

Unit II: Terrorism: From the Playground to the World Stage

Grade Levels: 9-12

Time: 60 minutes or more

Lesson HII-4: Who is a Terrorist?

Objective:

The student will understand the role that stereotyping plays when identifying terrorists.

Key Terms:

Stereotype

Prejudice

Terrorism

Materials:

- Sketching or blank white paper
- Pencil
- Scotch or masking tape
- Student notebook

Activities/Procedures:

1. Ask students to close their eyes and picture a terrorist. After one minute, ask them to open their eyes. Hand out paper. Have students write a few sentences (or a list of adjectives) describing their concept of a terrorist, without looking at other students' papers (allow approx. 10 minutes). When they are finished, have students post them around the room. Have students walk around the room and read the words of their classmates. (allow approximately 10 minutes).
2. Have them write down answers to the following questions:
 - What do these words describing terrorists have in common?
 - How many are similar? Calculate a percentage.
3. Class discussion of the observations and answers to the questions (allow approximately 15 minutes).
4. Questions for the teacher to ask:
 - Were any of the terrorists women?
 - Were any of the terrorists children?
 - What were the qualities in your mind that you attempted to depict?
5. Teacher could show video clips, Internet pictures, etc. mentioned in background information.
6. The teacher should now introduce the concept of stereotyping.
7. Discussion: (Approximately 15-20 minutes). Divide class into small groups.
 - About whom else have students heard or used stereotypes?
 - What role does prejudice play in stereotyping?
 - Are stereotypes true?
 - What harm can stereotyping do?
 - Is racial profiling acceptable?
8. End lesson with the questions: Can you really identify a typical terrorist? Are there both good and bad uses of stereotypes?

Background for Subject of Lesson (when needed):

Teacher could prepare photographs/descriptions of terrorists accessed from newspapers or the Internet---especially those that do not fit the "stereotype."

- Timothy McVeigh
- Those who shoot and bomb abortion clinics
- Video clips of female and children suicide bombers

Evidence of Understanding (Assessment of Student Performance: Formative and Summative)

Essay: How might the use of stereotypes affect our society?
(summative)

Extension Activities: Taking Action and Giving Service:

Research an incident in the United States or in another country that has been identified as a terrorist incident.

- Who perpetrated the incident?
- Why was the incident identified as a terrorist incident?

Do the perpetrators (or alleged perpetrators) fit a stereotype of a terrorist? Explain your response, i.e. give examples of physical, religious, ethnic, cultural, etc. characteristics that would be identified in a stereotype that also are exhibited by the perpetrators. How does the perpetrator differ from the stereotype? Has the perpetrator (or accused perpetrator) been captured, given a trial, and convicted? Was the trial a fair trial? Explain your reasons for saying "yes" or "no" to the question of a fair trial.

Did the concept of a stereotype play a role in helping or harming the effort to find the perpetrator(s)? Explain.

Source: Kleg, Milton, *Hate Prejudice and Racism*, New York: State University of New York Press, 1993