

Right to Privacy?: Teacher's Guide

Grade Level: 9-12

Curriculum Focus: U.S. Government

Lesson Duration: One to two class periods

Program Description

Security measures have changed the way that we live. Surveillance cameras arguably help solve crimes, keep employee theft in check, deter criminals, and in some cases, replace the physical presence of law enforcement. But does their presence pose a threat to privacy?

Onscreen Questions

Before watching the video

- Many consider the use of surveillance cameras an infringement of their rights. As you watch the program, think about your rights as a United States citizen. Are these rights limited or unlimited? Who or what determines these limits?
- Listen to arguments for and against the use of video-surveillance technology.

After watching the video

- Some people fear that governments may use video-surveillance systems to control citizens. Debate the pros and cons of public surveillance systems from the points of view of the government, the community, and the individual.
 - Discuss the extent to which private companies should be permitted to use surveillance equipment.
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Lesson Plan

Student Objectives

- Discuss issues regarding the right to privacy.
- Learn about the proposed national identification cards.
- Write their own opinion papers for or against national identification cards.

Materials

- *Right to Privacy?* video and VCR
- Computer with Internet access
- Paper, pens, pencils

Procedures

1. Begin the lesson with a general discussion about privacy. What are some privacy issues discussed in the video? What systems were discussed? (Examples: video-surveillance cameras in stores, daycare, on highways, and the use of Echelon, a global electronic-communications surveillance system.) What are the advantages of using these systems? How could these systems threaten personal privacy?

Students may discuss the advantages of using surveillance cameras to detect criminal activity. However, some may feel that overuse of surveillance cameras is the same as treating the public like criminals. Students may discuss how surveillance cameras used at the uprising in Tiananmen Square in China were later used to identify and arrest pro-democracy demonstrators.

2. Next, ask students to talk about how the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, have affected issues regarding our rights to privacy. How and why did these events influence privacy concerns? Many people believe that Americans must sacrifice some rights to privacy to protect national safety. Others feel that national safety precautions could go too far, and that Americans may be in danger of losing too much of their privacy.
3. Tell students that they'll be examining the issue of national identification cards. Under this system, every American citizen would be given an identification card. The cards would be digitized, linked to huge databases, and used to verify the identity of all citizens. The cards gained widespread support after September 11, since some officials believe they would prevent terrorists from operating under assumed identities. Some people feel the cards will protect national security, while others feel they would give a false sense of security and threaten our civil rights even further.
4. Have students read articles from the Web sites listed below. The articles cover both sides of the debate.

In support of ID cards

- TIME: The Case for a National ID Card
<http://www.time.com/time/columnist/carlson/article/0,9565,193705,00.html>
- National ID Card Gaining Support.
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A52300-2001Dec16.html>

Against ID cards

- ACLU: National ID Cards: 5 Reasons Why They Should Be Rejected
http://www.aclu.org/issues/privacy/National_ID_Feature.html



- Electronic Privacy Information Center: ID CARDS
http://www.epic.org/privacy/id_cards/
5. To conclude the lesson, have students write their own opinion paper. Do they feel that national ID cards are a good idea? Have the students support their positions with examples whenever possible. Should Americans be willing to sacrifice some level of privacy for national security? As a class, discuss both sides of the issue. If time permits, have students debate the issue.

Assessment

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

- **3 points:** Students were highly engaged in class discussions, and they created comprehensive and thoughtful opinion papers that include several relevant facts from their research.
- **2 points:** Students participated in class discussions, and they created somewhat comprehensive opinion papers that include some relevant facts from their research.
- **1 point:** Students participated minimally in class discussions, and they created simplistic opinion papers that include few or no facts from their research.

Vocabulary

Echelon

Definition: A global electronic-communications surveillance system used to intercept billions of communications everyday, including phone calls, e-mail messages, Internet downloads, and satellite transmissions

Context: Echelon is operated by the intelligence agencies in five nations: the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

national identification cards

Definition: Proposed system of identification that would grant every U.S. citizen an identification card linked to a database of personal information

Context: Officials disagree whether national identification cards would adequately protect national security.

right to privacy

Definition: Having control over your own personal data and the ability to grant or deny access to others, according to the ACLU, or the American Civil Liberties Union

Context: Whenever our personal information is shared or sold without our knowledge, our right to privacy is denied.



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 link:
<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp>

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- Civics – Understands the role and importance of law in the American constitutional system and issues regarding the judicial protection of individual rights, Understands the formation and implementation of public policy, Understands issues regarding personal, political, and economic rights, Understands issues regarding the proper scope and limits of rights and the relationships among personal, political, and economic rights
- Language Arts – 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 for the Social Studies (NCSS)

NCSS has developed national guidelines for teaching social studies. To become a member of NCSS, or to view the standards online, go to <http://www.socialstudies.org>

This lesson plan addresses the following thematic standards:

- Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
 - Power, Authority, and Governance
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Support Materials

Develop custom worksheets, educational puzzles, online quizzes, and more with the free teaching tools offered on the Discoveryschool.com Web site. Create and print support materials, or save them to a Custom Classroom account for future use. To learn more, visit

- <http://school.discovery.com/teachingtools/teachingtools.html>

