child mortality
- Water- or sanitation-related diseases
- Healthcare access

Ensure **Environmental Sustainability**

What are the greatest global threats to our environment? How do our business and social practices impact the environment in which we live? Students may wish to think about:

- Causes of pollution (man-made and natural)
- E-waste
- Global warming
- Taxes imposed on companies that pollute
- Cost and benefits of establishing environmentally friendly business practices
- Threatened species and eco-systems
- Health hazards related to pollution
- Pollution whose effects are felt by someone other than the polluter.

What happens next?

Upon registration for the WAC, teachers will receive access to online resources designed to support their team's research. The central goal for the students is to put together a creative presentation that represents what they have learned, why it is important, and what their ideas are for solutions. Students then give their presentations in front of panels of judges at the tournament. In addition, teams should review the resources provided to prepare for the Global Awareness Quiz (see below for more). The Collaborative Question will be provided on the day of the tournament, though teachers will be able to access sample questions (and possibly background materials on this year's CQ) via online resources provided.

On the day of the WAC tournament, participants gather on the University of Denver's campus for a full day of activities. The WAC is made up of 3 different events, all of which are tabulated into a team's score:

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| 1. The Formal Presentation (FP) | 60% |
| 2. The Global Awareness Quiz (the Quiz) | 30% |
| 3. The Collaborative Question (CQ) | 10% |

WAC Tournament Structure

Students work in teams of 7-12 for the Formal Presentation (FP), on an individual basis for the Quiz, and with their peers from other schools on the Collaborative Question (CQ). Below you will find brief descriptions of each event.

The FP: Each team creates a 10-15 minute presentation/skit showcasing their research findings and related solutions. The FP must be international in scope and fall under one of the categories previously described. Students may present in any creative way that communicates an understanding of the topic's complexities and proposes a reasonable solution(s). Teachers receive the scoring rubric for the FP to share with their students prior to the WAC, and awards are often given by category. In addition, 60% of a team's FP score contributes to an Overall team score.

The Quiz: Students have 30 minutes to complete the 50-question, multiple-choice Global Awareness Quiz, which encompasses events, institutions, and people in the national and international news. Details about the Quiz, along with sample questions, will be provided to teachers prior to the WAC so that they can help prepare their students. The top individual scores are awarded, and the scores are averaged for the team, which contributes 30% to an Overall team score.

The CQ: Participants are assigned to new teams with peers from other schools and they receive a "real world" question, simulation, or problem. They must come to consensus on a response and present their answer to event judges, who ask questions and have a dialogue with the students. The CQ process (about 30-45 minutes in length) helps young people synthesize knowledge. Additionally, they learn to work with others and listen to a variety of views as they work toward consensus. The CQ also provides a unique forum for them to engage in discourse with adults. Students receive an individual score, which flows back to their FP team (10% of an Overall team score) and each CQ team also receives a score.

"[The WAC] has made me a better and more aware person and I will take the information I gathered from research and other teams and apply that to the rest of my life. This experience has been truly life-changing."
2008 middle school WAC participant

Now What?

Talk to your teacher or your students (depending) and to see if there is interest in taking on some pretty big issues. There is a lot to learn. We can provide the curriculum, the facts, the structure, some research help, and the event, but you need to do all the work in pulling it all together and getting ready.

These are some exciting issues, and we hope you will be interested in learning more. For more information, visit www.worldaffairschallenge.org to get the registration form, or contact wacinfo@du.edu for more information. We look forward to hearing your point of view and understanding how you think you can change the world for the better.

"[The] World Affairs Challenge made me feel like just because I'm a teenager doesn't mean I won't be especially included in helping make this world a better place."

2008 middle school WAC participant