

Unit V: Post 9/11: Consequences and Challenges

Grade Levels: 7-8

Time: 80 minutes

Lesson MV-11: Civil Rights in the Age Of Terrorism

Objectives:

- Students will define and identify some American civil rights.
- Students will analyze hypothetical cases and discuss the impact of terrorism on these rights.

Key Terms:

Civil rights

Consensus

Profiling

Materials:

- Case studies
- Copy of Constitution
- Background information on the Patriot Act (<http://www.justice.gov/archive/11/highlights.htm>)

Activities/Procedures:

1. Students will review the Patriot Act and respond to the journal prompt: "Security at the expense of justice is no security at all."
 - What do they think the statement means?
 - Do they agree or disagree?
 - How does this statement pertain to terrorism?
2. Students will share their journal responses.
3. Introduce the term "civil rights." Students should list some of their rights.
4. Break students into groups and distribute all four case studies to each group. Groups will analyze the cases and decide: What are the issues? What rights are being violated? How should this case be handled? Why?
5. Groups should present their findings to the class.

Evidence of Understanding:

Questions for large group discussion or possible writing prompts:

1. What were some of the problems your group had determining answers?
2. Which case studies were the most difficult? Why?
3. When discussing the case studies dealing with students, did you visualize a particular group?
How did that influence your decisions?
4. In what ways was there a difference in your discussions between the class trip case study and the 9/11 case?
Why?
5. 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?

Teachers' Note: Students may also select 2 of the 4 case studies (randomly or assigned to each group to insure that all 4 cases can be covered in class).

Extension Activities: Taking Action and Giving Service

1. 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. Explain why some of these groups were viewed as so controversial. (Possible examples: American Civil Liberties Union, Southern Poverty Law Center, etc.) Do you think such organizations play an important role for the citizens of the nation? Explain why or why not.
2. 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.

Civil Rights in the Age of Terrorism and Case Studies

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

What civil rights are being violated?

What actions should the authorities take, keeping in mind the issue of security?

The group should 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 20 randomly selected students.
5. Other?

Case Study 3 – The Class Trip

You are on an overnight class trip. Someone informs the teacher chaperones 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. 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. The act is unconstitutional and should be eliminated.
2. Restrict use of the act.
3. Limit the amount of time a person can be detained.
4. Use this only with individuals suspected of posing an immediate threat to our security.
5. The government should use it every time it determines it is necessary.
6. Other?