

# 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.