

Trade and Tariffs

Discussion Guide



Let's review

At the start of each discussion, review the conversation ground rules for returning and new members alike to set the stage for active participation by all. You may want to use a timer as you go around the room.

And don't forget to decide who will take notes and post a discussion recap.

- **Be open and curious:** Everyone has a unique perspective, so be prepared to hear a different point of view. Listen first, and focus on the facts.
- **Be respectful and engaged:** Be sure that everyone has a chance to speak before adding a second comment or perspective. Encourage each other's participation.
- **Be focused and concise:** Keep the conversation centered on the issue and the brief.

The "Table-it" Rule: If the group has gone off-topic but the area is of interest, the group can table the conversation and save it for another time to be addressed in a different manner.

Let's begin

- Take five minutes to review the [Executive Summary](#) for this brief. Highlight the main point of each section and key statistics.
- Each member is invited to answer the following questions in a **two-three minute reaction** to the brief:
 - Introduce yourself, and share what "lens of care" did you wear when reviewing this brief (e.g. personal, professional, community, state, nation, global)?
 - What did you find most interesting or surprising from reading the brief? What matters?

Spread the Word: Some Facts to Share with the Group During Your Discussion

- Economists from the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, Princeton University, and Columbia University [reported](#) tariffs from 2018 increased costs for consumers by \$1.4 billion per month.
- The U.S. Customs and Border Protection reported it collected almost [\\$75 billion in tariffs](#) on imported goods during FY2020.
- After widening in 2018 to \$419 billion, the [U.S. trade deficit with China](#) saw a reduction in 2019. The trade gap totaled \$311 billion in 2020, due to slowdowns in the global economy as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, and widened 14.5% to [\\$355 billion in 2021](#) due to increased American demand for imported goods.

Let's discuss

Pick 2 or 3 questions that resonate with the group and discuss, or choose your own.

- **Community:** Is there a place for tariffs in free trade? Have the prices of items you purchase been affected by tariffs?
- **Local, State, or Federal Government:** What measures can be taken to ensure all countries commit to equitable trade practices?
- **Business:** How important is it that trade agreements address the trade of intangible goods such as digital technologies, data, and intellectual property?

Let's act

1. **Take it local.** Identify the status of trade and tariffs in your community.
2. **Explore the impact of trade laws in your community.** Search on your state or municipality's website for the business portal or a tab labelled "*business*" in a dropdown menu. Search for [your state] + "*international trade*" in the search bar.
3. **Investigate community programs.** Search for [your state] or [your county] + "*trade*" or "*imports and exports*" to see if there is a related task force or entity to connect with. Investigate how trade and tariffs have affected businesses in your community.
4. **Research your elected representatives' positions** on free trade, and their vision for how to tackle related challenges facing Americans and your community. You can find contact information for federal, state, and local government officials [here](#). Your state or municipality's websites will also have information to contact leaders. Try looking at the drop-down menu for a *Government* tab.
5. **Establish a relationship with your legislators.** It's easy to establish a relationship with your legislators. Start by introducing yourself. You can also learn to write to your representatives or set up a meeting with a legislator on [The Policy Circle website](#).
6. **Consider writing a letter to the editor or an op-ed on your stance on data privacy in your local paper.** Learn how on [The Policy Circle website](#).

Next Steps for Your Circle

- **Post a Recap:** Summarize your discussion to share thoughts with members not present, and share planned actions from group members. Designate who will post a meeting recap on your circle page.
- **Decide your next meeting topic.** Want to discuss a related brief at your next meeting? Suggestions include:
 - [Foreign Policy: Asia Pacific](#)
 - [Economic Growth](#)
- **Dive Deeper into the issues.** If this is an area you would like to pursue further, consider taking possible steps to influence policy. The Policy Circle offers resources for [developing a message about your issue](#) and [organizing a petition](#) to amplify your voice and raise awareness. Don't miss our [latest events](#) that help you dive deeper on this issue and more.