

Lesson Title:
Future Conflicts

Subjects:
U.S. History, World History

Suggested time:
Two 50-minute class periods

Grade Levels:
9-12

Essential Questions:

- Why have conflicts and wars changed over time?
- How do we prioritize military spending?

Learning Targets:
Students will be able to list the key purposes of each branch of the United States military.

Students will be able to identify current events around the world, and use that knowledge to determine how to best defend American from future conflicts and wars.

Overview:
Throughout history, different wars and conflicts have required action by the five different branches of the United States military. Often, technological advances have led the way for a particular branch to change the trajectory of war. Consider, for example, the different uses of aircraft as technology moved from dirigibles, to bi-planes, to fighter planes, to jets, to missiles, to drones, and to satellites. The U.S. Airforce was not established until 1947. Similarly, advances in watercraft, land craft, telecommunications, etc. have all evolved over the centuries and various wars. In this lesson, students will look to the future of conflict, and wrestle with the idea of both *preventing* future conflicts as well as *defending* the USA during future conflicts. Thinking about the future allows students to be less concerned with finding the right answer to a problem, and become more focused on thinking about a defensible solution. This module will challenge students to think about the problem of how does America best prepare for preventing future wars and conflicts. Many have said that wars on terrorists cannot be waged with traditional techniques, and that these wars will not be waged against a coalition of countries. Cells of terrorist activities, for example, can be found in any country, and exist without the support of a government. Therefore, the manner in which countries defend themselves is different.

Procedures:
Warm up: Accessing Prior Knowledge
Write on the board or project on a screen the following:

The U.S. Armed Forces are made up of the five branches, with each carrying out the following duties and responsibilities:

- **Air Force: The nation's source of air and space power. The primary mission of the U.S. Air Force is to fly planes, helicopters, and oversee satellites.**
- **Army: Primarily focused on establishing land power. The Army generally moves to a location and secures it, and guards U.S. properties around the world.**
- **Coast Guard: Primarily focused on protecting domestic waterways, as well as helping with rescues, and law enforcement on these waterways.**
- **Marine Corps: Trained to fight by sea and land, and usually are the first to arrive in an international conflict/war.**
- **Navy: Primarily functions to secure and protect oceans and seas around the world, but also provide air support and at times land troops.**

NOTE: These are broad generalizations, and not close to a complete list of duties and responsibilities.

With a partner, have students think about the roles of each of these five branches during wars involving the United States of America. Have each pair try to think of a specific example for each of these branches (for example, they may have seen a Coast Guard ship escorting a tanker out of a bay, or they may have read about the Marines landing on the shore of a country).

After this initial thinking warm-up, now add to the board two more parts of America's defense system:

- **Homeland Security: Works with businesses, communities, and local governments across the United States to enhance the security of the nation's critical infrastructure (roads, power grids, dams, water systems, etc.), and to recover from any hazard facing America.**
- **Intelligence: Works across the world to collect and analyze information from other countries to predict domestic and international violence. This information assists the President and senior U.S. government policymakers in making decisions relating to national security (for example, the CIA).**

As with the five branches of the government, have students come up with a specific example of where they have seen or heard about each of these two elements. After about five minutes, gather examples (one or two) of each branch of the military and of the two extra elements. In this way, each group will have an example to enhance their understanding.

Step 1: Protecting the Country

Now that the students have a general idea about the seven parts of the nation's defense system, they will begin to consider the roles of the defense system today. One theme of the National Council for the Social Studies is "Time, Continuity, and Change." This theme is described as follows:

Studying the past makes it possible for us to understand the human story across time. The historical experiences of societies, peoples and nations reveal patterns of continuity and change. Historical analysis enables us to identify continuities over time in core institutions, values, ideals, and traditions, as well as processes that lead to change within societies and institutions, and that result in innovation and the development of new ideas, values and ways of life.¹

Exploring defense systems to protect against conflict and avoid future conflict is an opportunity to help students better understand how over time some ideas have continuity and some change.

