

Focused Learning Lesson
**Evaluating and defending positions on issues regarding the personal, political,
and economic rights of citizens**
Civics
Grade Level: 10th
C-1D-H1

Overview:

In this focused learning lesson, students will be required to evaluate an issue regarding personal, political, or economic rights of American citizens. Debate is the best way to teach this benchmark; thus, students will formulate an opinion on a given opinion and evaluate a historical debate on the same opinion. The key objective for this lesson is having students break down the arguments on both sides of the debate and evaluate the stance based on who presents the stronger argument.

Approximate Duration:

45 minutes

Benchmarks with GLEs:

C-1D-H1 – Evaluating and defending positions on issues regarding the personal, political, and economic rights of citizens

GLE:

52. Evaluate and defend a position on a given situation or issue in terms of the personal, political, or economic rights of citizens.

Objectives:

1. Discuss a given debate topic that deals with civil rights.
2. Evaluate both sides of a given civil rights debate issue to determine what side has the stronger argument.

Teacher Preparation:

- Read *Teacher Attachment 1* “Teacher Handout”
- Review *Teacher Attachment 2* “Teacher Resources”
- Make copies of *Student Attachment 1 and 2*

Materials/Equipment/Resources:

- Copy machine for student handout
- Erase-able board for notes or discussion points
- Pen or pencil
- *Optional* – Computer with internet access / research topics

Lesson Procedures:

Set or Opener

The teacher should open this lesson with a brief description of racial profiling and some examples such as profiling of minorities in America. Examples can include profiling of Arabs, African-Americans, Caucasians, and historical topics such as the internment of

Japanese Americans during World War II, etc. This topic can also include various other forms of profiling such as gender and age criteria. Have students discuss any racial profiling that they have witnessed personally or seen on TV.

Make sure students understand that all groups are susceptible to profiling. Not only are minorities a target of profiling, as we have seen with Arab-Americans and terrorism, but some Caucasians are also targets of profiling. A good example of gender and race profiling lies in the cases of serial killers. The standard profile of a serial killer is usually a white male, whereas the standard profile of a terrorist has been an Arabic male.

Body of the Lesson

Have the students complete **Step 1** of the student handout. After all of the students have discussed with their partners for a couple of minutes, have all of the students enter into a class discussion about racial profiling and compare their thoughts.

If there are other students in the class, have each student share their comparison with another classmate and complete **Step 2** on the student handout.

Have the students read the flashpoint debate and answer the questions on the student handout. Once the students complete the debate questions, have the entire class discuss the issue of racial profiling using all of the information that they have discussed and learned. If time permits, you may want to take a poll and evaluate how many students agree with racial profiling at the beginning of the lesson and take another poll at the end of the lesson to see if any of the students' opinions have changed.

Closure

Complete this lesson closure with a final discussion about what was learned during the lesson.

Activities and Handouts:

- **Teacher Attachment 1** *Teacher Handout* – Background information
- **Teacher Attachment 2** *Teacher Resources* – Additional resources that can be used by the teacher to gain background information or change the lesson.
- **Student Attachment 1** *Debating Civil Rights* – Student worksheet with activities for the lesson and instructions about the lesson
- **Student Attachment 2** *Civil Rights Debate* – Transcript of a civil rights debate which will be used to complete Student Handout 1

Assessment Items:

- Use the students' responses from the student worksheet and in the class discussion to assess students' understanding of the topic. Be sure to look at the difference between the students' responses and how the class discussion affected his or her responses.
- Many GEE open response questions require students to defend or develop an opinion and support it with facts. This exercise is perfect practice for student to

develop opinions. This exercise is also a great way for the teacher to evaluate where a student stands in regards to higher order thinking skills

Reference Links and Technology Connections

- See Teacher Handout 2 for all technology connections and reference links.

TEACHER NOTES

- This lesson on racial profiling is an introduction to benchmark C-1D-H1.
- Racial profiling was a current civil rights debate as of December 2003 and will continue to be a debated issue for years to come; however, the topic can be changed to evaluate another issue depending on current issues or teacher preference.
- This lesson can be used in part or in whole depending on the number of participating students and the time available for remediation.

TEACHER RESOURCES

WEBSITE RESOURCES

<http://www.debate-central.org/> - Overall Debate Site
<http://debate.uvm.edu/> - Overall Debate Site
<http://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/constitution.overview.html> - US Constitution
<http://www.usccr.gov/> - US Commission on Civil Rights
<http://www.civilrights.org/> - Civil Rights Organization
<http://www.civilrightsmuseum.org/> - National Civil Rights Museum
<http://www.cnn.com> – Good site for debate transcripts
<http://www.pbs.org/flashpointsusa> - Good site for debate transcripts
<http://supct.law.cornell.edu/supct/> - Supreme Court Case Opinions

CURRENT DEBATE TOPIC EXAMPLES:

1. Should the United States allow cloning?
2. Should the United States allow stem cell research?
3. Has the first strike policy of the United States suppressed terrorism?
4. Are the Patriot Acts an unnecessary breach of American citizens civil rights?
5. Should the United States enact a Constitutional Amendment banning capital punishment?
6. Should the United States ban the sale, possession, and use of handguns?
7. Should the United States enact a Constitutional Amendment to permit voluntary prayer in public schools?
8. Should the United States adopt a Constitutional Amendment requiring a balanced federal budget?
9. Should affirmative action be legalized to improve the opportunities of minorities?

