# Victory and Its Limits

Compare the causes and consequences of two US-led wars in Iraq

**SS24.US2.18c** "Compare and contrast Operation Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom, including why they took place, the domestic political consequences of United States' involvement in these conflicts, and the international implications for these wars."

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline each war's stated goal, circle one domestic political consequence of each war, and number two international implications: 1 for Desert Storm and 2 for Iraqi Freedom. Use your marks to track both similarities and differences.

### Two Wars, Different Aftermaths

(1) In August 1990, Iraqi forces occupied neighboring Kuwait. The United Nations demanded that Iraq withdraw and authorized member states to use force after a deadline. In January 1991, a US-led coalition began Operation Desert Storm, an air and ground campaign that expelled Iraqi forces from Kuwait. Its stated aim was to restore Kuwait's independence, not remove Iraq's leader, Saddam Hussein. Coalition troops included forces from Arab and European countries, giving the campaign broad international backing. The fighting ended within weeks, but US forces remained in the region, and disputes over Iraq's weapons programs continued.

(2) In March 2003, the United States and partners launched Operation Iraqi Freedom. President George W. Bush's administration argued that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction and posed a security threat, particularly after the September 11 attacks. Unlike in 1991, removing Hussein's government was a central goal. Inspectors had not verified the administration's weapons claims, and no new UN Security Council resolution explicitly authorized the invasion. US troops quickly toppled Hussein, but the claimed stockpiles were not found. A long occupation and violent insurgency followed. Both wars used US-led forces against Iraq, yet their immediate goals, international authorization, and aftermath differed.

(3) At home, Desert Storm's swift victory boosted President George H. W. Bush's approval ratings, though that support did not prevent his defeat in the 1992 election amid economic concerns. The 2003 invasion initially drew substantial US support, but missing weapons, mounting casualties, and the prolonged war fueled criticism and divided voters. Abroad, the 1991 coalition reinforced the UN-backed principle that states should not conquer their neighbors. The 2003 invasion split long-standing allies and strained trust in US claims; the occupation also contributed to instability in Iraq and the wider region. Military success alone did not settle either war's political questions.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the reason for fighting and the immediate goal differ between Desert Storm and Iraqi Freedom?

2. How did international authorization and backing differ between the two wars?

3. Compare how US public support changed after the early military success of each war.

4. What different international consequences followed the two wars, even after US-led forces met their immediate military goals?

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 75- to 95-word museum label arguing which war more clearly shows that a quick battlefield victory does not settle political consequences. Compare both wars, including one domestic and one international consequence of each, and distinguish an immediate goal from a later result.

**ANSWER KEY**

# Victory and Its Limits

**GRADE 11 · SS24.US2.18c**

## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each war's stated goal, circle one domestic political consequence of each war, and number two international implications: 1 for Desert Storm and 2 for Iraqi Freedom. Use your marks to track both similarities and differences. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | How did the reason for fighting and the immediate goal differ between Desert Storm and Iraqi Freedom? | **Desert Storm responded to Iraq's occupation of Kuwait and aimed to restore Kuwait's independence. Iraqi Freedom was justified by claims that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction and posed a security threat; removing Hussein's government was a central goal.** |
| 2 | How did international authorization and backing differ between the two wars? | **Desert Storm had UN authorization to use force and a broad coalition that included Arab and European forces. No new UN Security Council resolution explicitly authorized the 2003 invasion, which split long-standing allies.** |
| 3 | Compare how US public support changed after the early military success of each war. | **Desert Storm's swift victory raised George H. W. Bush's approval ratings, although he lost the 1992 election amid economic concerns. Iraqi Freedom initially had substantial support, but missing weapons, casualties, and a prolonged war fueled criticism and divided voters.** |
| 4 | What different international consequences followed the two wars, even after US-led forces met their immediate military goals? | **Desert Storm reinforced a UN-backed principle against conquest, although disputes over Iraq's weapons continued. Iraqi Freedom strained trust in US claims, split allies, and contributed to instability in Iraq and the wider region.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Operation Iraqi Freedom more clearly shows the limits of a quick battlefield victory. US forces toppled Hussein quickly, but the occupation and insurgency continued, while missing weapons and casualties divided voters at home. The invasion also split allies and weakened trust in US claims. Desert Storm quickly expelled Iraqi forces and initially raised President George H. W. Bush's approval ratings, yet he lost the next election amid economic concerns. Its UN-backed coalition strengthened the principle of resisting conquest, but disputes over Iraq's weapons continued. In neither case did battlefield success end political debate.

Accept a different choice of war in Part 3 if the argument accurately compares both wars and addresses the required domestic and international consequences. Do not treat Bush's 1992 defeat as caused by Desert Storm; the passage identifies economic concerns as a factor.