

LESSON H-UV-L2

# Security vs. Civil Liberties After 9/11

**Unit V:** Post 9/11: Challenges and Consequences

**Grade Levels:** 9–12

**Time:** 45–60 minutes (over two separate class periods)



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## Objectives

- Weigh three controversial issues associated with the Patriot Act and American civil liberties, and how 9/11 has affected viewpoints.
- Analyze the inconsistencies that may occur when trying to balance the need for national security and the need to protect civil liberties.

## Key Terms

- civil liberties
- Patriot Act

## Lesson Materials

- “Security vs. Civil Liberties: Holmes Debate Examines Contemporary Issues” by Robert Mander and Janice Hyde (found at <http://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/o4o8/safefree.html>), and article that describes a debate divided into three rounds and a final panel discussion on the following issues:
  - “The USA Patriot Act: Patriotism at Work or an Intolerable Law in a Constitutional Democracy?”
  - “The Balance Between Freedom and National Security: Must Americans Accept Limitations on Their First Amendment Rights to Be Successful in the Battle Against Terrorism?”
  - “Enemy Combatants/Military Tribunals: Fair vs. Foul Means in the War Against Terrorism.”
  - Panel Discussion: “International Forum on World Terrorism”
- The United States Bill of Rights (found at <http://billofrightsinstitute.org/founding-documents/bill-of-rights/>)
- Student Worksheet: Security vs. Civil Liberties in Three Rounds (one copy for each student; see below)

## Lesson Plan

### Day #1

- Review the rights of all Americans as listed and explained in the U.S. Bill of Rights.
- Divide the class into three groups, one for each of the three debate rounds and the panel discussion. (Alternatively, this activity may be done as a class, reviewing the questions for each of the three rounds and the panel discussion together.) Each group should have a “reporter” who will report the main points of the group discussion back to the class.
- For approximately 30 minutes, have the students read the questions and perspectives in the debate round. Have them discuss each argument and expand the ideas inherent in each.
- Come together as a class once again, and have each group reporter read the question and explain the basic arguments, pro and con.
- Then assign the following homework: Ask the students to research one of the issues in the debate and gather more information on the subject at home. Encourage them to use news web sites or government agencies to avoid partisanship and bias. Remind them to document all the sources they use in their research.

## Day #2

- Have the students share the additional information they researched with their groups or with the class.
- Ask the students: “After reviewing the Bill of Rights and the issues addressed in the debate, what should the balance be between national security and the protection of civil rights? Has this balance been found?” Guide students to discuss the questions in groups or as a class.

## Evidence of Understanding

### Formative Assessment

- Evaluate the students based on their participation in the class and group discussions about the debate on security vs. civil liberties.
- Evaluate students’ worksheets on the debate questions.

### Summative Assessment

Have a final student discussion about the inconsistencies that may occur when trying to balance the need for national security and the need to protect civil liberties. Ask: “Has this balance been achieved? Is it fluid? If another terrorist attack occurs in the U.S., will this debate become more intense?”

## Additional Activities and Resources

Have students research and examine these topics or other similar topics from current events: closing Gitmo, military tribunals, trial of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed in New York City, etc.

## Taking Action and Giving Service

- Have the students research current bills in Congress that might affect rights granted under The Bill of Rights. Encourage them to write a letter or email to their legislators expressing their opinion on whether or not the bill should pass.

# Student Worksheet: Security vs. Civil Liberties in Three Rounds

**Unit V:** Post 9/11: Challenges and Consequences

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Period/Class \_\_\_\_\_

## Student Assignment

1. Review the United States Bill of Rights (found at <http://billofrightsinitiative.org/founding-documents/bill-of-rights/>)
2. Read and discuss the three rounds of the debate on security vs. civil liberties (found at “Security vs. Civil Liberties: Holmes Debate Examines Contemporary Issues” by Robert Mander and Janice Hyde, <http://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/0408/safefree.html>). Also read and consider the points made in the panel discussion, “International Forum on World Terrorism.”
3. Use the Discussion Questions below to guide your group discussion. Take notes on your discussion to share with the class.
4. As homework, research one of the points made during the three debates and the roundup discussion. What is currently under scrutiny as discussed in the Mander and Hyde article (cited above in question 2)?
  - “The USA Patriot Act: Patriotism at Work or an Intolerable Law in a Constitutional Democracy?”
  - “The Balance Between Freedom and National Security: Must Americans Accept Limitations on Their First Amendment Rights to Be Successful in the Battle Against Terrorism?”
  - “Enemy Combatants/Military Tribunals: Fair vs. Foul Means in the War Against Terrorism.”
  - Panel Discussion: “International Forum on World Terrorism”
5. As a class, discuss and debate the arguments in the three rounds and panel discussion. Expanding the ideas inherent in each. What did your homework research uncover?

## Discussion Questions

1. Explain both sides of the issue. Which seems the most convincing? Explain.
2. The argument can be made that compromising our civil liberties in any way means the terrorists have won. Do you agree or disagree? Explain your reasoning.
3. Has a balance between national security and civil liberties been achieved? Is it fluid? Explain.
4. If another terrorist attack occurs on American soil, will this debate become more intense? Explain.