



# YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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

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## **Dilemma of a Democracy: Liberty and Security**

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by Rita Sorrentino

The curriculum unit "Dilemma of a Democracy: Freedom and Security" is planned for a fifth grade class in preparation for their class participation in Law Day. The unit will consist of three areas: Rights and Responsibilities (Constitution in Daily Life), Civil Liberties during Wartime (Civil War and Cold War Cases) and Privacy and Public Information (Privacy and the Patriot Act).

The theme of civil liberties during wartime is presented in a framework that engages fifth graders in a learning process, inviting them to reflect on past practice while encouraging them to take an active stance in learning history. Each week part of the lesson will be conducted in the fifth grade classroom with follow-up lessons and activities in the computer lab. Participation in this unit will help students make connections between historical events and their daily lives, and encourage them to use technology as a tool for thinking in meaningful ways. As students investigate examples from our history, they will develop opinions about rights and responsibilities, safety and security, and privacy and public information. Ultimately, I hope it prepares them to appreciate, but not take for granted, the freedoms they enjoy, especially in areas of communication, entertainment and technology.

(Developed for Social Studies and Computers, grade 5; recommended for Social Studies and Computers, grade 5)

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