



UNIVERSITY INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUE
Making a World of Difference

CURRENT ISSUES & EVENTS

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2023 • INVITATIONAL B

Jan. 11, 2023



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UNIVERSITY INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUE

CURRENT ISSUES & EVENTS

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- 1. Representative-elect George Santos admitted to a sizable list of falsehoods about his professional background, educational history and property ownership. But he said he was determined to take the oath of office and to join the House majority representing what state?**
 - a. New York
 - b. Pennsylvania
 - c. Florida
 - d. Texas
- 2. “Her incredible career made its mark on history. And yet her greatest contributions may be yet to come. Thank you, Serena Williams. Your journey continues,” wrote Billie Jean King, the trail-blazing 12-time singles Grand Slam champion. From what sport did Williams retire after losing the third round of the U.S. Open in September?**
 - a. pickleball
 - b. soccer
 - c. tennis
 - d. badminton
- 3. In an attempt to become a smoke-free country in the near future, Spain is now making tobacco companies pay for the cost of what?**
 - a. medical insurance for smokers
 - b. cleaning up millions of cigarette butts
 - c. medical bills for smokers
 - d. nicotine-free smoking devices
- 4. The famous statues on Rapa Nui suffered “irreparable” damage in a fire, local authorities said. “All the fires on Rapa Nui are caused by human beings,” the mayor said. Rapa Nui is also known as what?**
 - a. Ellis Island
 - b. Sadhu Bet
 - c. Easter Island
 - d. Sri Lanka
- 5. What online cryptocurrency exchange collapsed, filing for bankruptcy last fall?**
 - a. FTX
 - b. Binance
 - c. Bitcoin
 - d. OKE
- 6. Edward Snowden is a former computer intelligence consultant who leaked highly classified information from the National Security Agency in 2013 when he was an employee and subcontractor. As of Sept. 26, he’s officially a citizen of what country?**
 - a. China
 - b. Bolivia
 - c. Russia
 - d. Ecuador

7. **Who became the first person in history to erase more than \$200 billion from his net worth?**
 - a. Donald Trump
 - b. Tom Brady
 - c. Sam Bankman
 - d. Elon Musk

8. **What show, the longest-running show in Broadway history, will drop its famous chandelier for the last time in February, becoming the latest show to fall victim to the drop-off in audiences since the pandemic hit?**
 - a. The Lion King
 - b. Cats
 - c. Les Misérables
 - d. Phantom of the Opera

9. **After a marathon 20-hour negotiating session, leaders and workers from what companies reached a tentative agreement to avert a nationwide strike that could have devastated the economy less than two months before the midterm elections?**
 - a. airline
 - b. rail
 - c. trucking
 - d. shipping

10. **Following a series of striking eruptions in recent years of a smaller and nearby volcano, what volcano, located on the Big Island of Hawaii and the Earth's largest active volcano, erupted for the first time in 38 years late in November?**
 - a. Kilauea
 - b. Mount Ranier
 - c. Mauna Loa
 - d. Eyjafjallajokull

11. **President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia accelerated his war effort in Ukraine by doing what?**
 - a. launching a tactical nuclear weapon in the Donetsk region
 - b. calling up 300,000 reservists to the military
 - c. resigning and putting the head of the Russian military in as president
 - d. stopping the distribution of oil and gas to all European countries in advance of winter

12. **President Joe Biden warned that Hurricane Ian could be the “deadliest hurricane in Florida’s history.” The actual death toll, however, was much less than the deadliest even in modern times. That record belongs to the 1928 Okeechobee hurricane with an official death toll of 1,836. How many deaths were attributed to Ian?**
 - a. 4
 - b. 148
 - c. 1,085
 - d. 3,059

13. **To provide a “high level of protection from paralysis,” last August Britain rolled out urgent vaccinations for all London-based children under 10. The vaccines were designed to limit the spread of what virus?**
 - a. polio
 - b. COVID-19
 - c. monkeybox
 - d. malaria

14. **Who became the first singer to fill all top 10 spots on the Billboard Hot 100 in the same week?**
 - a. Taylor Swift
 - b. Barbara Streisand
 - c. Lady Gaga
 - d. Drake

15. **Highlighting the extraordinary stress levels that have plagued the United States since the start of the pandemic, a panel of medical experts recommended for the first time that doctors screen all adult patients under 65 for what?**
 - a. cancer
 - b. thoughts of suicide
 - c. COVID-19 antibodies
 - d. anxiety

