



## September 11<sup>th</sup>: *Discussion Guide*

### Overview

Despite U.S. involvement in wars and other international events, the modern-day battlefield has always existed somewhere else. Not since the attack on Pearl Harbor has war taken place on American soil. The events of September 11, 2001 brought the horror of war home and shattered the illusion of safety that many Americans enjoyed. The post-9/11 era is a different world, marked by new interpretations of freedom, privacy, and safety.

Help your students understand these events and the repercussions that will affect their lives for decades to come—with this discussion guide and related videos and activities.

### Classroom Activities

1. Show the “The Aftermath of September 11, 2001: Impact on Civil Liberties” segment from the *The Cost of Freedom: Civil Liberties, Security, and the USA PATRIOT Act* video.
  - **Access Prior Knowledge:** Before showing the video segment, ask students what they know about civil liberties and the U.S. Constitution. What liberties are guaranteed by the Constitution? Under what circumstances might the government suspend civil liberties? What changes have occurred with regard to our civil liberties since September 11, 2001? What opinions do students have about these changes?
  - **Understand Terms:** Have students make a list of words that are unfamiliar to them as they watch the video. After watching the video, have students look up the terms in a dictionary. The following words might be unfamiliar: *constitutional*, *safeguards*, *democratic*, *civilized*, *unalienable*, *combatant*, *diminution*, *retribution*, *coercive*, and *catastrophic*.
  - **Define Freedom:** This segment weighs the value of freedom against the importance of security when the two cannot exist simultaneously. Ask students to write a narrative essay defining what freedom means to them. Have them consider what they would be willing to give up and what they would not be willing to give up.

2. Show the “FBI and CIA: The PATRIOT Act and the Criminal and Intelligence Communities” and “Section 215 and the First and Fourth Amendments to the Constitution” segments from the *The Cost of Freedom: Civil Liberties, Security, & the USA PATRIOT Act* video. (Access to unitedstreaming is required.)
  - **Pro/Con Debate:** The fear of terrorism generated by the September 11, 2001 attacks has sparked controversy about how best to protect Americans from future terrorist attacks. Some people believe that the government should be allowed to suspend civil liberties in order to guard against attacks, while others believe that our Constitutional rights should be preserved at all cost. Divide students into groups and assign a pro or con position to each. Ask students to research the issue and prepare a debate. If time allows, have students debate both sides of the issue.
  - **Bill of Rights Background:** Have students read background information describing the colonists’ desire for a more specific list of rights guaranteed by the new Constitution. Ask students whether they agree with the concerns of the early Americans. Do they believe that any of these concerns are valid today? Information can be found at this Web site:
    - [http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/bill\\_of\\_rights.html](http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/bill_of_rights.html)
  - **Read the Bill of Rights:** Next, have students read the original transcript of the Bill of Rights. Ask students whether any of the rights guaranteed in the Bill of Rights are in jeopardy in today’s society. Make sure that they explain why or why not. A copy of the transcript can be found at this Web site:
    - [http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/bill\\_of\\_rights\\_transcript.html](http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/bill_of_rights_transcript.html)
  - **Understand Freedom of Speech:** Many students assume that free speech means that they can say anything they want. Ask students to visit the Web site below in order to find the answers to the following free speech questions: What types of speech are not protected by the first amendment to the Constitution? Can students be required to stand while other students recite the Pledge of Allegiance? Can a public school official legally censor a school-sponsored publication, like a newspaper or yearbook? Can public schools impose dress codes and uniforms? Can administrators remove controversial books from school library shelves? What is freedom of expression? What rights to freedom of expression do students have? What has the Supreme Court said about free expression?
    - <http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org/Speech/index.aspx>
3. Show the “Providing More Protection for Potential Terrorist Targets” segment from the *Naming the Nightmare—Journey Back from 9/11: People Who Keep Us Safe* video. (Access to unitedstreaming is required.)
  - **Pre-Viewing Discussion:** What do students know about the rescue workers who would be called upon in the event of a disaster? What types

can they name? What roles might these rescue workers fill? How are these roles similar to or different from their normal (non-emergency) roles?

