



UNIT: Historical Impact

GRADE LEVEL/S: 7-9, 10-12

TIME NEEDED: 2 sessions

TEACHER: Brian Marggraf

LESSON TITLE:

ISLAMIST EXTREMISM IN THE LAST 20 YEARS

Common Core Standards

RH 7 Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

W 2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

W 5 Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

W 7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

W 8 Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

W 9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Key Questions/ Issues Addressed

What is terrorism?

What are the goals of Islamist extremism?

What terrorist attacks have been conducted by Islamist extremists in the past 20 years?

How are they similar? How are they different?

How have countries responded to terrorist attacks?

How do these attacks compare to 9/11?

Lesson Goals/ Objectives

Students will learn about terrorist attacks conducted by Islamist extremists in the last 20 years and compare and contrast those attacks to 9/11.

Students will recognize the myriad repercussions of these attacks.

Key Terms

Casualties, Islamist extremist**, Motivation, Terrorism*

* Violent acts aimed at civilians intended to create and spread fear to further religious, political or ideological goals. The attacks of 9/11 are a large-scale example of terrorism.

**See [9/11 FAQ](#) for further information

Materials

www.911memorial.org/911-related-terror
 Library / internet access for research
 Pencils/pens/markers
 Chart paper
 Presentation Software (i.e. PowerPoint)
 Reference materials

Background for lesson (if necessary)

A basic understanding of the attacks and aftermath of 9/11.
 See [9/11 FAQ](#) for more information.

Remind students that terrorism has been used by many groups around the world. Islamist extremists, including al-Qaeda, represent one example within the broader sphere of terrorism, which can be a domestic or international phenomenon. As al-Qaeda perpetrated the attacks of 9/11, they are the focus of this lesson, but it is important to remind students that all terrorists aren't members of al-Qaeda nor are all terrorists of Muslim background. For information and updated numbers regarding terrorism, see the National Counterterrorism Center (NCC) website here: www.nctc.gov. The NCC defines terrorism as: "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents."

Instructional Activity/Procedures

1. Introduce the lesson, and gauge students' understanding of recent acts of terrorism, by facilitating a class discussion around the following questions:
 - *What is Islamist extremism? What are its goals? How do Islamist extremists work to achieve those goals?*
 - *What terrorist attacks in the past 20 years have been carried out by Islamist extremists?*
 - *How are they similar? How are they different? Have they changed over time? How?*
 - *How do these attacks compare to 9/11? Was 9/11 unique? If so, how?*
2. Introduce the task: Students, in small groups, will complete a mini-research project comparing an Islamist extremist terrorist attack from the last 20 years to 9/11. Each group will select a different terrorist attack. See www.911memorial.org/911-related-terror as a jumping off point for information, context, and primary sources on relevant attacks related to 9/11.
3. Each group will research its attack, providing a narrative of the event and details outlining the perpetrators, their motivations, the casualties and inflicted damage, and the responses and repercussions of the attacks.

Some questions to consider:

- *What did the terrorists hope to achieve through their violence? How do you know?*
- *Whom did they target? Why did they target that city/site/population?*

Instructional Activity/ Procedures (continued)

- *How did the victim nation respond? How did other nations respond?*
 - *What were the repercussions of the attacks? Were there widespread political, economic or social consequences? Were these in line with the terrorists' goals?*
 - *Were there subsequent attacks in that nation?*
4. For Middle School classes, students will write an essay synthesizing their research. For High School classes, students will first present this research to the class in a 20-minute presentation, taking questions and comments from their peers following their presentation. Then, synthesizing the information from their presentations, students will each write an essay surveying the goals, means, and repercussions of Islamist extremist terrorism before and after 9/11.
- *What are the salient characteristics of these attacks?*
 - *What motivations, features, and outcomes do they have in common?*
 - *How have they changed over time? Are there substantive differences in these attacks before and after 9/11?*
 - *Can we draw conclusions about successful or unsuccessful responses of the nations that sustained the attacks? How do you define "success" (i.e. no subsequent terrorist attacks, decrease of extremist ideology in country, capture of terrorists, etc.)?*
 - *Is 9/11 a unique event? If so, why? If you think it was not unique, explain why.*

Evidence of Understanding

The research presentation, participation during other's presentations, and the final essay will highlight students' understanding of recent terrorism and its goals.

Extension Activities

For a math extension, students can synthesize data from their research, graphing the results and interpreting the information:

- *How do the attacks compare to one another in goals, scope, method, severity, participants, casualties, outcomes, etc.?*
- *Which years had more activity? Which had less? What factors might have contributed to those changes?*