HISTORICAL TOPICS EXAMPLES:

1. Was slavery the primary cause of the Civil War?
2. Should the United States have dropped the atomic bomb on Japan?
3. Should the United States have fought in the Vietnam War?
4. Has the United States done enough to protect the environment?
5. Has participation in the United Nations advanced American interest?
6. Did Ronald Reagan's policies win the Cold War?
7. Is the United States effectively fighting the War on Terrorism?

STEP 2

- *If you have a partner available, compare your list and conclusions with your partner's list and conclusions and ask yourself the following questions*
 1. Did your partner have different positive and negative points about racial profiling?
 2. Did you and your partner agree on the issue of racial profiling, and on which points did you agree or disagree?
 3. Did what your partner say convince you to change your ideas?

STEP 3

- *Read the transcript for the flashpoint debate on the following page and answer the following questions*
 1. In your opinion, who made the stronger case about racial profiling, **Steve Pomerantz or Nabih Ayad**? NOTE: This does not mean you have to agree with them.
 2. Whom do you agree with more, **Steve Pomerantz or Nabih Ayad**? Why?
 3. Did this debate change your opinion about the issue of racial profiling? Why?

CIVIL RIGHTS DEBATE

The following transcript was copied from the “Flashpoint USA” website.

http://www.pbs.org/flashpointsusa/20030715/infocus/topic_02/trans_profiling.html

Gwen Ifill examines the debate surrounding the use of profiling with Steve Pomerantz, Former Assistant Director of the FBI and Nabih Ayad, a civil rights attorney.

Gwen Ifill:

The practice of singling out individuals of one group is called ethnic profiling. And for people in law enforcement, it's an important tool in their security arsenal. But others call it un-American.

We're joined now by Steve Pomerantz, Former Assistant Director of the FBI, and attorney Nabih Ayad who lives in suburban Detroit... home to the largest Arab community outside the Middle East. He's counsel to the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee. Welcome Gentlemen.

Mr. Pomerantz — Un-American? Necessary? Which?

Steve Pomerantz:

Well, profiling is a law enforcement tool that has been around for a long time. It is necessary; it's a useful tool. Profiling solely on the basis of someone's ethnicity or religion or race is simply wrong and shouldn't be done.

Ifill:

Mr. Ayad you represented a lot of men of Middle Eastern descent who had to register with the government after 9-11 and they started tightening that. What was your experience? Did people who were registering feel that they were being profiled?

Nabih Ayad:

I think absolutely, I think it's profile on its face when the government comes out and says we are going to have you register individuals from certain countries, certain Middle Eastern countries, I think that is profiling on its face. I mean they were cooperative with the law and registered...did what they were told...they didn't really have much of a choice. I think profiling is wrong, it hits at the core of civil liberties, fundamental constitutional rights. And the most important thing here is that profiling has not proven to be effective.

Ifill:

But if 19 men of Arab descent, all from... many of them from Saudi Arabia could hijack two planes, three planes crash them and cause the kind of trauma that we had and we'd have known in advance to watch out for men of Arab descent, wouldn't that have been worthwhile?

Ayad:

Well I think they were... even before 9/11, I think they were watching out for men of ethnic... Middle Eastern descent...with the racial profiling and what have you. You know as the term is driving while black, it's flying while Arab. I think that was well before 9/11.

Ifill:

Mr. Pomerantz who gets to make the distinction about who's worth profiling and whose not?

Pomerantz:

Well again it's based on an analysis of certain objective facts. For example you talk about profiling of people from certain Middle East countries. Yes, there are countries in this world particularly Middle East countries that are state sponsors of terrorism. I think it is reasonable to look at citizens of those countries in terms of potential terrorists.

Ifill:

But Saudi Arabia is one of our allies. It is not one of these state sponsors of terrorism yet you could argue that we should be watching Saudi Arabia?

Pomerantz:

I would make that argument, yes, because of the... because of the certain activities carried on by the Saudi government... because of the fact... as you said, a large number of the 19 September 11 terrorists came out of Saudi Arabia. I would argue that based on the activities and actions of the Saudi government and certainly the actions and activities of those countries that are state sponsors of terrorism, it is not ethnic profiling to look at their citizens a little more closely as they enter the country.

Ifill:

It is not ethnic profiling? What do your clients say?

Ayad:

I think it is clear ethnic profiling. I think when you target certain individuals from certain countries you're saying that you're the ones that we're looking at, you're the individuals that we're targeting.

Ifill:

So what do you do about that? How can you not target certain people if they fit the profile?

Ayad:

I think... I think these individuals from the firsthand if they are terrorist they are more sophisticated than that. They know what the red flags are for the government to sit there and to target them and what have you. I think they have overcome that ...that's proven by 9/11. I think if they would use good old-fashioned intelligence, sources would be much more effective without shielding away civil liberties. I think there is this falsity out there that you have to take away civil liberties in order to have security. There is nothing in history that proves that case.

Ifill:

Mr. Pomerantz. How do you find that balance?

Pomerantz:

Well it's a difficult balance to find. I agree we do not have to give up our civil liberties in this fight against terrorism. I don't think we have. I think the things the government has done up 'til now have been reasonable steps as part of this fight against terrorism. I do agree that the gathering of intelligence is the single most important thing but I certainly don't feel that looking at... look... we would be... I think there are two issues...two truths that exist simultaneously. First of all, it is certainly true that most Arabs and most Muslims certainly in the United States and worldwide are not terrorists, are not supporters of terrorists and do not condone terrorism and that's true. But it also is true that right now the terrorist threat against this country emanates out of the Middle East and out of Middle Eastern citizens and we can't be blind to that. It would be against our best interests to be blind to that reality.

Ifill:

Ok, well we're going to have to leave the debate there for now.
Thank you very much.