

Understanding General Concepts – Answer Key

You can check your notes against this key to be sure you are identifying the most important information.

Term	Notes
sovereignty	<p>Definition: The principle of complete authority within a territory.</p> <p>Examples: Germany after the Treaty of Westphalia; any state in the contemporary international system.</p>
nationalism	<p>Definition: A large identity group (nation) with core similarities—religion, ethnicities, language, or race—that develops a feeling of community and a desire for self-rule (nation-state). Can also refer to a general support for one’s nation state relative to other states.</p> <p>Examples: Conflicts between various ethnic groups in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s; increased support for the President during times of war (“rally around the flag” effect); recent creation of an independent South Sudan.</p>
social Darwinism	<p>Definition: A pseudo-scientific theory that applies the principles of natural selection and survival of the fittest to societies, nations, and states; when combined with nationalism, it justifies survival of the fittest and has enabled imperialism and the Holocaust, and it continues to fuel genocides today.</p> <p>Examples: Nazi Germany; Japanese in China and Korea before and during World War II; Serbs in Bosnia during the Balkan conflicts in the 1990s.</p>
supreme authority	<p>Definition: The right to command or be obeyed; legitimate use of coercion.</p> <p>Examples: The use of the police, or at times the National Guard or military, to enforce laws in the United States, such as to integrate schools following the <i>Brown vs. Board of Education</i> Supreme Court case. A lack of supreme authority can also be notable in its absence, such as (as realists argue) at the level of the international system, or with regard to failed states such as Somalia or the tribal areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan.</p>

anarchy	<p>Definition: A condition in which there is no central authority or ultimate arbiter to resolve disputes.</p> <p>Examples: According to realists, the international system is anarchic; Tribal areas in Afghanistan and Pakistan; Somalia.</p>
circumscription of the sovereign state	<p>Definition: Intervention that abridges the rights of sovereign states, ceding control of all matters within a state to outside powers, rules, or agreements.</p> <p>Examples: Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948); The Responsibility to Protect (2001); the European Union (1950); NATO intervention in Libya in 2011.</p>
Prisoner's Dilemma	<p>Definition: A concept from game theory that describes a situation in which each state works in its own self-interest, and the result is everyone is worse off.</p> <p>Examples: Behavior of states with regard to climate change; the arms race during the Cold War.</p>
globalization	<p>Definition: Worldwide interdependence of a growing number of aspects of economic and cultural life.</p> <p>Examples: Indiana's agricultural sector competing with subsidized exports and relying on the World Trade Organization (WTO) to resolve the issue.</p>
de facto/de jure	<p>Definition: De facto: In fact, but not necessarily ordained by law. De jure: in law.</p> <p>Examples: Many argue that though Dmitry Medvedev was the de jure President of Russia from 2008 to 2012, Vladimir Putin was the de facto ruler.</p>
realism	<p>Definition: An approach to understanding international politics that adopts a negative view of human nature, views the international system as anarchic, and emphasizes the pursuit of and distribution of power (and the various sources of power) in the international system.</p> <p>Examples: Morgenthau's theory of international politics: national interest = power.</p>

national power	<p>Definition: Economic, social, cultural, political, military, territorial, scientific and technological, and transnational variables that, when weighted for role and importance, show a broader range of power than previous models based primarily on economic and military variables.</p> <p>Examples: Finland ranks #1 in political power, while the US ranks #1 in economic power and social power.</p>
alliance	<p>Definition: A formal or informal relationship of security cooperation between two or more sovereign states.</p> <p>Examples: Franco-Russian Alliance before WWI; Japanese alliance with Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy during WWII; NATO.</p>
balance-of-threat theory	<p>Definition: The theory that says states ally to balance threats, not just power. Threats can include geographic proximity, offensive capabilities, and perceived intentions.</p> <p>Examples: US alliances with Middle Eastern states such as Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.</p>
bandwagoning	<p>Definition: When states join together in pursuit of a common task that is immanent or already in progress; states will join one side of a conflict that is happening or about to happen because they want to be on the side of the winner.</p> <p>Examples: The coalition of states that supported the US during the Gulf War.</p>
resource curse	<p>Definition: The theory that the presence of valuable natural resources can impede a country's development because of corruption and reliance on a limited range of sources of income.</p> <p>Examples: The oil-rich Gulf states; African countries that rely on cash crops that may increase or decrease in value.</p>