- **Post-Viewing Discussion:** Were students surprised to hear that the disease Small Pox has been almost completely erased from the planet? Were they surprised that Anthrax is so easy for U.S. doctors to overlook? What else did they learn that was unexpected?
- **Create an Emergency Plan:** Most schools have emergency plans, but many families have not taken steps to protect themselves in the event of a disaster. Have students create emergency plans for their families. They might want to consider the following: the type of disaster; the time of day or night in which the disaster might occur; possible evacuation routes; instances when evacuation is not an option; meeting places for immediate and/or extended family members; emergency supplies; where to go for help.
- **Increase Public Awareness:** The video segment explains that many U.S. doctors would not recognize the disease Anthrax because it is so rare in this country and its symptoms are similar to the common cold. Have small groups of students investigate other potential health threats and create public awareness campaigns that inform people how to respond in the event of an emergency. Students might want to design posters, write radio or television ads, or design informational pamphlets. Students may use the following Web sites for information:
  - <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/>
  - <http://www.fda.gov/cber/faq/centrbfaq.htm>
  - <http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/>

4. Show the “Conflict: Security and Liberty” segment from the *TLC Elementary School: American Values in Conflict* video. (Access to unitedstreaming is required.)

- **Compare and Contrast Issues:** This is not the first time in U.S. history that civil liberties have been denied to individuals or groups in the name of national defense. Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, Japanese Americans living on the West Coast were relocated to internment camps. After watching the video, have students study additional facts about the internment of Japanese Americans and compare and contrast the two situations. Students might want to use a T-chart to organize their comparisons graphically. Use the following Web sites to obtain information about the Japanese internment during WWII:
  - <http://www.cr.nps.gov/NR/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/89manzanar/89manzanar.htm>
  - <http://www.pbs.org/childofcamp/>
- **Graphic Organizer:** In the video, the Supreme Court made the final decision about the constitutionality of interning Japanese Americans.

Explain to students that the Supreme Court is one of the three branches of government in the U.S. system, and that each of the branches offers checks and balances over the other two branches. Have students investigate how checks and balances are used to protect the rights ensured by the Constitution. Then ask students to create a graphic organizer illustrating checks and balances. Students can visit the following sites for additional information:

- <http://ap.grolier.com/article?assetid=0088940-00&templatename=/article/article.html>
  - <http://www.c-spanclassroom.org/constitution/video.asp>
  - [http://www.congressforkids.net/Constitution\\_index.htm](http://www.congressforkids.net/Constitution_index.htm)
- **Answer the Question:** The video asks whether the Bill of Rights should be interpreted differently in times of war. After watching the video, have students write a journal entry in which they answer this question by giving their own opinions and interpretations. Follow the writing activity with a small group or whole class discussion in which students share and discuss their opinions.

## Academic Standards

### Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)

McREL's Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education addresses 14 content areas. To view the standards and benchmarks, visit <http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp>.

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- Working With Others
  - Contributes to the overall effort of a group
- History
  - Understands the historical perspective
- Life Skills
  - Understands and applies the basic principles of presenting an argument
  - Effectively uses mental processes that are based on identifying similarities and differences
- Language Arts
  - Listening and Speaking: Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes
  - Reading: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts
  - Viewing: Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media
  - Writing: Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process; Gathers and uses information for research purposes

### **The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)**

The National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association have developed national standards to provide guidelines for teaching the English language arts. To view the standards online, visit [www.ncte.org/about/over/standards/110846.htm](http://www.ncte.org/about/over/standards/110846.htm)

This lesson plan addresses the following English standards:

- Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.
- Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
- Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

### **National Council for the Social Studies**

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) has developed national standards to provide guidelines for teaching social studies. To view the standards online, go to <http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/strands/>.

This lesson plan addresses the following thematic standards:

- Culture
- Time, Continuity, and Change
- People, Places, and Environments
- Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
- Power, Authority, and Governance