

# **LEARNING FROM THE CHALLENGES OF OUR TIMES:**

**Global Security, Terrorism,  
and 9/11 in the Classroom**

---

## **Middle School**

**Lesson Plans & Themes**

# **Unit II**

**From Playground to World Stage**

# **Violence, Aggression & Terrorism**



**Unit II:** From Playground to World Stage

**Grade Levels:** 7-8

**Time:** 2-3 classes (approximately 90 minutes)

## Lesson MII-5: What Is Terrorism?

### Objectives:

- Students will construct a definition of terrorism.
- Students will analyze several cases and determine if the acts were terrorism.

### Key Terms:

**Assassinate**

**Guerillas**

**Radicalism**

**Systematic**

### Materials:

- Definitions of Terrorism (handout 1)
- Examples of terrorism worksheet (handout 2)

### Activities/Procedure:

1. Give out page with definitions of terrorism. Since some of the terms or concepts may be difficult, this should be discussed as a class.
2. Have pairs of students analyze these definitions and decide.
  - a. What do they mean?
  - b. What similarities are there in the definitions?  
Pairs should then construct their own definition of terrorism.
3. Discuss answers and come up with a class definition.  
(These should include the factors of violence, fear and intimidation.)
4. In groups, students will apply the definition of terrorism to decide if the examples (Handout 2) represent a terrorist activity.

### Evidence of Understanding:

Students should defend their decisions as part of a whole class discussion.

### Extension Activities: Taking Action and Giving Service

Research on the web, in newspapers and magazines, or by watching a news program on television and identify one current event (that occurred within the previous six months) you believe meets your definition of terrorism. Write a brief description of the event and explain why you think it meets your definition.

# HANDOUT 1

## Definitions of Terrorism:

### **ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA**

"The systematic use of terror (such as bombings, killings, and kidnappings) as a means of forcing some political objective. When used by a government, it may signal efforts to stifle dissent; used by insurrectionists or guerillas, it may be part of an overall effort to effect desired political change."

### **WEBSTERS II NEW RIVERSIDE DICTIONARY**

"Systematic use of violence, terror and intimidation to achieve an end."

### **U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

"...terrorism is premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine state agents usually to influence an audience."

### **LEAGUE OF NATIONS CONVENTION (1937)**

"All criminal acts directed against a State and calculated to create a state of terror in the minds of particular persons or groups of persons or the general public."

### **UNITED NATIONS**

"An anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent activity...whereby...in contrast to assassination, the direct targets of violence are not the main targets."

## Handout 2

Use your definition of terrorism to determine whether each of the following is a terrorist activity. Make sure you can defend your answer.

1. Blowing up a government building with people in it.  
a. terrorism                      b. not terrorism                      c. not sure
  
2. Killing the leader of a government.  
a. terrorism                      b. not terrorism                      c. not sure
  
3. Training people to attack civilians.  
a. terrorism                      b. not terrorism                      c. not sure
  
4. Bombing a city that has no military targets.  
a. terrorism                      b. not terrorism                      c. not sure
  
5. Throwing stones at occupying army soldiers.  
a. terrorism                      b. not terrorism                      c. not sure
  
6. Kidnapping people and killing them.  
a. terrorism                      b. not terrorism                      c. not sure
  
7. Exploding a bomb where people shop.  
a. terrorism                      b. not terrorism                      c. not sure
  
8. Imposing an economic boycott that keeps people from getting food and medicine.  
a. terrorism                      b. not terrorism                      c. not sure
  
9. A student who opens fire and hurts classmates.  
a. terrorism                      b. not terrorism                      c. not sure

