



UNIVERSITY INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUE  
*Making a World of Difference*

# CURRENT ISSUES & EVENTS

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**2022 • STATE**

May 2, 2022



**President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Boris Johnson walked around the center of Kyiv April 9.**



**Ukraine's President Zelenskyy to BBC: Blood money being paid for Russian oil.**



**President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy met with President of the Republic of Poland Andrzej Duda, President of the Republic of Latvia Egils Levits, President of the Republic of Lithuania Gitanas Nausėda and President of the Republic of Estonia Alar Karis. The leaders visited Ukraine on April 13.**

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# CURRENT ISSUES & EVENTS

## STATE • 2022

- 1. With a turnout of less than 19%, voters gave President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, known as AMLO, a victory in a recall referendum with a 90% margin. Voters in what country will now allow Obrador to finish his six-year term in office?**
  - a. Turkey
  - b. Belize
  - c. Argentina
  - d. Mexico
- 2. The German automaker BMW showed off new technology at the 2022 Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. What new technology?**
  - a. a self-driving car without windows, using LED monitors to display what is outside — or movies
  - b. a car with back seat for pets — not people
  - c. the ability to change the color of the car using E Ink
  - d. a car with a robot driver that can “strike an instant rapport with anybody”
- 3. In the company’s quest to increase digital subscriptions to 10 million by 2025, which company purchased Wordle, a game that requires players to guess a five-letter word in six chances?**
  - a. Disney
  - b. Comcast
  - c. *The Wall Street Journal*
  - d. *The New York Times*
- 4. All but one of Texas’ executives — the governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general and comptroller — won his primary election. Which one will face a run-off in May?**
  - a. Texas Gov. Greg Abbott will face Rick Perry.
  - b. Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton will face George P. Bush.
  - c. Texas Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick will face Michelle Beckley.
  - d. Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar will face Mark Goloby.
- 5. In early April, Shanghai officials reported more than 9,000 new COVID cases in one day, pushing the city’s total caseload to more than 60,000 since the omicron outbreak began in March. How did officials react?**
  - a. They put more than 25 million people on extreme lockdown.
  - b. They provided at-home tests for all working individuals and schoolchildren.
  - c. They vaccinated all 25 million residents.
  - d. They did nothing.
- 6. To what did the Treasury Department attribute America’s gross national debt topping \$30 trillion earlier than expected?**
  - a. the inability of Congress to pass a balanced budget amendment
  - b. the pandemic
  - c. funding of the Family Medical Leave Act
  - d. legal fees to fight “frivolous lawsuits” by Republicans against the Biden administration

7. **Michelle Kwan is an retired American figure skater. She is a two-time Olympic medalist, a five-time world champion and a nine-time U.S. champion. U.S. President Joe Biden appointed her to what position?**
- official representative of the U.S. to the Winter Olympics
  - director of the Presidential Youth Fitness Program
  - ambassador to Belize
  - president of the 2028 Olympic organizing committee for the Winter Olympics in Los Angeles
8. **When President Joe Biden swung through the city in January, there was a prominent Atlanta resident missing: Stacey Abrams. Biden, who said, “I’m tired of being quiet,” was in Atlanta to discuss what?**
- infrastructure improvements
  - the pandemic and mask/vaccine mandates
  - inflation
  - voting rights
9. **Robert Manfred Jr., commissioner of baseball, announced an outcome that is “bad for our fans, bad for our players and bad for our clubs.” He delayed the start of the season. Which was NOT one of the things the MLB offered by March 1?**
- salaries higher than the \$700,000 minimum, an increase of \$130,000 from 2021
  - a 33.3% raise to nearly two-thirds of the players
  - a 14-team format for postseason baseball playoffs to the delight of fans
  - a draft lottery
10. **In one of the biggest victories for organized labor in a generation, workers at what Staten Island facility voted by a margin of more than 10% to form a union this spring?**
- Amazon
  - Apple store employees
  - University of Vermont Medical Center
  - Starbucks
11. **The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, an independent, volunteer group of national experts in prevention and evidence-based medicine, now sees little benefit for most healthy people, and says it may contribute to a risk of bleeding in the stomach or brain that goes up as people get older. So now, after years of recommending it to prevent heart attack and stroke, scientists no longer recommend what?**
- fentanyl in any situation
  - multivitamins (including B12 and zinc) for children younger than 16
  - 200 milligrams of ibuprofen weekly
  - a daily aspirin
12. **German pop artist Niclas Castello installed his “Castello Cube” in Central Park. What was it?**
- a glass box filled with nonfungible tokens
  - a knee-high cube cast from more than 400 pounds of Nevadan gold
  - Velveeta cheese
  - artifacts representing 2021 to be buried as part of a time capsule

