

## Lesson Plan

# Terrorism: Introduction

**Length**

One 45-minute period

**Grade Level**

High School

## Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to define the basic elements of terrorism including commonalities amongst terrorist groups as well as the use of the media to promote their ideology.

[Terrorism: Introduction](#)[Guided Reading Handout](#)[Presentation](#)[How Terrorist Leverage the Media to Promote Their Agenda](#)

## Homework

- Students should complete Parts 1 and 2 of the guided reading handout.

## Class

1. **(10 Minutes) Homework Debrief:** Ask students to discuss what they know about terrorism. Where have they gotten their information about terrorism? What kind of terrorism are they familiar with? What historical examples do they know? What have they seen in the news about terrorism? What major terrorist groups do they know?
  1. From worksheet - Why is terrorism difficult to define? What is the common definition? What are some motivations for terrorism?
2. **(20 Minutes) Partner Work:** Complete Part 3 of the guided reading handout.
  - Note: This section will help students more clearly define terror in recent years. They will look at data related to incidents in both the United States and globally. They will also identify some of the more notable terror attacks that have taken place around the world in recent years.
3. **(5 Minutes) Watch:** *How Terrorists Leverage the Media to Promote Their Agenda*
  - Students should take notes on Part 4 of the guided reading handout.
4. **(10 Minutes) Debrief/ Intro HW:**
  - How are domestic terrorism and international terrorism defined differently in U.S. law?
  - Has the threat from terrorism increased, decreased, or remained steady? Why do you say so?
  - How is media coverage part of terrorists' strategy?

## Homework

1. Students consider how terrorists use the media and how the media can help fuel terrorism, then write a memo to a news organization with suggestions on how best to cover terrorism.
  - Have students imagine they are terrorism experts advising a news organization on how best to cover news of terrorism.
  - Ask them to write a memo providing recommendations in response to the following questions:
    - How can terrorist attacks be covered responsibly, when coverage is often exactly what the terrorists want?
    - Should messages from or interviews with terrorists be published or broadcast?
    - How much should terrorism be covered as compared to other national issues?
2. NOTE: For more of a challenge, consider having students write a memo to a generic news organization, assign each student or group a real news organization and ask them to critique that organization's reporting in their memo. This goes much more smoothly if you select a particular terrorist incident for everyone to focus on, because students will find it easier to navigate the news archives if they are looking for a specific incident.

## Vocabulary

### civil war

a war among groups inside of one country.

### counterterrorism

the set of policies and actions—including intelligence collection and analysis, military action, and homeland security measures—designed to combat terrorism.

### nonstate actors

individuals or groups that do not belong to or act on behalf of a country.

### radicalization

the process by which individuals come to adopt extreme religious, political, or social beliefs.

### recession

a period of economic downturn, usually marked when an economy shrinks instead of grows for at least six consecutive months.

### refugee

defined by the UN Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, as someone who has fled conflict or persecution in their home country, has a reasonable fear that returning would be unsafe, and is protected by international law. In many countries, the term refugee also refers to someone who has sought and received asylum in a new country.

### sanction

a tool of statecraft, frequently involving economic measures such as asset freezes and trade restrictions, used to exact a certain behavior or outcome from another party.

### surveillance

a type of intelligence collection that involves the systematic, and often concealed, observation of people, places, and things by visual, aural, electronic, photographic, or other methods.