



Role of Intelligence in Hunting Osama bin Laden

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Grade level: 12

Length: Semester project

Introduction

In order to understand the impact that September 11th had on the world and how the attacks have shaped our future, students are encouraged to view them in a global context. As demonstrated in this excerpt from the HBO documentary [What Happened on September 11](#), teachers can present their students with this complex historical subject in a variety of ways.

Watch the [Placing 9/11 In A Global Context](#) excerpt, then explore this lesson plan to see how teachers have framed 9/11 within the scope of global history.

Objective

To analyze primary source documents and discuss the CIA's activities in pursuing terrorists hiding in Afghanistan prior to 9/11 to understand how the agency influenced U.S. policy regarding Osama bin Laden.

Common Core Standards

Comprehensive Common Core Alignments at end of lesson plan.

Reading Standards for Informational Text 1, 2, 3

Reading Standards for Literacy in History/ Social Studies 3, 5, 9

Resources

- [Placing 9/11 In A Global Context](#) Excerpt
- ["What Happened on September 11"](#), HBO
- [Gina Bennett, CIA Counterterrorism Analyst Makers Video](#)
- [Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001](#), Steve Coll
- ["Pakistani man executed for CIA killings," CNN](#)
- [U.S. Policy on Counterterrorism, PDD 39, June 21, 1995, secret](#)
- ["\[Title Excised\]" "Planning for the UBL Rendition is Going Very Well," To: Michael F. Scheuer, From: \[Excised\], Central Intelligence Agency Email. Cited in 9/11 Commission Report as "Capture Op," "\[Gary\] Schroen to Mike," 9/11 Commission Report \(Chapter 4](#)

Preparation

Prior to this lesson, students will be assigned an excerpt from *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001*, written by Steve Coll and published in 2004. The excerpt is entitled "You Are to Capture Him Alive" (Pgs. 371-396). Students will answer the following questions after reading:

1. How and why did Bin Laden come to be viewed as a threat by elements in the CIA?
2. Explain the failure of the CIA to capture bin Laden at Tarnak Farm. What factors led to the abandonment of this plan?

Activity

1. Discuss connection to the Mir Kazi CIA shootings (2 killed, 3 wounded) at Langley, and the connection between the hunt for him and the hunt for UBL (CIA acronym for Usama bin Laden).
2. Short lecture/discussion on the origins of Alec Station using a PowerPoint presentation.
3. Students watch Gina Bennet video and discuss: What core idea is Gina Bennet trying to convey through her story? – Emphasis on covert action, legal issues, gender?

Assessment/Reflection

As students learn how to interpret government documents and how to understand them in terms of historical events, they will write a reflection on the fallout from failure of a particular CIA operation and how the agency applied its lessons learned.

Common Core Alignments

These alignments were written for the 11th-12th grade level. However, this lesson can easily be adjusted for use in other grades and corresponds to the following Common Core Standards. Student assessments and expectation may vary depending upon grade level and ability.

Reading Standards for Informational Text

Key Ideas and Details

- Standard 1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- Standard 2: Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.
- Standard 3: Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

Reading Standards for Literacy in History/ Social Studies

Key Ideas and Details

- Standard 3: Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

Craft and Structure

- Standard 5: Analyze in detail how a complex primary source is structured, including how key sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text contribute to the whole.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- Standard 9: Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.