16. **The nearly \$1 billion award is the largest the Texas conspiracy theorist Alex Jones was ordered to pay as part of three defamation lawsuits against him for falsely claiming what?**
 - a. that the Uvalde, Texas, school shooting was all done by actors in a studio
 - b. that the shooting in Raleigh, North Carolina, in which five people were killed, was a terrorist act
 - c. that the 2012 school shooting in Newtown, Connecticut, was a hoax
 - d. that the leaders of the Oath Keepers orchestrated the shooting in Harrisonburg, Virginia, in which eight people were injured

17. **Brittney Griner, an American basketball star who had been imprisoned in Russia on drug charges, returned to America. How did officials get her released?**
 - a. They sent in an elite team of Navy SEALs who rescued her.
 - b. They agreed to stop giving Ukraine military supplies.
 - c. They agreed that both men and women in professional basketball would receive equal pay.
 - d. They traded her for Viktor Bout, a Russian arms dealer.

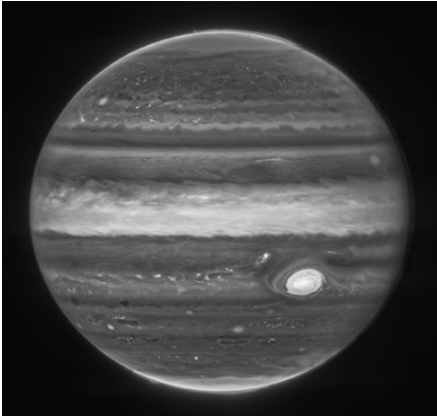
18. **A case before the Supreme Court, *Merrill v. Milligan*, concerned a congressional map drawn by Alabama lawmakers that a lower court said diluted the power of Black voters, violating what landmark legislation?**
 - a. the Civil Rights Act of 1964
 - b. the Voting Rights Act of 1965
 - c. the Citizenship Act of 1946
 - d. *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896)

19. **Law enforcement officials are warning drivers of popular car models, including Ford F-Series and Chevrolet Silverado, to take extra precautions because of the rising number of thefts targeting those vehicles looking for platinum, palladium and rhodium in what part?**
 - a. the air conditioner
 - b. the catalytic converter
 - c. the battery
 - d. the stereo system

20. **It means “manipulating someone over an extended period of time, especially for one’s own advantage.” It was Merriam-Webster’s 2022 word of the year. What is it?**
 - a. permacrisis
 - b. metaverse
 - c. fearmongering
 - d. gaslighting

21. **Spain is the world's biggest producer of this product, accounting for more than two-fifths of the global supply last year. Greece, Italy and Portugal are also major producers. But a drought this past summer threatened the supply of what?**
- sunflower oil
 - olive oil
 - rapeseed
 - corn
22. **Former Trump White House strategist Steve Bannon was sentenced to four months in prison for what?**
- knowingly overcharging officials for stays in Trump hotel properties
 - contempt of Congress for defying a subpoena related to the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol riot
 - lying under oath, saying the Uvalde school shooting was a hoax
 - secretly carrying classified documents from the White House to unsecure locations including Mar-a-Lago, the former president's home in Florida
23. **What is the goal of NASA's Artemis program?**
- to colonize Mars and planets beyond
 - to detect life in outer space
 - to place astronauts on the lunar surface and to develop an ongoing presence there
 - to establish a permanent station in high Earth orbit
24. **A power outage in Central North Carolina ended late Dec. 7 when service was restored to the last of some 45,000 customers who were affected. What caused the outage?**
- a squirrel
 - ice, part of a winter storm that blanketed the East Coast
 - unseasonably high demand
 - gunfire that damaged two substations
25. **According to a U.S. Treasury report released in early October, the nation's gross national debt surpassed how much?**
- \$8.507 million
 - \$17 billion
 - \$754 billion
 - \$31.12 trillion
26. **The 118th Congress convened on Jan. 3 and, on the first day as is tradition, members nominated colleagues as speaker of the House. Who won?**
- Kevin McCarthy
 - Nancy Pelosi
 - Hakeem Jeffries
 - No one
27. **The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation declared a Tier 2 water shortage for which river, reducing the amount of water provided to users in seven U.S. states, including Arizona, which will lose about 20% of its yearly allocation of river water?**
- Rio Grande
 - Mississippi
 - Colorado
 - Jordan

