

Unit V: Post 9/11 - Consequences and Challenges

Grade Levels: 9-12

Time: 45-60 minutes

Lesson HV-15: Debate - Security vs. Civil Liberties After 9/11

Objective:

Students will weigh three controversial issues associated with the Patriot Act and American civil liberties, and how 9/11 has affected viewpoints.

Student will analyze the inconsistencies that may occur when trying to balance the need for national security and the need to protect civil liberties.

Key Terms:

Patriot Act Civil Liberties

Materials:

1. Security vs. Civil Liberties debate article by Robert Mander and Janice Hyde divided into 3 rounds on the following issues: <http://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/0408/safefree.html>
 - "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."
2. U.S. Bill of Rights
3. Student worksheet on Mander and Hyde article (included).

Activities/Procedures:

1. Review the rights of all Americans as listed and explained in the U.S. Bill of Rights.
2. Divide the class into three groups, one for each of the three debate rounds. Or, this may be done as a class, reviewing each of the three round questions together. Each group should have a "reporter" who will report the main points of the group discussion back to the class.
3. For approximately 30 minutes, students should read the round questions and perspectives. They should discuss each argument, while expanding the ideas inherent in each.
4. Coming together as a class once again, each group reporter should read the question and explain the basic arguments, pro and con.
5. Homework: Students should research one of the issues in the debate, gathering more information on the subject at home. They should be encouraged to use news websites or government agencies to avoid partisanship and bias and document the source from which they researched.
6. Tomorrow, students will share their additional information with their groups or as a class.
7. Discuss: After reviewing the Bill of Rights and the issues addressed in the debate, determine what the balance should be between national security and the protection of civil rights. Has this balance been found?

Evidence of Understanding (Assessment of Student Performance)

Formative:

1. Student class or group discussion on the three rounds of the debate on Security vs. Civil Liberties.
2. Completion of worksheets on debate questions.

Summative:

Final student discussion on the inconsistencies that may occur when trying to balance the need for national security and the need to protect civil liberties. Has this balance been achieved? Is it fluid? If another terrorist attack occurs in the U.S. will this debate become more intense?

Extension Activities: Taking Action and Giving Service (Optional)

- Research and examine topics from current events: Closing Gitmo, military tribunals, trial of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed in New York City, etc.
- Research current bills in Congress that might affect rights granted under The Bill of Rights and write a letter to your legislators expressing your opinion on whether or not the bill should pass.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Period/Class: _____

Worksheet: Security vs. Civil Liberties in Three Rounds

Directions:

1. After reviewing the U.S. Bill of Rights, read and discuss the three rounds of the debate on security vs. civil liberties by Robert Mander and Janice Hyde.
2. Use the following questions to guide your discussion. Take notes on your discussion to share with the class.
3. Consider the points made in the roundup discussion, "International Forum on World Terrorism."
4. As homework, research one of the points made during the three debates. What is currently under scrutiny?
 - "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."
 - Roundup- "International Forum on World Terrorism"
5. As a class, discuss and debate arguments of the three rounds and roundup, while 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. 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.