



## Lesson plan: Preparedness for a potential terrorist attack

This lesson plan is aimed at High School students. It is expected that this age group would carry the information learned back to their family, and also into their future College or professional careers.

### 1.1 What is Terrorism?

Aims: To provide the class with an understanding of the complexity of defining terrorism in the world today. Students will recognize how current definitions fail to adequately encompass terrorism, and how these definitions vary across the globe.

- Students will break into groups and form their own definitions of terrorism (10-15 mins).
- The instructor will extract key similarities and differences in their definitions.
- The lecturer will then present the current debate on defining terrorism, highlighting the difference between intra-national, international, and trans-national terrorism and terrorist groups.
- The lecturer will present the U.S. government definition of terrorism, asking students to highlight flaws in this definition, and compare the official definition to their own.
- Students will work in small groups and use the Internet to gather different definitions of terrorism from various nations throughout the world, i.e. Israel, United Kingdom, China, and France. Additionally, students should attempt to find definitions of terrorism from non governmental agencies such as the United Nations and Interpol, as well as any private research think tanks.

#### 1.1.1 Research question

Create your own definition of terrorism. How does this differ from the definition used by the United States government? What flaws can you identify in your definition? Will we ever be able to construct a solid definition of terrorism?

### 1.2 Terrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction

Aims: Students will be able to differentiate between Nuclear, Radiological, Biological, and Chemical Terrorism. Furthermore, students will understand historical precedents of use of these weapons and the consequences.

- The instructor will discuss how terror organizations traditionally use more conventional forms of weaponry.
  - Ask the students to suggest why this is more likely to be the case.
- Students will break into groups and each attempt to define what we mean by nuclear, radiological, biological and chemical weapons. In particular:
  - How do these weapons differ?
  - Can we identify when these weapons have been used throughout history?
- Lecturer will address each topic individually, identifying the following:
  - How it works

- How it could be transported
- Various types of this weapon
- Symptoms of exposure
- Possible cures

### **1.2.1 Group research project- Initial meetings in class, followed by assignment- one week deadline.**

Breaking the class down into four groups, ask students to research and present any historical precedents of the use of one of these weapons. Students should particularly consider the following:

1. Who used the weapon?
2. Why do you think this weapon was selected instead of a more conventional form of weapon?
3. Who was targeted?
4. What were the long and short term effects of using this weapon?
5. Was this a successful attack? If not, why not?

### **1.2.2 Class debate**

There is a high threat that the average citizen will be exposed to one of these weapons. Discuss.

### **1.3 What is Preparedness?**

Aims: The student will understand the importance of preparedness, and the different ways in which responses may occur.

- What do we mean by 'preparedness'? Prepared for what exactly?
  - Preparedness in this context can be seen in two ways. Firstly, as being in a state of anticipation before a terrorist attack with sufficient law enforcement agents as a preventative agency. Secondly, able to effectively respond to an attack with regards to emergency services, shelters, etc.
- Course leader will highlight the advantages of a proactive versus reactive approach to disasters.
- Who does preparedness impact?
- Students will divide into groups and consider how an individual/family can be prepared for a terror attack.
- Students will learn about emergency response kits that should be kept at home in the event of a loss of power, water etc.

#### **1.3.1 Assignment: Using the [Terrorism & Preparedness Data Resource Center](#), investigate current reports and research examining preparedness.**

### **1.4 Cyber Terrorism Prevention**

Aims: To draw awareness to the current concerns surrounding the use of the Internet by terror groups, particularly as a tool for theft and network destruction.

- Class participation: For what purposes would terrorists use the Internet? What are the advantages of using the Internet? Answers should cover:
  - Provides communication for terror groups both across the globe or locally
  - Outlet for terrorists to spread their cause
  - Fund raising through donation sites
  - Identity theft including credit card details
  - Access to target information
  - Recruitment

- People can retain elements of anonymity
- Inexpensive to set up and maintain
- Globally accessible
- Lecture: Ways a terrorist organisation might seek to destroy a computer network
  - Virus- A piece of computer code that attaches itself to a program or file so that it can spread from computer to computer, infecting as it travels.
  - Worm- Designed to copy itself from one computer to another, but it does so automatically by taking control of features on the computer that transport files or information.
  - Trojan Horse- A computer program that appears to be useful but that actually does damage.
  - E-mail attachments- Most of the dangerous viruses are primarily spread through E-mail attachments.
  - Spyware- A program secretly loaded onto a computer by a visited site and then serve to track one's browsing habits and record the sites visited and activities conducted by the host computer.

**1.4.1 Assignment: Using the Internet- find an example of each of the above. What were they called? What damage do they do?**

**1.5 Possible Class Field Trip**

Instructor should seek out a possible excursion to a local emergency service or government building where plans are formed for emergency response to disasters, natural or otherwise. Contacts can often be found through local law enforcement web-sites:

[http://www.michigan.gov/msp/0,1607,7-123-1593\\_3507-15509--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/msp/0,1607,7-123-1593_3507-15509--,00.html)

**1.6 Current strategies for preparedness**

Aims: To provide the class with a further understanding of current strategies for preparedness to a terrorist attack.

- Lead a class discussion into what the students saw on the class trip, paying particular attention to what students agreed, disagreed, liked, and disliked about what they heard and saw.
- Highlight other agencies who have considered the issue of preparedness.
- Break class into groups and ask them to consider what they would use for a preparedness kit in their own home.

**1.7 Current Emergency Strategy Plans**

Aims: In preparation for the final project, students will gain an understanding and appreciation of what current emergency plans are in place.

- Using the Internet and any other resources available, students are asked to discover current emergency preparedness plans.

In a paper of not more than 1,000 words students should:

- Introduce the plan they have discovered
- What the plan is in place for and what elements it involves
- Who the plan effects and who is involved in its implementation/creation
- Has the plan ever been executed?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the plan?

## 1.8 Final Group Project

Divide the class into groups:

1. County Government- Urban
2. County Government- Rural
3. State Government
4. National Government

Working as part of the group, they must:

- Formulate a terrorism preparedness plan appropriate to the level of government in which they are employed.
- Define what would be a 'successful' plan for their level of government
- Consider how different agencies might influence or interact with them during the development and execution of their plan
- What are the possible flaws or short comings in their plan

The group will then present their strategy to the class who will serve as an audience to challenge the plan, raising concerns and questions.

## 1.9 Final Class Project

Depending on the size of the class, break the groups into sizes of no more than 10.

The instructor will ask the groups to organize themselves as a terrorism response committee. Each person within the group will maintain a unique role. These might include, but not limited to:

- Committee chair
- Committee secretary
- Committee treasurer
- Chief of local police
- Chief of local fire service
- Member of the school board
- Member of the health board
- Agent from local F.B.I station
- Member from the local amenities board
- Member from public transport

Once the group is organised into their various departments, the instructor will present the committee chair with an emergency scenario. Using the lessons learnt on the course to-date, the student committee has to respond to the emergency scenario within a strict time limit (approximately 30mins). The response should include:

1. What they identify the threat to be
2. Who the threat is directed towards
3. What are the first initial steps required
4. What are the possible long term consequences

At the end of the time, the committee secretary should have recorded the committee's final responses to the required points, to hand into the instructor.