- 13. More than 200 earthquakes of 3 magnitude and greater shook Texans in 2021, more than double the 98 recorded in 2020, according to a Texas Tribune analysis of state data maintained by the Bureau of Economic Geology at the University of Texas at Austin. What was almost certainly the cause?**
- climate change
  - tectonic shift
  - disposing huge quantities of contaminated, salty water deep underground
  - extraction of water from underground aquifers such as the Edwards Aquifer and Pecos Valley Aquifer
- 14. Representatives of 175 nations agreed in March to begin writing a global treaty and legally binding accord, one that supporters called the most important environmental accord since the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change. What would this treaty restrict?**
- production of plastics
  - use of solar cells that contain gallium
  - extrication of fossil fuels from underground sources
  - construction of offshore wind farms
- 15. State media in North Korea broadcast footage from a military parade in April. The country's leader, Kim Jong Un spoke, decked out in a white military uniform. The whole event seemed choreographed to show off what?**
- new nuclear weapons
  - banned intercontinental ballistic missiles
  - a space station
  - a stealth fighter plane
- 16. It's hardy enough to survive colder climates in the Southeast. It's about the size of a human palm. Like the murder hornet and spotted lanternfly, it's invasive — from Japan. What kind of animal is raising alarms?**
- a spider
  - a rat
  - a snake
  - a fly
- 17. Conservative activist Ginni Thomas, in a series of 29 messages to Mark Meadows, chief of staff for U.S. President Donald Trump, repeatedly asked Meadows to overturn the election results. Ginni's husband, Clarence Thomas, was the lone voice dissenting when the U.S. Supreme Court did what?**
- voted 5-4 NOT to overturn the election results, which would have kept Trump in office
  - refused to hear a case involving Meadows, who was eventually jailed for failing to provide the Court with evidence
  - rejected a request to block the release of White House records
  - ruled that neither a sitting president nor a former president can face charges; "the president is above the law"
- 18. Oklahoma's Senate Bill 612 would make what a felony punishable by up to 10 years in prison and a fine of \$100,000?**
- abortion if a fetal heartbeat can be detected
  - abortion except to save the life of a pregnant woman in a medical emergency
  - teaching of critical race theory in the public school classroom
  - use of certain books deemed "pornography" by parental organizations

- 19. Palm oil is the world's most widely used vegetable oil, but it's harmful to the environment, including to orangutans that are threatened by the massive expansion of palm oil plantations. President Joko Widodo announced that his country, the world's top palm oil producer, will ban exports of the commodity?**
- Malaysia
  - Colombia
  - Indonesia
  - Nigeria
- 20. Thanks to the help of a high tide, several tugboats and barges, crews plucked a 1,095-foot ship free from the shallow water in which it had been, like its sister ship last March, stranded for about a month. Where?**
- Chesapeake Bay
  - Suez Canal
  - Black Sea
  - off the Northern California coast
- 21. Citing competition and password-sharing, what streaming service lost 200,000 subscribers in the first quarter of 2022 and expects to lose another 2 million in the second quarter?**
- CNN+
  - Disney Plus
  - Netflix
  - Amazon Prime
- 22. It's sinking. It's congested. So, Indonesia is moving its capital from Jakarta to where?**
- Banda Aceh
  - Kalimantan
  - Phnom Penh
  - Kuala Lumpur
- 23. The Supreme Court heard oral arguments in a free speech case arising from Boston's practice of allowing outside groups to fly their flags on one of the three flagpoles in front of city hall. What group was denied permission?**
- Oath Keepers, whose flag contains a Nazi swastika
  - Pride, whose flag contains a rainbow of colors
  - the old state of Mississippi, whose flag contains a symbol of the Confederacy
  - Camp Constitution, whose flag contains a Christian symbol
- 24. Michoacan is the only state in Mexico authorized to export them to the United States. However, the U.S. suspended all imports of which item after an American plant safety inspector received threats?**
- automobiles and automobile parts
  - avocados
  - chile peppers
  - tequila
- 25. Florida's "Parental Rights in Education" bill did what?**
- It limited what teachers can discuss about the 1619 Project and race relations.
  - It expanded the role of teachers in sex education saying that such education is a definitive role of the government.
  - It limited what teachers can discuss about sexual orientation and gender identity.
  - It required school districts to provide contraceptives and prophylactics in junior high and high school.

