

**LESSON PLAN**

**What is Torture?**

FOUNDATION: *UNIT VI. I International Implementation, Monitoring, and Enforcement*

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LENGTH	NEBRASKA SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS	McREL NATIONAL STANDARDS
2 days	US History: 12.1.3 World History: 12.2.11, 12.2.10, 12.1.14	US History: Era 9, 10 World History: Era 8 (42), Era 9 (44, 45), Across the Eras (46)

OBJECTIVES	TERMS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Students will investigate the meaning of the word “torture” and analyze how September 11 has changed our worldview of this word.</li><li>2. Following the rules from the Convention Against Torture and Degrading or Inhumane Treatment, students will interpret whether recent allegations against the United States prison camps are true.</li></ol>	United Nations Convention Against Torture and Degrading or Inhumane Treatment Guantánamo Bay Abu Ghraib Prison

MATERIALS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Video clip from <i>A Few Good Men</i> Plot Summary: <a href="http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0104257/plotsummary">http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0104257/plotsummary</a></li><li>• Torture Convention’s Definition of Torture (attached)</li><li>• Websites:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>BBC: Legal limbo of Guantánamo's prisoners <a href="http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/3034697.stm">http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/3034697.stm</a></li><li>MSNBC: Guantánamo detentions ruled unconstitutional <a href="http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/6889654/">http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/6889654/</a></li><li>US: Pentagon Detention Guidelines Entrench Illegality <a href="http://hrw.org/english/docs/2005/04/07/usdom10440.htm">http://hrw.org/english/docs/2005/04/07/usdom10440.htm</a></li><li>PBS NewsHour: Allegations of Abuse <a href="http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/military/jan-june05/gitmo_6-3.html">http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/military/jan-june05/gitmo_6-3.html</a></li><li>Wikipedia: Abu Ghraib Torture and Prisoner Abuse <a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Ghraib_prisoner_abuse">http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Ghraib_prisoner_abuse</a></li><li>The New Yorker: Torture at Abu Ghraib <a href="http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?040510fa_fact">http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?040510fa_fact</a></li><li>HRW: The Road to Abu Ghraib <a href="http://www.hrw.org/reports/2004/usa0604/">http://www.hrw.org/reports/2004/usa0604/</a></li><li>Iraqi Prisoner Abuse Courts Martial <a href="http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/jan-june04/court martial_5-19.html">http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/jan-june04/court martial_5-19.html</a></li><li>Convention Against Torture <a href="http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cat.htm">http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cat.htm</a></li></ul></li></ul>

**Day One:**

- I. Have students address both issues below on their own and then share their answers with the class.
  - Create a definition for “torture”.
  - How has 9/11 changed the way Americans view the world and whom we consider “enemies”?

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II. Using the Human Rights website Unit 6.3, allow students the chance to browse information about the recent issue of prisoner abuse at the American run prisons of Guantánamo Bay and Abu Ghraib.

III. Have students collect and write down 10 facts that support allegations of abuse.

### **Day Two:**

IV. Teacher will introduce the Convention Against Torture and Degrading or Inhumane Treatment (see website above).

- a. Give the class an explanation of what this convention believes falls under the categories of torture, acts of degradation, and acts of inhumane treatment.
- b. Class discussion using the previous day's findings: how do the allegations stack up? Is America guilty of abusing prisoners at either holding facility?

V. Show the film clip from *A Few Good Men* where Jack Nicholson explains the role of a Marine at Guantánamo Bay and justifies the tactics used to protect American citizens.

- a. After viewing the clip, ask students how they feel about his explanation. Are we protecting Americans from dangerous terrorists or are we using terrorism as a cover story?
- b. Students will then be asked to make a proclamation and defend their opinion about whether the United States is guilty of breaking the Convention's laws against Torture.

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### **Torture Convention's Definition of Torture**

#### ***Article 1***

1. For the purposes of this Convention, the term "torture" means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity. It does not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions.