



UNIVERSITY INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUE
Making a World of Difference

CURRENT ISSUES & EVENTS

 @UILCIANDE

2023 • REGION

March 15, 2023



Part of aid packages from Japan and Canada being unloaded Oct. 24, 2022, and Jan. 26, 2023, by United Nations Development Program Ukraine. | Makariv is one of Ukraine's most destroyed communities. Almost 300 children attended the ruined kindergartens. Officials from UNDP and Japan are helping clear explosive ordnance and remove debris. Photo by Andrii Krepykh | More than 130 internally displaced persons from Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts learn to provide first aid during a training series organized by UNDP. Photo by Ivan Lavrenko

DO NOT TURN THIS PAGE UNTIL YOU ARE INSTRUCTED TO DO SO!

UNIVERSITY INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUE

CURRENT ISSUES & EVENTS

REGION • 2023

- 1. Days after the company announced it would not dispense abortion medication in 21 states, California Gov. Gavin Newsom said his state will cease all business with what retail drugstore chain?**
 - a. CVS Health
 - b. Walmart
 - c. Rite Aid Corp.
 - d. Walgreens
- 2. Made by Japan's Eisai and its U.S. partner Biogen, a new drug — the first with clear-cut evidence that it slows Alzheimer's by several months — is hitting the market. What drug?**
 - a. Galantamine
 - b. Donepezil
 - c. Legembi
 - d. Rivastigmine
- 3. The Supreme Court's conservative majority seemed deeply skeptical of the legality of the Biden administration's plan to wipe out more than \$400 billion in student debt. Still, the administration maintained it was legal based on what legislation passed by Congress?**
 - a. the HEROES Act (2003)
 - b. the USA PATRIOT Act (2001)
 - c. the CARES Act (2020)
 - d. the STABLE GENIUS Act (2018)
- 4. Dr. Seuss fans will find some holiday cheer this fall with the release of a sequel to what classic children's book?**
 - a. *If I Ran Your School*
 - b. *Cat in the Hat*
 - c. *Oh, the Places You'll Go*
 - d. *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*
- 5. The U.S. shot down a Chinese aircraft over the Atlantic Ocean, ending a dramatic saga that inflamed tensions between the world's two great powers in early February. What type of aircraft?**
 - a. a Chengdu J-20, Mighty Dragon
 - b. a Chinese Navy J-11 fighter jet
 - c. a balloon flying at 66,000 feet
 - d. a Russian-made MiG
- 6. After Liz Truss was forced to step down, Rishi Sunak took over as what?**
 - a. prime minister of the United Kingdom
 - b. queen of England
 - c. secretary of the United Nations
 - d. prime minister of Sweden

7. **Almost three weeks later, the EPA gave the all-clear following the release of toxic chemicals in East Palestine, Ohio. What was behind the release of the chemicals?**
 - a. a domestic terrorist attack using fertilizer
 - b. a train derailment
 - c. a faulty pipe at a sewage treatment plant involving a computer programming error
 - d. a break in the Keystone XL Pipeline and subsequent fire

8. **Numerous newspapers announced they would drop which comic strip after its creator made racist remarks?**
 - a. Bloom County
 - b. Doonesbury
 - c. The Far Side
 - d. Dilbert

9. **Single boxes of the cookies, which cost from \$4 to \$7, are selling for as much as five times the usual price on secondary markets. Girl Scouts, which notes that cookie sales fund troop activities, expressed dismay when discussing what new flavor of cookie?**
 - a. Toffee-tastic
 - b. Adventurefuls
 - c. Raspberry Rally
 - d. Samoas

10. **A Japanese startup announced plans to launch commercial space viewing travel that it hopes will provide an experience that is safe, economical and gentle. “The idea is to make space tourism for everyone,” company CEO Keisuke Iwaya said. How did he plan to get tourists into space?**
 - a. a plane launched off a catapult that would glide back to Earth, all without gas-powered engines
 - b. a helium balloon that rises up to 15 miles
 - c. a space elevator, basically an elevator car tied to an electrically charged cable
 - d. a nuclear-powered jet that takes off like a plane and returns to Earth like a plane

11. **A bill introduced in the Texas Senate in late December has been gaining steam over the past month, and it came as a bombshell to Asian Americans and others across the state. What would SB 147, which also covers citizens of North Korea, Iran and Russia, do?**
 - a. make it illegal for Chinese citizens working in America to visit China
 - b. make it illegal for citizens of China, North Korea, Iran or Russia to attend public schools or to receive scholarship money to any state institution
 - c. require Chinese citizens without American citizenship to live in relocation centers in Texas
 - d. make it illegal for Chinese citizens to buy any property in Texas, including homes