- 26. The coldest place on the planet experienced an episode of warm weather unlike any ever observed, with temperatures soaring 50 to 90 degrees above normal in mid-March. Where?**
- Denali, Alaska, U.S.
  - Oymyakon, Siberia, Russia
  - Oodnadatta, Australia
  - Eastern Antarctica
- 27. Uber announced a partnership with an industry that Uber characterized as inefficient, corrupt and greedy. Soon, what will customers in New York City be able to do?**
- order food for delivery, including a slice of New York pizza, using the Uber app
  - order a yellow taxi on the Uber app
  - order a ride on a helicopter from the city's three largest airports into Manhattan
  - order a Metro card for a subway ride
- 28. Troy Kotsur won an Academy Award for best actor in a supporting role. His "CODA" costar, Marlee Matlin, won an Oscar back in 1987, receiving the best actress award for "Children of a Lesser God." They both broke barriers because they are different in what way?**
- They are both legally blind.
  - They are both physically handicapped and use a wheelchair.
  - They were both born in developing countries to parents of immigrants.
  - They are both deaf.
- 29. Russia and the U.S. carried out an unexpected prisoner exchange in a time of high tensions, trading an American for a convicted Russian drug trafficker serving a long prison sentence in America. Who was the American released?**
- Trevor Reed, an American studying Russian charged with assaulting police officers
  - WNBA star Brittney Griner
  - Michigan corporate security executive Paul Whelan
  - Terry Anderson, an American abducted while playing tennis
- 30. To eliminate 1.7 million pounds of plastic waste every year, Coors Light — following the lead of other companies such as Coca-Cola — said it would replace six-pack plastic rings with what by the end of 2025?**
- only single-can sales requiring no packaging
  - rings made of cardboard or barley straw
  - reusable paper cups and beer or soft-drink dispensing machines
  - biodegradable plastic and an \$85 million donation to Sea Turtle, Inc., on Padre Island
- 31. What does "mask fishing" mean?**
- using various social media to find a new friend based on the type of face mask they wear
  - using facial coverings to cover up what a person really looks like
  - using a false identity to engage in a deceptive relationship
  - using technology to remove a person's mask virtually to see what he or she might look like
- 32. Astronomers using the Hubble Space Telescope announced the discovery of the farthest star ever seen. How far did light from that star travel to reach earth?**
- 4.2 light-years
  - 900 million light-years
  - 12.9 billion light-years
  - 13.4 trillion light-years



- 33. If you joined Donald Trump’s social media platform when it went live in February, you likely saw a waiting list or a stack of error messages. When you got on, you posted “truths,” not tweets. What was the name of his platform?**
- Truth Social
  - Six Degrees
  - Truth or Consequences
  - Trumpster
- 34. After a six-day blockade by truckers protesting COVID restrictions, Canadian police cleared what bridge in Ontario, the largest international suspension bridge in the world, opening it to traffic into the United States?**
- Ambassador Bridge
  - Verrazano-Narrows Bridge
  - Commander Bridge
  - Kokonoe Yume Bridge
- 35. The Digital Markets Act is the most sweeping piece of digital policy since the European Union put into effect the world’s toughest rules to protect people’s online data into effect in 2018. What does it attempt to do?**
- Stop companies like Facebook from sharing personal information for any reason.
  - Stop social media companies from collecting facial recognition information from photos not uploaded for that purpose.
  - Stop companies from blocking content just because company representatives disagree with the content being posted.
  - Stop the largest tech companies from using their considerable resources and foster more competition.
- 36. In one of the deadliest disasters in South Africa’s history, nearly 4,000 homes were destroyed and more than twice as many damaged in the Durban area in April. The death toll approached 500 as a result of what?**
- earthquakes, a result of shifting tectonic plates
  - drought and fires
  - hurricanes coming off the Cape of Good Hope
  - flooding
- 37. Families of victims killed in the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting reached an agreement to settle a lawsuit against the company that made the murder weapon, an AR-15 style weapon, for \$73 million. What company?**
- National Rifle Association
  - Smith & Wesson
  - Remington
  - Sturm, Ruger & Co.

