

Policy

Reading and Discussion

Policy typically means a general plan or method that governs specific actions. Governments have policies that tell us how issues are handled, both within their own countries and with foreign countries. A nation's policy regarding home issues is called **domestic policy**. A nation's policy regarding issues with foreign countries is called **foreign policy**. In other words, in the United States, domestic policy is the term used to refer to policies regarding issues that happen in the US. Foreign policy refers to the nation's policies regarding all other countries.

The main goal of domestic policy is to maintain and improve the quality of life for US citizens. Policies can change over time, but the goal always remains the same. There are many different domestic policies, but the issues can typically be divided into five categories. These categories are:

- Agriculture;
- business and labor;
- environment;
- transportation;
- social policy (which is policy that is focused on people).

Federal **agriculture policy** is used to make sure that farmers are paid well for their crops. The federal government supports American farmers through the US Department of Agriculture.

Business and labor policies are designed to promote the sale of American products. These policies encourage companies to expand by allowing them to pay less in taxes. The government also lends money to businesses to help them become established in the marketplace. **Minimum wage** is the result of one of the US policies regarding business and labor. The government has also passed laws regarding **labor unions**. Labor unions are groups of workers that have banded together to ensure that they are treated fairly. These labor unions often negotiate with employers for fair wages and working conditions.

Policies regarding environment are designed to protect and reclaim the nation's land, air, and water resources. Policies are created that prevent individuals and businesses from putting toxins and chemicals into the environment.

Transportation policies help to provide funding for roads. The **Federal Highway Administration** supervises all federal roads. The Urban Mass Transit Administration gives money to cities to help them improve their transportation systems.

Social policies focus on people. Social policies deal with issues of education, public assistance, health, and housing. In other words, social policies deal with issues like health insurance, welfare, social security, and unemployment. As an example,

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unemployment insurance is for workers who lose their jobs. The federal government sends money to the state that can be paid to workers while they look for a new job. Policies regarding unemployment insurance are in place to protect American workers who lose their jobs.

Foreign policy deals with how issues are handled outside of the US. The goal of foreign policy is to ensure **national security**. Offering aid to foreign countries falls under foreign policy. In addition, summit meetings with other countries would fall under foreign policy. Issues of declaring war or sending troops to other countries are considered to be part of foreign policy as well.

Name _____

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Activities

Activity A: Multiple Choice:

1. Social policy focuses on:

- a. animal rights
- b. the environment
- c. books
- d. people

2. A general plan or method that governs specific actions is called:

- a. policy
- b. due process
- c. philosophy
- d. law

3. Groups of workers that have banded together to ensure that they are treated fairly are called:

- a. Communists
- b. Labor unions
- c. Worker bees
- d. Pirates

Activity B: Fill in the Blanks:

1. The federal government supports American _____ through the US Department of Agriculture.
2. _____ policy deals with how issues are handled outside of the US.
3. A nation's policy regarding home issues is called _____ policy.
4. Policies regarding environment are designed to protect and reclaim the nation's land, air, and _____ resources.

Activity C: True or False:

- _____ 1. There are many different domestic policies, but the issues can typically be divided into seven categories.
- _____ 2. Issues of declaring war or sending troops to other countries are considered to be part of domestic policy.

Name _____

Date _____

Answer Key

Activity A

1. Social policy focuses on:

- a. animal rights
- b. the environment
- c. books
- d. **people**

2. A general plan or method that governs specific actions is called:

- a. **policy**
- b. due process
- c. philosophy
- d. law

3. Groups of workers that have banded together to ensure that they are treated fairly are called:

- a. Communists
- b. **Labor unions**
- c. Worker bees
- d. Pirates

Activity B

1. The federal government supports American farmers through the US Department of Agriculture.

2. Foreign policy deals with how issues are handled outside of the US.

3. A nation's policy regarding home issues is called domestic policy.

4. Policies regarding environment are designed to protect and reclaim the nation's land, air, and water resources.

Activity C

F 1. There are many different domestic policies, but the issues can typically be divided into seven categories.

F 2. Issues of declaring war or sending troops to other countries are considered to be part of domestic policy.