12. **She announced her candidacy for president, the first Republican to enter a contest against Donald Trump. She then suggested that politicians over the age of 75 should be required to take a “mental competency test.” Who?**
 - a. Dianne Feinstein
 - b. Sarah Huckabee Sanders
 - c. Nikki Haley
 - d. Victoria Woodhull

13. **Gov. Greg Abbott was sworn in for a third term with a promise to do what?**
 - a. close down charter schools to bolster public school funding
 - b. usher in the largest property tax cut in state history
 - c. tear down the wall between Texas and Mexico to increase trade
 - d. require background checks and a waiting period for anyone purchasing a gun

14. **The Thwaites Glacier, a glacier of almost 70,000 square miles, may be losing ice at its fastest pace in the past 5,000 years. What is the nickname for this glacier that, as it melts, could cause global sea levels to rise up to 10 feet?**
- the Doomsday Glacier
 - the Titanic
 - Icy and Spicy
 - the Cool Freeze-Off
15. **Chick-fil-A is adding a new menu item to their line of sandwiches, nuggets and salads: a no-meat alternative made of what?**
- seaweed
 - soybeans
 - mushrooms
 - cauliflower
16. **The Earth's inner core does it regularly on a roughly 70-year cycle, and precisely nothing apocalyptic will result when the Earth's inner core does what early this year?**
- change the direction it spins relative to the Earth's surface
 - solidifies
 - breaks through to the surface of the planet
 - gets so hot, it converts from iron to ruthenium
17. **India is projected to overtake what country, a country with 1.41 billion people, as the world's most populous country in 2023?**
- China
 - Pakistan
 - United States
 - Indonesia
18. **For the first time since Sept. 11, 2001, the FAA ordered airlines to pause all domestic departures on Jan. 11 after a system outage. FAA officials determined that a damaged database file was at fault. That file was part of what?**
- Terminal Radar Approach Control
 - the Airline Relational Database Management system
 - the Notice to Air Missions system
 - the National Air Traffic Control system, also known as NextGen
19. **Limited just to the U.S., INRIX's Global Traffic Scorecard for the most congested urban areas included three Texas cities in the top 25. Which Texas city, the second-largest city in the state and seventh-largest city in the country, was NOT in the list?**
- Houston
 - Dallas
 - Austin
 - San Antonio
20. **Australia's Reserve Bank announced that King Charles will not be featured on Australia's soon-to-be-redesigned \$5 banknote. What will the note feature instead?**
- Indigenous Australians or Australian First Nations
 - Queen Elizabeth II, who died last year
 - The koala, an endangered animal in dire need of protection
 - Jacinda Ardern, New Zealand's prime minister who resigned in February

21. **Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen notified Congress that the U.S. was projected to reach its debt limit Jan. 19 and would then resort to “extraordinary measures” to avoid default. What was the debt limit at the time?**
- \$3.4 trillion
 - \$32 billion
 - \$31.4 trillion
 - \$2.35 million
22. ***Spare*, the hotly anticipated memoir by Prince Harry, has captivated people across the world, and is shaping up to be one of the year’s biggest books. To what does the title refer?**
- Harry’s feelings that he’s like, in his words, “a spare tire on a boat,” not needed or wanted
 - an informal way of referring to the two children of a monarch who are first and second in line for succession
 - literally — “to refrain from attacking or reprimanding with necessary or salutary severity”
 - the queen’s announcement that the monarchy was now “spare” and no longer needed
23. **When Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, 95, died in December, what did Catholic Church officials say he will forever be remembered for?**
- prosecuting the last of the cardinals involved in clerical sex abuse scandals and awarding victims \$121 million
 - supporting the ordination of female priests
 - being a vocal and supportive member of the Nazi youth movement
 - being the first pontiff in 600 years to resign from the job
24. **Morocco became the first African team to qualify for the semifinals at what sporting event that was played for the first time in the Middle East in November and December?**
- the Summer Olympics
 - the Grand Prix
 - the Stanley Cup Finals
 - the FIFA World Cup
25. **The 88th session of the Texas Legislature started Jan. 10. Among other things, lawmakers have to deal with what?**
- \$31.4 trillion in debt
 - a \$32.7 billion budget surplus
 - \$362.87 billion in state debt, the fifth-largest debt of any state
 - how to implement a state income tax approved by voters in the fall of 2022
26. **As of late January, classified documents have been found in the homes of three senior politicians. Which of the following is NOT one of those senior officials?**
- Donald Trump
 - Kamala Harris
 - Mike Pence
 - Joe Biden
27. **The coldest temperature ever recorded in the U.S. including Alaska, the wind chill on Mount Washington in New Hampshire reached what temperature on Feb. 3, 2023, making it as cold as Mars?**
- 128.92° F (-89.4° C)
 - 108° F (-77.8° C)
 - 38.7° F (-39.3° C)
 - 459.4° F (-273° C)