- 38. The acquisition of Activision Blizzard would make what company the world's third-largest gaming company, behind Tencent and Sony?**
- Microsoft
  - Alphabet
  - Amazon
  - Meta
- 39. The Supreme Court heard arguments in *Kennedy v. Bremerton School District* in which a former Washington State high school football coach lost his job. Why does the coach claim he lost his job?**
- for requiring the players to kneel during the national anthem
  - for requiring players to say a team prayer before every game and practice
  - for speaking out on social media against school board policies
  - for praying at the 50-yard line after games
- 40. After helping to lengthen the average workday for more than a century, the Biden administration adopted two new rules that set stricter energy efficiency standards that would, in 2023, effectively phase out the sale of what?**
- incandescent light bulbs
  - fluorescent light bulbs
  - candles
  - LED light bulbs

## 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

The Russian war in Ukraine has proven itself to be one of the most consequential political events of our time — and one of the most confusing. In a televised speech announcing Russia's "special military operation" in Ukraine on Feb. 24, Russian President Vladimir Putin said the invasion was designed to stop a "genocide" perpetrated by "the Kyiv regime" — and ultimately to achieve "the demilitarization and de-Nazification of Ukraine." Russian rule ended in 1991 when 92% of Ukrainians voted to secede from the Soviet Union. Now it appears that Putin wants control of Ukraine back.

Discuss how members of the world community — NOT including the United States — have responded to the conflict.



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# ANSWER KEY

## ESSAY PROMPT

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## POTENTIAL DISCUSSION POINTS PREPARED May 2, 2022 might include, but should not be limited to...

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

- *United Nations* — On March 2, in a rare emergency session, the U.N. General Assembly overwhelmingly voted to condemn Russia’s attack on Ukraine and to demand that Moscow immediately end its military operations in Ukraine. A total of 141 U.N. member states voted to support Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity while condemning Russia’s further invasion. Only five countries voted against the resolution — Russia, Belarus, Syria, Eritrea and North Korea — while 35 countries abstained.
- *Austria* — Austria doesn’t support Ukraine’s admission in the EU. Austria’s finance minister ruled out any EU sanctions that target oil and gas coming from Russia. Austria’s Chancellor Karl Nehammer said he raised alleged Russian atrocities in Ukraine during a “tough” and unfriendly meeting Monday with Vladimir Putin -- the first Western sit-down with the Russian President since he launched the invasion.
- *Britain* — Britain is a staunch supporter of Ukraine and has accused Russia of plotting to overthrow the government in Kyiv. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and warned Russian citizens about the potential human cost of war. Britain also sent antitank weapons to Ukraine, and Johnson said he is considering deploying fighter jets and warships to the region.
- *German* — Even as some of its allies ramp up military support for Ukraine, Germany has taken a more cautious approach. The crisis is an early test for Chancellor Olaf Scholz, whose party has promoted rapprochement with Russia. Russia accounted for 55% of Germany’s gas imports in 2021 and 40% in the first quarter of 2022.
- *Poland* — Russia’s gas supplies are looking highly uncertain after Poland and Bulgaria were told their supplies would stop.
- *China* — China has aimed to strike a delicate balance between Moscow and the West when it comes to the Ukraine crisis. For Beijing, endorsing an invasion of Ukraine by Putin would further deteriorate its ties with Western nations, but Xi also seeks to strengthen China’s growing relationship with Russia. Putin traveled to Beijing for the Opening Ceremonies of the Winter Olympics and met with Xi in person for the first time in nearly two years.
- *Japan* — Zelenskyy thanked Japan for being the first Asian nation to pressure Russia over its invasion of Ukraine. Japan froze the assets of dozens of Russians and prohibited exports to 81 Russian organizations in response to Moscow’s war in Ukraine. Japan refrained from imposing harsh sanctions on Russia after the invasion of Ukraine and annexation of Crimea in 2014. Abe Shinzo, Japan’s longest-serving prime minister, met Vladimir Putin, Russia’s president, 27 times between 2012 and 2020.
- *India* — Neutral. India’s neutrality on Ukraine rooted in deep ties to Russia, lingering mistrust of U.S. A deputy U.S. national security adviser traveled to New Delhi to press India to take a more forceful stance against Russia over the Ukraine war.
- *Cuba* — Mixed. The Cuban government’s failure to condemn the invasion conflicts with Cuba’s history of international solidarity with Ukraine. During and since the run-up to the Ukraine invasion, Cuban state media parroted Russian propaganda in support of Putin’s actions, as well as Russian claims of genocide perpetrated by the Ukrainian government. It has also criticized the “hypocrisy” of sanctions against Russia.
- *North Korea* — “The Ukraine situation is never irrelevant to us.” With global attention focused on Europe, “there is a possibility that North Korea will conduct strategic provocations,” South Korean President-elect Yoon Suk-yeol said. In late April, North Korea put two new ICBMs on parade, a warning officials said.