

LESSON M-UV-L1

Civil Rights in the Age of Terrorism

Unit V: Post 9/11: Challenges and Consequences

Grade Levels: 7-8

Time: 80 Minutes



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Objectives

- Define and identify some American civil rights.
- Analyze hypothetical cases and discuss the impact of terrorism on these rights.

Key Terms

- civil rights
- consensus
- profiling

Lesson Materials

- Student Assignment: Civil Rights in the Age of Terrorism: Case Studies
- copy of the Constitution
- background information on the Patriot Act (found at <http://www.justice.gov/archive/ll/highlights.htm>)

Lesson Plan

- Have the students review the Patriot Act and respond to the journal prompt: “Security at the expense of justice is no security at all.” Ask:
 - What do you think the statement means?
 - Do you agree or disagree?
 - How does this statement pertain to terrorism?
- When the students have completed their writing, ask them to share their journal responses.
- Next, introduce the term “civil rights.” Have the students list some of their rights.
- Break the students into groups and distribute the Student Assignment Civil Rights in the Age of Terrorism: Case Studies to each group. Have the groups analyze the cases and decide:
 - What are the issues?
 - What civil rights are being violated?
 - How should this case be handled or what actions should the authorities take, keeping in mind the issue of security? Why?
- Have the groups present their findings to the class.

Evidence of Understanding

Use the following questions for a large group discussion or possible writing prompts:

What were some of the problems your group had in determining your answers?

Which case studies were the most difficult? Why?

When discussing the case studies dealing with students, did you visualize a particular group? How did that influence your decisions?

In what ways was there a difference in your discussions of the class trip case study and the 9/11 case study? Why?

Go back to the original journal entry: “Security at the expense of justice is no security at all.” How has this activity influenced your perception and understanding of civil rights? How can the U.S. protect its civil rights while maintaining our nation’s security?

Note to Teacher: Students may also select two of the four case studies (randomly or assigned to each group to ensure that all four cases can be covered in class).

Additional Activities and Resources

- Have students research information about organizations that have been established in the history of United States specifically to address issues of civil rights and the protection of civil rights for all. (Possible examples: American Civil Liberties Union, Southern Poverty Law Center, etc.) Have them consider these questions:
 - Why were some of these groups viewed as so controversial? Explain.
 - Do you think such organizations play an important role for the citizens of the nation? Explain why or why not.
- Identify several legal cases that have reached the United States Supreme Court over an issue of civil rights. Make a chart with columns headed as follows: Name of case, Date of case, Brief summary of case, Civil right in question, Decision of court. Review the cases and fill in the chart with the class.

Taking Action and Giving Service

- Ask the students to identify a policy in their community or school that has in the past or could potentially infringe on the civil rights of citizens. Have them complete the following items:
 - Identify the event that precipitated the policy or law (use newspaper sources).
 - Develop a timeline from the event to passing the law or enacting the policy.
 - Identify the responses and reactions to the law or policy (use letters to the editor in newspapers, etc.).
 - Determine what organizations supported the civil rights of citizens. Visit the organization’s website and subscribe to their e-news, write an email commenting on their resources, or write an email with a question about the policy or law identified above.

Student Assignment:

Civil Rights in the Age of Terrorism: Case Studies

Unit V: Post 9/11: Challenges and Consequences

Lesson: M-UV-L1

Name _____ Date _____

Period/Class _____

In each of these case studies, your group should come to a consensus on the following issues:

What are the issues?

What civil rights are being violated?

How should this case be handled or what actions should the authorities take, keeping in mind the issue of security? Why?

Discuss each of the suggestions and determine which one is the best. Keep in mind the issues of civil rights and security.

Case Study 1 – The Airport

After 9/11, U.S. security authorities adopted a series of measures at airports. These included body searches and interrogations. In addition, certain background information (passports from certain countries, last minute reservations) was also used to decide who should be searched and questioned. It was suggested by some that people were being selected by race, religion, or nationality. This action could be considered profiling.

Some suggestions to alleviate this issue are:

1. Search everyone.
2. Search randomly.
3. Use profiling to determine who should be searched.
4. Do not search anyone.
5. Other?

Case Study 2 – The Drug Case

There are rumors of drug use in the local school. Which would be the best way to fight this problem?

1. Administer a drug test to all students once a month without prior notification.
2. Use group profiling to determine who should have a drug test. Groups known to have access to drugs or a history of drug use would be given a drug test.
3. Administer a drug test without prior notification to teachers and students whom the administration suspects of drug use.
4. Administer a drug test to twenty randomly selected students.
5. Other?

Case Study 3 – The Class Trip

You are on an overnight class trip. Someone informs the teacher chaperones of a rumor that a group has been partying with alcohol. What should be done?

1. Cancel the rest of the trip and take all the students home.
2. Send home the students who are suspected of using the alcohol.
3. All the students should be questioned and subsequent actions should be taken as needed.
4. Do nothing; after all, it was just a rumor.
5. Other?

Case Study 4 – The Patriot Act

After 9/11, the U.S. government passed a law called the Patriot Act. This act gives the government the right to search telephone, e-mail, and medical records of possible terrorist suspects without a court order. It also allows for the indefinite detention (imprisonment) of suspected immigrants.

1. Different groups believe the following should be done regarding the Patriot Act:
2. The act is unconstitutional and should be eliminated.
3. Restrict the use of the act.
4. Limit the amount of time a person can be detained.
5. Use this only with individuals suspected of posing an immediate threat to our security.
6. The government should use it every time it determines it is necessary.
7. Other?