



YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2005 Volume III: War and Civil Liberties

The Critical Balance Threatened: Personal Liberties and National Security in Time of War

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This unit surveys United States History with special emphasis on the recurrent struggle to balance our precious civil liberties with the security needs of the nation during times of war. The unit is designed to help students to:

- Understand the main purposes of government.
- Know the specific freedoms that they and all Americans possess.
- Recognize specific abridgements of their personal rights.
- Distinguish between legitimate and tyrannical abridgements in their personal rights, in accordance with their own personal values and American precedents.
- Develop the ability to evaluate historical situations and draw these distinctions in ongoing units throughout the school year.
- Understand why governments might legitimately restrict freedoms in time of crisis such as wars.
- Learn that, oftentimes, these issues involving the critical balance between freedom and security lack moral and even constitutional clarity.

(Developed for U.S. History, grades 9-11; recommended for U.S History, High School grades)

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