

# International Threats: Al-Qaeda and ISIS Pre-Tour Lesson Agenda: Timeline and Activity Descriptions

## Learning Objectives:

In this lesson, students will:

- Define terrorism and Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs), and describe common tactics used by groups like al-Qaeda and ISIS.
- Identify key geographic regions impacted by extremist violence and explore contributing political, economic, and social factors.
- Analyze the impact of terrorist attacks on individuals, communities, and international security.
- Explore how religious extremism drives the ideology and actions of terrorist groups.

| Lesson Time (60 mins.)  | Activity Instruction   | Activity Content<br>(Materials, Key Terms, Questions, Answers)   |
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| <b>Activity 1:</b><br><b>Understanding Terrorism, FTO's and Strategies of Terrorism</b><br>(10 minutes) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>On notecatcher:</b> What do you think makes an organization a terrorist group?</li> <li>• <b>Essential question:</b><br/>- What is terrorism, and how are Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs) like al-Qaeda and ISIS defined and classified?</li> </ul> | <b>Materials:</b> Notecatcher, Scenario Cards<br><br><b>Key Terms:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Terrorism:</i> Terrorism is the premeditated use of violence or the threat of violence targeting civilians or their property for political, religious or ideological gain. It is a tactic used to create an environment of fear, chaos and intimidation in order to further the terrorists' objectives.</li> <li>• <i>FTO:</i> A foreign organization that engages in terrorist activity, and the activity threatens the security of U.S. nationals, or the national security of the U.S. as categorized by the U.S. Department of State.</li> <li>• <i>Violent Extremism:</i> The support of violent acts to achieve political, religious, or ideological goals, often targeting specific groups of people.</li> <li>• <i>Religious Extremism:</i> Refers to the belief in, and support for, extreme interpretations of religious doctrines that justify or promote violence to achieve religious or ideological goals.</li> <li>• <i>Ideology:</i> A system of beliefs or ideals, especially one that forms the basis of economic or political theory and policy. In this context, it's the motivating force behind terrorist groups like ISIS and al-Qaeda.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Activity 2: Geographic Hotspots of Foreign</b>   |  | <b>Materials:</b> Notecatcher and access to the internet for research:<br>1. Brookings Institute; <a href="https://www.brookings.edu/topics/international-affairs/">https://www.brookings.edu/topics/international-affairs/</a>  |

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| <b>Terrorist Organizations al-Qaeda and ISIS</b><br>(15 minutes)         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Small Group Research:</b> Students will research an assigned region (Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, Kenya, Burkino Faso, Mali, Niger, Syria, Yemen, and Nigeria) to learn more about the activity associated with ISIS and al-Qaeda in that region.</li> <li>• <b>Exchange Information:</b> Small groups will exchange their information with one other group and compare similarities and differences among the regions.</li> <li>• <b>Class Discussion</b></li> <li>• <b>Essential questions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What tactics do terrorist organizations commonly use to carry out attacks?</li> <li>- Where are al-Qaeda and ISIS currently active, and what evidence supports their presence in those regions?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Council on Foreign Relations; <a href="https://www.cfr.org/books-reports">https://www.cfr.org/books-reports</a></li> <li>3. BBC News; <a href="https://www.bbc.com/news">https://www.bbc.com/news</a></li> <li>4. Associated Press (AP)</li> <li>5. Combatting Terrorism Center (Westpoint); <a href="https://ctc.westpoint.edu/">https://ctc.westpoint.edu/</a></li> <li>6. Washington Institute for Near East Policy; <a href="https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/">https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/</a></li> </ol> <p><b>Research questions and potential answers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What evidence shows that al-Qaeda, ISIS, or their affiliates are active in your assigned region? <i>Consider attacks, recruitment, propaganda, or territorial claims.</i></li> <li>- What local factors might be enabling terrorist activity in this region? <i>Think about political instability, conflict history, poverty, or environmental challenges.</i></li> <li>- Besides al-Qaeda and ISIS, are there any other extremist or terrorist groups operating in this area? If so, how are they similar to or different from al-Qaeda and ISIS? <i>Proxies, competing or oppositional FTO's</i></li> <li>- What are the core ideologies and goals of the terrorist groups in this region? <i>Focus on al-Qaeda and ISIS—what do they believe, and what are they trying to achieve?</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Class Discussion:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What patterns or similarities do you notice in the goals and tactics of terrorist groups across different regions?</li> <li>- How do al-Qaeda and ISIS adapt their strategies to different local conditions?</li> <li>- Which regions appear to have the most concentrated terrorist activity, and why might that be the case?</li> </ul> |
| <b>Activity 3: Examination of ISIS and al-Qaeda</b><br>(5-7 Minutes)     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>‘What I know &amp; what I want to know’</b> chart in notecatcher.</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Materials:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notecatcher (Venn Diagram)</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Activity 4: Understanding the Impact of Terrorism</b><br>(20 minutes) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In small groups, students will read/view an excerpt from a primary source and complete the "Impacts of Terrorism" using a Venn Diagram</li> <li>• <b>Essential questions:</b></li> </ul>  | <p><b>Materials:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary Resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">Ted Talk Gill Hicks (10 minutes and 28 seconds)</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">Oklahoma City National Memorial &amp; Museum Recovery: The Financial Impact of the Oklahoma City Bombing (specifically page 2)</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">Joint Resolution 115 STAT. 224</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>  |

