

What Does Afghanistan Need to Ensure a Peaceful and Secure Future?

Overview This lesson examines what happened in Afghanistan that led to the American-led war there. Students are challenged to think about what Afghans need to ensure a better future.

Objectives Students will

- Summarize key points clearly and succinctly in their own words.
- Consider alternate perspectives in an argument.
- Make an argument for ethical and responsible action in relation to its impact on the local communities and international stakeholders.

Prerequisite This lesson focuses on recent Afghan history, but does not cover events outside Afghanistan. High school students today have little, if any memory, of the September 11 attacks and the Bush Doctrine. They may have little understanding of what al Qaeda is. Depending on the prior knowledge of your students, you may need to provide a summary overview.

Consider projecting the following quote, excerpt, and definition to give students a little context of outside forces:

“We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them.” – U.S. President George W. Bush, September 11, 2001

“[To prevent hostile attacks] the United States will, if necessary, act preemptively in exercising our inherent right of self-defense.” – National Security Strategy of the United States (aka Bush Doctrine), September 22, 2002

Al Qaeda is a stateless terrorist network known to operate in many countries, including Afghanistan.

Time Required Two 50-minute class periods, plus optional extension exercise that may be completed outside class.

Materials Internet connection
Projector

Assessment Quality of whole-class discussion

Quality of response to an online article about Afghanistan's future

Procedure **Class period one:**

- Introduce the lesson by showing photos comparing women in Afghanistan's capital city of Kabul. ([Download the PowerPoint slides.](#))



circa 1950s



circa 2000s

Explain that in the last 100 years, Afghanistan enjoyed a long period of peace and stability as a sovereign nation before a Marxist overthrow of government and Soviet invasion in the late 1970s. The United States

backed resistance fighters. After the Soviets withdrew, civil war continued, and finally, the American-led war ensued in 2001. This lesson looks at the 30 years plus years of war in Afghanistan, and challenges students to think about what Afghans need to ensure a better future.

- Split the class into four groups. Give each group an assignment sheet, “What Were the Roots of Conflict in Afghanistan?” (attached). Review the assignment.
- Assign each group watch one of the following videos and to follow the instructions on the assignment sheet. Set timer and give students 20 minutes to complete this task.

Group 1: [Void After Victory](#)

Group 2: [The Rise of the Taliban](#)

Group 3: [A Fragile Nation Divided](#)

Group 4: [Wealth and Warlords](#)

- After they watch the video, ask a representative from each group to summarize the main points of the video in one minute or less. You may want to play the video, without sound, in the background.
- As a large group discuss the fact that the Soviet Afghan War caused a rupture in the political, social, and cultural fabric of Afghanistan, and the effects of which have affected the world.

How did the Soviet Afghan War create the conditions that led to the Taliban gaining control?

How did those conditions also provide a safe haven for al Qaeda?

Class period two:

- Before class, print one set of Hierarchy of Needs cards. Print double-sided or tape paper together so that the front displays a basic human need, and the back has a short definition.
- Ask five volunteers to step to the front of the room. Give each student a card (shuffled).

Tell the class that the objectives are to deduce what

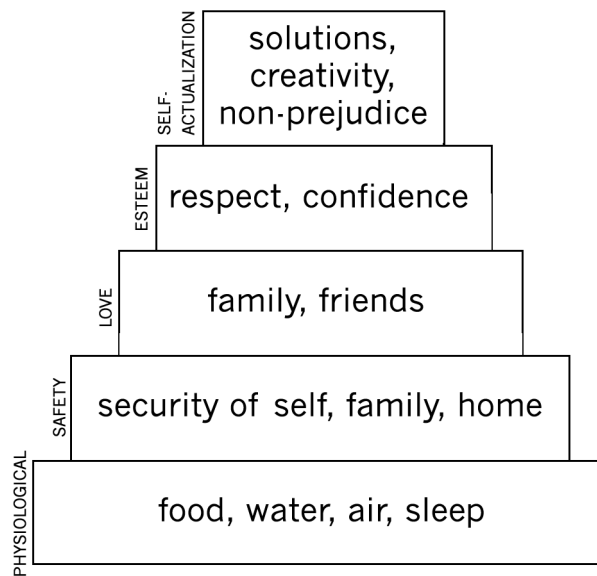
human needs are most basic, and what needs are contingent upon others.

Each of the five students will read the small-text description on the back of the card, while holding up the front of the card for the whole class to see.

Through constructive debate, the class has to help order the cards from most basic needs to the higher order needs. In other words, what needs must be met before focusing on achieving the next level of needs?

The answer is, from most basic to highest-order: physiological, safety, love/belonging, esteem, self-actualization.

The hierarchy of needs, constructed by Abraham Maslow in the 1940s, typically looks like this:



- Write or project this on the board: “Our security as Americans depends on the security of Afghans.”
- Show these videos to the class:

[Homeland Security](#)
[A Song for Afghanistan](#)

- Discuss: Does the class agree with the first statement, that American security is contingent on Afghan security? Why or why not?

Extension Ask students to find an online article offering broad analysis of current Afghanistan strategies (they should not look for news coverage of a specific event). Offer comments in the comment field.

- State ideas clearly and succinctly
- Compels thinking of alternative perspectives or strategies.