28. **What state became the first to ban gender-affirming medical care for transgender minors, blocking minors from receiving gender-affirming surgeries and placing an indefinite moratorium on their access to puberty blockers and hormone therapy?**
- New Jersey
 - Arkansas
 - Utah
 - West Virginia
29. **Austin’s progressive country music scene coalesced around Willie Nelson in the early ’70s. But the real star was the Austin scene itself as what is now the longest-running musical performance series in American television history first aired in 1975. What show?**
- “Austin City Limits”
 - “Woodstock”
 - “The Midnight Special”
 - “Armadillo World Headquarters Tonight”
30. **Very popular with preschool-aged children, the original series began airing on PBS in 1992 and continued until 2010. Now, a character in the show is coming back in animated form to deliver lessons in song and dance with a message of love and kindness. What character?**
- Big Bird
 - Barney
 - Kermit the Frog
 - He-Man
31. **On Oct. 17, 2022, the FDA’s hearing aids ruling went into effect. What did it do?**
- It capped the maximum price of a hearing aid.
 - It required that all hearing aids paid for by government insurance be made in the U.S.
 - It made hearing tests a required part of any routine physical or medical checkup.
 - It made hearing aids available over the counter without a medical exam, prescription or professional fitting.
32. **Branded Oleato, five new beverages containing what ingredient were on the Starbucks menu at the Reserve Roastery in Milan?**
- soybeans
 - sugar beets
 - olive oil
 - tomatoes
33. **Power from zero-carbon sources made up a full 41% of the U.S. electricity mix in 2022, a record-breaking number that has increased almost every year since 1990. Which form of energy generation provided the most electricity to the grid — a relatively unchanged 19%?**
- hydroelectric dams
 - nuclear
 - solar
 - wind

34. **The Alabama Media Group made what change in the state's media on Feb. 26?**
- It stopped using TikTok at any of its media outlets including al.com, the largest media website in the state.
 - It switched from Twitter to Post News for breaking news announcements.
 - It permanently stopped printing *The Birmingham News*, *The Huntsville Times* and *Mobile's Press-Register*, the largest newspapers in the state.
 - The company laid off all but a dozen or so reporters at three newspapers statewide and would use AI to write most stories.
35. **Each of the following cities is under investigation by the Justice Department for discriminatory policing. However, in March, the department announced it had uncovered dysfunction that went far beyond racial discrimination as part of its investigation prompted by the killing of Breonna Taylor in what city?**
- Minneapolis, Minnesota
 - Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
 - Mount Vernon, New York
 - Louisville, Kentucky
36. **Across Oklahoma voters rejected a ballot initiative that would have done what to marijuana use in the state?**
- allowed dispensaries for recreational use in shopping malls, airports and entertainment venues
 - legalized recreational use by adults 21 and older
 - criminalized any use of marijuana, making Oklahoma the most strict state regarding the use of any form of the plant
 - allowed marijuana for medical use when prescribed by a doctor only
37. **To speed up the pace of play and make the game more enjoyable for fans, Major League Baseball is instituting this season its most significant set of rules changes since the adoption of the designated hitter. Which of the following is NOT one of those changes?**
- reducing the game from nine innings to eight in post-season play
 - adding a pitch clock forcing pitches to throw the ball within 20 seconds with runners on base
 - increasing the size of the bases by 3 inches
 - limiting the number of pickoff attempts per plate appearance to two
38. **On Jan. 15, President Joe Biden became the first sitting president to deliver a Sunday sermon at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta. Historically, that church is known as whose church?**
- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
 - Sen. Raphael Warnock
 - Billy Graham
 - Stacey Abrams
39. **Arrested in the Bahamas and extradited to the U.S. on charges that include fraud, Sam Bankman-Fried was known for founding what collapsed cryptocurrency exchange?**
- Futures Exchange
 - Gemini
 - BitMart
 - CashApp

40. Silicon Valley Bank was the 16th-largest bank in the U.S. when it failed March 10. Secretary of the Treasury Janet L. Yellen and Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome H. Powell said all depositors would be fully protected and have access to all of their money. What government agency protected the assets?
- the SBA, Small Business Administration
 - the SEC, Securities and Exchange Commission
 - the FDIC, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
 - the FTC, Federal Trade Commission

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

Russia's war against Ukraine is causing a humanitarian, social and economic crisis for the Ukrainian people. Further, this full-scale military invasion is also having an impact outside Ukraine. Discuss some of the political, economic, scientific, social and cultural consequences of the war, particularly consequences on the United States.