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How do extremist groups like al-Qaeda and ISIS use their tactics to influence communities and assert control?</li> <li>- How do the psychological and societal impacts of terrorism affect individuals and communities long after the attacks occur?</li> </ul> |                               |
| <b>Activity 5: Conclusion – Final Discussion or Writing Prompt</b><br>(10 minutes) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Reflection:</b> Students choose one of the reflection questions below and write a brief response (1-3 paragraphs) OR discuss in small groups.</li> </ul>   | <b>Materials:</b> Notecatcher |

### Al-Qaeda/ ISIS Pre-Tour Lesson Agenda: Colorado Academic Standards

| Content Area                                    | Standard Number                                    | Grade Level Expectation or Essential Skill   |
|---|--|--|
| Geography                                       | SS22.GR.HS.S.3-GLE.3                               | Investigate patterns of the interconnected nature of the world, its people, and places.  |
| History   | SS22-GR.HS-S.1.2-GLE.2                             | Analyze and evaluate key concepts of continuity and change, cause and effect, complexity, unity and diversity, and significant ideas in the United States from Reconstruction to the present. Includes: “the war on terror (e.g., 9/11, Afghanistan and Iraq wars... and the evolution of U.S. counterterrorism efforts).”   |
| History   | SS22.GR.HS.S.1.3-GLE.3                             | Analyze and evaluate key concepts of continuity and change, cause and effect, complexity, unity and diversity, and significant ideas throughout the world from the Renaissance to the present. Includes: “the Shiite/Sunni split in Islam... international terrorism... issues of unity and diversity in world history... world conferences and international agreements (e.g., ...United Nations).” |
| Reading for all purposes                        | RW20-GR.H1-S.2-GLE.2                               | Understand the logical progression of ideas in increasingly complex texts.   |
| Reading for all purposes                        | RW20-GR.HS2-S.2-GLE.2                              | Interpret and evaluate complex informational texts using various critical reading strategies.  |
| CO Essential Skill – Entrepreneurial Skills     | Inquiry/Analysis                                   | Recognize and describe cause-and-effect relationships and patterns in everyday experiences.  |
| CO Essential Skill – Civic/Interpersonal Skills | Global and Cultural Awareness                      | Compare attitudes and beliefs as an individual to others.  |
| CO Essential Skill – Civic Interpersonal Skills | Use of Information and Communications Technologies | Find information through the use of technologies.  |