28. **The U.S. Defense spending bill authorized increased security cooperation in the region. In response, China's military sent 71 planes and seven ships in a display of force directed at what self-ruled island that China claims is its own territory?**
- Taiwan
 - Guam
 - Faroe Islands
 - Fiji
29. **Following the lead of several other GOP governors, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott said banning a social media platform run by the Chinese company ByteDance would protect state information from the Chinese Communist Party. What social media platform?**
- Truth Social
 - Vine
 - TikTok
 - Meerkat
30. **Even if humans stopped emitting planet-warming greenhouse gases today, scientists in the journal Nature Climate Change said Earth's oceans are already locked into nearly 10.8 inches of sea-level rise from a melting ice sheet. Where?**
- Siberia
 - Antarctica, the Lambert Glacier
 - Alaska, the Brooks Glacier
 - Greenland
31. **A record-breaking drought has caused some rivers in China – including parts of the world's third largest river – to dry up, affecting hydropower, halting shipping, and forcing major companies to suspend operations. What river?**
- Yangtze River
 - Amazon River
 - Yenisei River
 - Yellow River
32. **The House select committee investigating the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol outlined 17 specific findings in the executive summary of its final report. Which of the following was NOT one of them?**
- Donald Trump illegally, and without Congressional advice and consent, appointed a Trump loyalist, Jeff Clark, to be attorney general.
 - Donald Trump purposely disseminated false allegations of fraud related to the 2020 presidential election.
 - Donald Trump refused to accept the lawful result of the 2020 election.
 - Donald Trump corruptly pressured Vice President Mike Pence to refuse to count electoral votes during Congress's joint session on Jan. 6.
33. **Which country's team became the first African nation ever to make it to the World Cup semifinals?**
- Egypt
 - Morocco
 - South Africa
 - Ivory Coast



34. **This image is a composite image of Jupiter from three filters and alignment due to the planet's rotation. "We've never seen Jupiter like this; it's all quite incredible," said principal investigator Imke de Pater of the University of California, Berkeley. The image was taken with what?**
- the James Webb Space Telescope, launched in 2021
 - telescopes at the University of Texas McDonald Observatory
 - the Hubble Space Telescope, launched in 1990
 - the Arecibo Observatory Telescope in Puerto Rico
35. **Passed in a bipartisan manner by Congress in December, the Respect for Marriage Act requires states to take what action?**
- to require married couples to agree before having an abortion
 - to require churches to perform marriages before they will be legally recognized
 - to pass legislation determining whether they will recognize same-sex marriages in that state
 - to recognize same-sex marriages performed in other states
36. **Russia annexed four regions of Ukraine in September just days after voters supposedly approved Moscow-managed "referendums" that Ukrainian and Western officials denounced as illegal, forced and rigged. Which of the following was NOT one of the regions?**
- Donetsk
 - Luhansk
 - Kherson
 - Crimea
37. **Amid record high inflation, Social Security beneficiaries will get an increase to their benefits in 2023, the highest increase in 40 years. How much?**
- 3.7%
 - 8.7%
 - 19.2%
 - 33.1%
38. **What did Title 42, a law applied 2.5 million times since 2020, allow?**
- migrants to be expelled on public health reasons
 - asylum seekers from oil-producing nations such as Venezuela and Argentina to gain automatic admission into the U.S.
 - workers with certain high-level skills (such as computer programming) to gain entry into the U.S. with automatic citizenship
 - some individuals with unlawful presence in the United States after being brought to the country as children to receive a renewable two-year period of deferred action from deportation

39. Experts last fall warned that a “triple-demic” was due to hit the U.S. This triple threat of viral threats included all of the following EXCEPT which virus?
- smallpox
 - respiratory syncytial virus
 - influenza
 - COVID-19
40. In accordance with President Joe Biden’s memorandum of Dec. 15, 2022, the National Archives posted 13,173 documents containing newly released information related to what?
- the Cuban Missile Crisis
 - the insurrection on the Capitol of Jan. 6, 2021
 - the assassination of U.S. President John F. Kennedy
 - the Vietnam War

THE ESSAY

NOTE: *Contestants who do not write an essay will be disqualified.* Essay length is not a major grading factor as long as the essay is substantial and demonstrates a sincere effort to discuss the assigned topic. Cover as many corners of the issue as practical, including historical, political, economic, social and cultural, when relevant. Avoid including your personal opinions, as more than enough information on the subject has been published.

A focused, concise and specific essay beats a vague and rambling essay.

PROMPT

During the last six months of 2022 and the first few months of 2023, citizens of countries all over the world saw smooth transitions in top public officials while others saw riots as new leaders took office. Pick three. Discuss the implications of the change, in personnel if not political party, on the leader’s country and on the United States.

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ANSWER KEY

ESSAY PROMPT

During the last six months of 2022 and the first few months of 2023, citizens of countries all over the world saw smooth transitions in top public officials while others saw riots as new leaders took office. Pick three. Discuss the implications of the change, in personnel if not political party, on the leader's country and on the United States.