To initiate this step in the lesson module, talk with the students about the idea that the country's defense systems have evolved over time. Some examples you may want to share are as follows:

- In the American Revolutionary War the foot soldier was the main force, and still today the soldiers in the Army and Marines are critical. However, where horses were used up through WW1, they are not an important part of modern warfare.
- Maps and charts have always helped during battles. Today, however, GPS systems and other digital interfaces allow for more robust maps and charts.
- The U.S. Air Force was not formed until 1947.
- Aircraft have changed dramatically in the last 100 years. Ask students to list some changes.
- Water craft have changed dramatically over time. Ask students to list some changes.
- Drones are becoming an increasingly important weapon.
- Concerns will always exist about the loss of innocent civilian life during conflicts.
- Soldiers and civilians have always been wounded and killed during war.
- Property has always been damaged during war.

You might also ask students to identify areas that are the same today during war as they were in the past (continuity) as well as areas that are different (change). This will engage them in thinking about this topic.

Place students in groups of three. Ideally, these groups will have at least one member who is aware of current events and international conflicts. Provide each group with the list of seven parts of America's defense:

- Air Force
- Army
- Coast Guard
- Marine Corps
- Navy
- Homeland Security
- Intelligence

¹ <https://www.socialstudies.org/standards/strands#2>

Students will rank order these in importance, based on how they understand conflict in the world today. Said another way, the students will be making a policy recommendation that emphasizes some parts of the defense system over others. The following prompt for the students might be helpful for you to use:

You are on a team advising the President about where to focus military funding for the next ten years. The United States has needs both internationally (e.g., Iraq), and domestically (protecting airplane travel). Rank, in order, the seven parts of the nation’s defense infrastructure with #1 being the most important to fund, and #7 being the least important to fund. Remember, in the war against terror, conflict is significant, but the traditional concept of war does not work. However, countries such as North Korea provide a genuine threat to peace, and may require more traditional defenses. This is not a scenario that has a pre-set correct answer. The best answer is the one that has a strong rationale. Please complete this grid:

Part:	Brief Rationale for Placing it at this Level
#1	
#2	
#3	
#4	
#5	
#6	
#7	

An example of a completed grid could be as follows (note: this is not an answer key that should be used to assess students)

Part:	Brief Rationale for Placing it at this Level
Intelligence	It all starts with knowing where terrorists are, because most of the conflicts are not with countries and do not follow traditional borders.
Air Force	Will operate drones and satellite-guided air strikes.
Homeland Security	Critical to protect America’s borders.
Navy	Ships will allow for closer bases of operation.

Army	More robotics and missiles will reduce size of Army.
Coast Guard	Navy and Homeland Security should cover this.
Marines	The Army and Navy will be adequate.

After completing the grid, combine two groups of three (so you now have students in groups of six). Have the six students compare their rankings. If they disagree on the ranking, they should try to resolve the conflict and come to a consensus. The goal is to compile a new list that they all agree with. Remind students that the rank order of these parts should take into account conflicts with terror (e.g., ISIS) as well as potential conflicts with other countries (e.g., North Korea). It should tap into their understanding of current conflicts and problems happening in the world today. Remind the groups that more important than their ranking is their rationale for the order.

If you have time, you may want to have each group of six share the rank order with the entire class. This will allow each group to hear from the others, and consider the order when compared to what the other groups thought were important.

Step 2: Future Results

This second step of the lesson involves students hypothesizing about future impact. The original groups of three (from Step 1) will allow for the most productive thinking. Using the ranked order of the seven parts of defense, students will examine what they suggested as their top two and bottom two. For the top two, have the groups discuss the following prompt (put this on the board, or as a heading on a sheet of paper that the students will complete as a handout):

“What are two significant benefits from having each of these two parts of defense be prioritized?”

For example, if students select the Air Force, a significant benefit is that all the other branches of the military will benefit from air support and surveillance. In addition, jets and drones are able to move around the country and world very quickly to respond to threats.

After the groups have recorded two benefits, have them shift to the two parts that were last on their ordering (rank ordered as numbers 6 and 7). Have the groups discuss the following prompt (as before, put this on the board, or as a heading on a sheet of paper that the students will complete as a handout):

“What are two risks to the country by having each of these two parts of defense be prioritized so low?”

For example, if students have Coast Guard low on their list, they might determine that this puts the countries seaports and cruise ships at risk of terrorist attacks.

After the groups record these risks, have them join another group (or you may want to run this as a whole class discussion). In these larger groups, students should evaluate the legitimacy of their risks and benefits. For example, and using the above examples, have students discuss whether or not it is true that the Air Force can move around to respond to threats, or whether or not the Coast Guard is the only way to protect cruise ships.