DO NOT DISTRIBUTE TO STUDENTS BEFORE OR DURING THE CONTEST!

ANSWER KEY

ESSAY PROMPT

Russia's war against Ukraine is causing a humanitarian, social and economic crisis for the Ukrainian people. Further, this full-scale military invasion is also having an impact outside Ukraine. Discuss some of the political, economic, scientific, social and cultural consequences of the war, particularly consequences on the United States.

POTENTIAL DISCUSSION POINTS PREPARED March. 15, 2023
might include, but should not be limited to...

- | | |
|-------|-------|
| 1. D | 21. C |
| 2. C | 22. B |
| 3. A | 23. D |
| 4. D | 24. D |
| 5. C | 25. B |
| 6. A | 26. B |
| 7. B | 27. B |
| 8. D | 28. C |
| 9. C | 29. A |
| 10. B | 30. B |
| 11. D | 31. D |
| 12. C | 32. C |
| 13. B | 33. B |
| 14. A | 34. C |
| 15. D | 35. D |
| 16. A | 36. B |
| 17. A | 37. A |
| 18. C | 38. A |
| 19. D | 39. A |
| 20. A | 40. C |

- *Food* — Blockades of Ukrainian grain exports have worsened hunger in some of the world's most vulnerable regions. Even as international efforts have helped to resume grain shipments, the situation remains dire. According to the International Rescue Committee, in East Africa, for instance, a perfect storm of continued drought, the blockade, and the economic fallout from the war is causing mass starvation. Ukraine and Russia are key exporters of wheat, barley, corn and cooking oil, particularly to African and Middle Eastern countries. Without urgent international funding, the lives of millions of people are at stake.
- *Fuel* — Russia is one of the world's largest producers of oil and fuel. European countries have banned the Russian oil, gas and diesel they relied on, which initially caused a steep spike in prices. And Russia is targeting key energy production facilities in Ukraine as residents try to survive winter. The prosecutor general's office of Ukraine has documented 240 Russian attacks on the country's energy facilities from the start of the full-scale invasion until the end of January. Another 15 attacks have targeted the power grid in February so far.
- *Refugees* — By January of 2023, more than 8 million refugees had fled Ukraine in what the World Health Organization describes as "the largest movement of people in the European Region since the Second World War." Poland has granted protection to over 1.2 million Ukrainian refugees while other nearby countries Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Moldova have each given safety to tens of thousands of Ukrainian refugees. Czechia is hosting the most refugees per capita in Europe, having granted protection to almost half a million people.
- *Border crossings* — From the time Russia started its invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022, until Jan. 24, 2023, more than 17.92 million border crossings from Ukraine to other countries were recorded, according to Statista.
- *Economic aide* — From Jan. 24, 2022, to Nov. 20, 2022, the U.S. provided around \$52 billion in bilateral financial, humanitarian and military aid to Ukraine. The second-highest value of commitments was recorded from the European Union institutions at approximately \$38 billion. U.S. aid to Ukraine totals \$68 billion, and the White House asked Congress for another \$37.7 billion. In the spring, the new Congress will consider aid in the context of the administration's proposed FY 2024 budget.
- *Politics* — As reported on CNN on Dec. 6, 2022, Americans still strongly back the U.S. providing aid for Ukraine's fight against Russia, but there has been a decline in support among Republicans as some prominent GOP politicians and media figures express opposition to the U.S. providing additional support to Kyiv. The poll from the Chicago Council on Global Affairs found that most Americans still support aiding Ukraine – 65% support sending weapons, 66% support economic aid, 75% support increasing sanctions on Russia, and 73% support accepting Ukrainian refugees to the U.S.
- *Russia's defense budget* — Russian President Vladimir Putin approved increasing the size of Russia's armed forces to 1.5 million from 1 million. Still, officials in Ukraine said they believe that Russia is no longer able to provide new citizens conscripted for war with weapons and equipment. Russia has announced a 2023 defense budget of approximately \$84 billion, more than 40% higher than its initial 2023 budget announced in 2021.
- *More politics* — By the time Congress convened in January, with a Republic majority in the House, consensus was changing. Republican senator J.D. Vance wanted oversight on the billions already allocated to Kyiv. And others started questioning the expenditures entirely.
- *Tanks mixed up in politics* — After some tense negotiations in which Berlin made clear that it did not want to be the first to provide Kyiv with tanks, which Moscow will no doubt view as a significant escalation of NATO involvement in the conflict, the U.S. and Germany agreed to send battle tanks to Ukraine.