



Our government interacts with other countries either one-to-one or as part of international organisations, like the [United Nations](#). How we interact with other countries can change in response to world events or events at home. Good relationships mean we can trade freely and travel overseas; on the other hand, bad relationships can hurt our economy and limit our travel freedoms. In this activity, we will explore international relations policy.

→ Go to [policy.nz/2023/party-vote/policies/defence-and-foreign-affairs/](https://policy.nz/2023/party-vote/policies/defence-and-foreign-affairs/)

→ Find and read the ‘International relations’ section

→ Explore answers to these questions and share your ideas and reasoning with others

1. We are a small country, but we interact with countries far bigger than us. How do differences in countries’ sizes affect how we interact? Read [this](#) page to get started.
2. Our international relations are managed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Foreign affairs and trade were not always managed by the same ministry, so what do you think it says about New Zealand that we now combine them in the same organisation? Read the information on the MFAT website [here](#) to guide your thinking.
3. Read [this](#) page on NZHistory for information on many of the major events in our international relations history in the last century. Which events do you think changed our international relations the most? Why do you think this? Read the history of our nuclear free policy. Do you think this policy still affects our relations with the USA today? Why or why not?

→ Go back to Policy.nz and browse the policies. Click on policies to read more detail

→ Save the policies you agree with by clicking the heart icon

4. How might other policy areas affect our international relations? Start by looking at policies under ‘Immigration’, ‘Te Tiriti o Waitangi and governance’ and ‘Travel and border restrictions’.
5. Political parties often have more similar approaches to foreign affairs than they do to issues within our country, like housing or tax. Why might this be?
6. Imagine you are the Minister of Foreign Affairs. What relationships should we have with the USA, China, Great Britain, Australia, and why? Choose where you stand on this spectrum:
  - Where they go, we go: Very similar foreign policy and trade goals
  - Closely aligned: Maintain a defense partnership and strong trade relations
  - A mixed bag: Maximise trade opportunities, but hold different foreign policy goals
  - Cautious: Maintain different views on most areas of policy