As an end to this step, ask students to write how their original order changed as a result of talking with others. If the order did not change, then have them write their justification for their order of the “middle 4” (the remaining four parts that were not the top two or the bottom two). This should be a quick write of only two or three sentences. This will help them reflect on how their thinking has emerged during the lesson.

Step 3: Policy Recommendation:

To help students “publish” their ideas (or at least to “go public” with them), move them back into groups of three and have them finalize their ranking from 1-7. Attached to this list, ask students to individually write a one or two paragraph rationale for their ranking. Two ideas for prompts that will pose this task to students are as follows:

- 1) You are making a policy recommendation to the President about how to fund these seven areas of defense over the next decade. Your list will inform the President about how to do this, because the most highly ranked areas will receive more money/support than those listed at the bottom.

OR

- 2) You are advising the President about how to allocate money for the five branches of the military and the two additional elements. You must divide all seven amongst 100%, with the highest the percentage being given to the highest ranked area. When the allocated percentages for all seven are added together it will come out to equal 100%. If you believe one area should not be funded, then give it 0%. If several areas are equally important, then they will be allocated equal percentage points.

(Teacher’s Note: Prompt 2 is a more challenging task than Prompt 1, because it requires students to think in more depth about how to differentiate amongst the seven parts. An example of an answer (without the rationale) might be as follows:

- i. Intelligence (25%)
- ii. Homeland Security (25%)
- iii. Air Force (20%)
- iv. Navy (15%)
- v. Army (5%)
- vi. Coast Guard (5%)
- vii. Marines (5%)

As an assessment, the teacher or a classmate can read the student’s list and the rationale to determine if they clearly support the order of seven areas of America’s defense. The rationale

should go beyond explaining what each part does. It should explain why it is important, and how it relates to the other parts.

Extension Activity:

If you planned a field trip to The Flying Heritage & Combat Armor Museum’s (FHCAM) “Why War: The Causes of Conflict” exhibit, then have students bring their ordered list with them. Using the large touch screen panel walls, have students consider how their list would be different in different times of American history and different wars. To do this, have students select at least one war, and scroll through the panels to gain information about that particular conflict. They can then re-order the list based on what they know about that time period, the conflict/war, and the context of that time in history. For example, the Air Force could only be considered after 1947.

Language Support:

To aid those with limited English proficiency or others who need help with academic language, place them in groups with at least one student who speaks English as a first language. The handout on risk factors can also be given to ELLs the day before this activity, and ELLs should be told which risk factor they will examine.

Standards:

Washington Standards (EALRs/GLEs)

9th and 10th Grade Social Studies

EALR GLE GLE Description

- Civics 1.3.1 Analyzes the relationships and tensions between national interests and international issues in the world in the past or present.
- 4.4.1 Analyzes how an understanding of world history can help us prevent problems today.

11th Grade Social Studies

EALR GLE GLE Description

- History 4.2.3 Analyzes and evaluates how technology and ideas have shaped U.S. history (1890— present).
- 4.3.2 Analyzes multiple causes of events in U.S. history, distinguishing between proximate and long-term causal factors (1890—present).
- 4.4.1 Analyzes how an understanding of United States history can help us prevent problems today.
- Skills 5.1.1 Analyzes the underlying assumptions of positions on an issue or event.

12 Grade Social Studies

EALR GLE GLE Description

- History 4.2.1 Evaluates how individuals and movements have shaped contemporary world issues.

4.2.2 Analyzes how cultural identity can promote unity and division.

Common Core State Standards:

Build Social Studies Literacy through Reading and Writing Common Core State Standard for ELA & Literacy in Social Studies Grades 9-10

<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/9-10/>

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

Build Social Studies Literacy through Reading and Writing Common Core State Standard for ELA & Literacy in Social Studies Grades 11-12

<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/11-12/>

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.3

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:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines *faction* in *Federalist* No. 10).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.5

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:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9

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

NCSS C3 Framework (College, Career, and Civic Life)

Dimension 1: Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries

Dimension 2: Applying Disciplinary Concepts and Tools

Dimension 3: Argument Writing

Dimension 4: Communicating Conclusions and Taking Informed Action

NCSS Themes

Theme 2: Time, Continuity, and Change