POTENTIAL DISCUSSION POINTS PREPARED Jan. 11, 2023 might include, but should not be limited to...

- | | | |
|-------|-------|--|
| 1. A | 21. B | |
| 2. C | 22. B | |
| 3. B | 23. C | |
| 4. C | 24. D | |
| 5. A | 25. D | |
| 6. C | 26. D | |
| 7. D | 27. C | |
| 8. D | 28. A | |
| 9. B | 29. C | |
| 10. C | 30. D | |
| 11. B | 31. A | |
| 12. B | 32. A | |
| 13. A | 33. B | |
| 14. A | 34. A | |
| 15. D | 35. D | |
| 16. C | 36. D | |
| 17. D | 37. B | |
| 18. B | 38. A | |
| 19. B | 39. A | |
| 20. D | 40. C | |
- *England monarchy* — Elizabeth II, Queen of the United Kingdom and 14 Commonwealth realms, and the longest-reigning British monarch, died of old age at Balmoral Castle in Scotland, at the age of 96. Her eldest son, Charles III, succeeded her. The coronation of Charles III and his wife, Camilla, as king and queen is scheduled for May 6, 2023, at Westminster Abbey.
 - *England prime minister* — Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced his resignation in July. Elizabeth Truss took over from Sept. 6, 2022, to Oct. 25, 2022. As CNN reported in an Oct. 20, 2022, article by Sana Noor Haq, when she took the keys to 10 Downing Street in the wake of Boris Johnson's political demise, Truss promised to "ride out the storm" of Britain's economic crisis. Just over six weeks later, she was engulfed by a hurricane of her own making and forced out of office.
 - *England prime minister* — Former finance minister Rishi Sunak won the race to be Britain's next prime minister, the first British Asian to assume the role. Sunak became the latest leader of the ruling Conservative Party to enter the revolving door of No. 10 Downing St. In his first public statement after the results were announced, Sunak said the country faces a "profound economic challenge." While Sunak viewed the economy as his priority, there were doubts about his stance on climate change. However, he did say, "There is no long-term prosperity without action on climate change."
 - *Brazil* — General elections were Oct. 2, 2022. No candidate for president—or for governor in some states—received more than half of the valid votes in the first round so a runoff election for these offices was held Oct. 30. Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of the left-wing Workers' Party received the majority of the votes in the second round and became president-elect of Brazil. His opponent, Jair Bolsonaro, incumbent far-right president, had made several premature allegations of electoral fraud. Reminiscent of the Jan. 5, 2021, insurrection on the U.S. Capitol, hundreds of supporters of Bolsonaro stormed government buildings in Brasilia to protest against the new administration. Police made more than 1,000 arrests and Lula said officials were investigating those who financed the "coup acts." Bolsonaro, who left Brazil for the U.S. ahead of Lula's inauguration, was hospitalized in Florida for treatment related to a knife attack in 2018.
 - *Italy* — The coalition led by Giorgia Meloni's Brothers of Italy, a radical-right political party with neo-fascist roots, won an absolute majority of seats in the Italian Parliament. Meloni was appointed prime minister on Oct. 22, 2022, becoming the first woman to hold that position. She tried to make climate change an issue for the far right. "There is nothing more 'right-wing' than ecology. The right loves the environment because it loves the land, the identity, the homeland."
 - *Israel* — Legislative elections were held in Israel on Nov. 1, 2022, to elect the 120 members of the 25th Knesset. The results saw the right-wing national camp of former prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu win a parliamentary majority, amid losses for left-wing and Arab parties, as well as gains by the far right. The election results — and in particular, the return of Netanyahu as prime minister with the support of 14 seats secured by the Religious Zionism slate — have prompted concern among liberal Israelis and Western analysts.
 - *Equatorial Guinea* — The official government website announced on Nov. 21, 2022, that the Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea had won more than 99.7% of the votes so far counted. News agencies suspected that this election would be a landslide "victory" for incumbent Teodoro Obiang, just as every presidential election in Equatorial Guinea since their post-coup reintroduction in 1989. The U.S. condemned the elections, labeling them a sham.
 - *Czechoslovakia* — Danuše Nerudová has emerged as a frontrunner for the presidential elections in January and could become the nation's first female head of state.
 - *Nigeria* — Nigeria's general election risks being canceled or postponed because of rising insecurity, the country's election chief said in a Jan. 10 article on the BBC by Chris Ewokor. More than 90 million Nigerians have registered to vote in the Feb. 25 election.