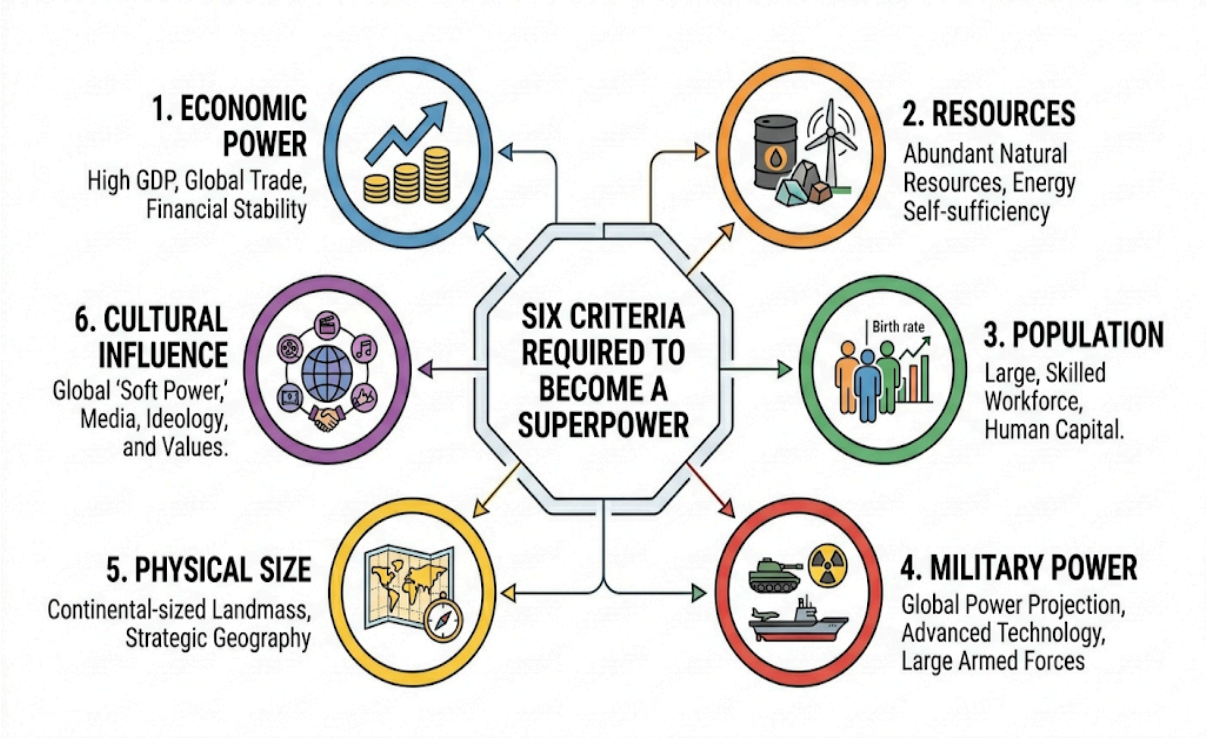
UNIT ENQUIRY - Who will be the world's dominant superpower in 2050?



<u>Lesson 1</u> - **What is a Superpower?**

1. The six pillars of power are economic, resources, population, military, physical size, and cultural influence.

2. Certain countries exert more influence than others through a mix of human and physical factors. such as their location and human capital.

3. After the unipolar world of the British Empire, the world moved to a bipolar world curing the Cold War and is now moving into a multipolar world where no country achieves hegemony.

<u>Lesson 2</u> - **Battle of the Giants - Who WIll Come Out on Top?**

1. USA and China are roughly the same physical size but the USA has a better physical geography to China due to its access to two oceans and isolation.

2. The two countries account for 40% of the world's GDP but whilst the USA has a larger economy, China has a larger population.

3. The two nations are now rivals as they compete on trade (tariffs), technology (5G and chips), and borders such as the South China Sea.

UNIT ENQUIRY - Who will be the world's dominant superpower in 2050?

Lesson 3 - **Round 1: Economic Power**

1. In geopolitics, **economic power** is the 'engine room'. A strong economy funds a massive military, advanced technology, and the ability to influence other nations.

2. The USA used the Bretton Woods System to establish US dominance of its currency and IGOs whilst China uses the infrastructure projects of its Belt and Road Initiative.

3. Geographers often refer to the USA as a country run by 'lawyers' whereas China is a country run by 'engineers'.

Lesson 4 - **Round 2: Resources**

1. Control over energy resources gives nations 'leverage' over others who must import them to keep their economies moving.

2. USA is an energy giant due to shale gas and water whereas China is a resource king due to the abundance of rare earth minerals.

3. As the world moves away from its reliance on fossil fuels, China's resources might help the country assert global dominance.

Lesson 6 - **Round 3: Population**

1. The USA has steady birth rates and immigration keeps the workforce stable whereas China's population is 'top-heavy' with a shrinking workforce as the number of elderly grows.

2. The USA uses migration to offset low birth rates, adding working-age adults without training costs whilst China's One-Child Policy caused an ageing crisis. Despite new rules, the birth rate remains low.

3. These demographic changes bring advantages and disadvantages for the future growth of both countries.

Lesson 7 - **Round 4: Military (Hard) Power**

1. Hard power refers to the use of military or economic force to influence the behaviour of other countries. Military strength is the ultimate insurance policy for a superpower.

UNIT ENQUIRY - Who will be the world's dominant superpower in 2050?

2. The USA military has a global reach due to its 800 foreign bases and its spending of $800bn+ whilst China is a regional power with spending of $290bn. However, China has the highest personnel in the world at over 2m+.

3. Beijing claims the South China Sea using artificial islands and bases whilst the US patrols the region to ensure a 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific'. The area surrounding Taiwan is a zone of potential conflict.

Lesson 8 - **Round 5: Physical Size and Sphere of Influence**

1. Large countries usually have more natural resources, but they also have longer borders that are expensive to secure.

2. A Sphere of Influence (SOI) is the region where a superpower exerts its strongest political, economic, and military pressure.

3. The USA's influence is 'Blue Water' (global/oceanic), while China's is currently more 'Continental' (regional/land-based).

Lesson 9 - **Round 6: Cultural Influence and Soft Power**

1. Soft power refers to the ability to influence others through attraction and persuasion rather than coercion (force) or payment.

2. Countries use different ways to export their culture and values to the rest of the world - media, technology, education, and languages.

3. The USA uses global brands, media dominance, and sporting influence whilst China uses pandas, technology, and mega-events.