



## CIA Policy Brief

Tom Murphy, Elisabeth Irwin High School, New York, NY

**Grade level: 11-12**

**Number of class periods: Ongoing (1 trimester- 13 weeks)**

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### Objective

After September 11<sup>th</sup> The Global War on Terror (or The Long War) became the central feature of American foreign policy. Today bin Laden is dead but the war against al Qaeda and its affiliates continues. The 13-week course will examine the evolution of the policies of the Bush and Obama administrations in an attempt to understand the War on Terror and its impact on America and the world. For the central project students will be assigned a “desk” at the CIA. They will become experts on one of the challenges facing the administration today. Using their expertise they will develop a policy brief that will outline their recommendations to the National Security Council.

### Common Core Standards

*Comprehensive Common Core Alignments at end of lesson plan.*

- Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies Standards 3, 7
- Writing Standards for Literacy in History/ Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects Standards 1, 5, 6, and 8
- Speaking and Listening Standards 1, 5

### Resources

- [\*The 9/11 Report: A Graphic Adaptation. Based on the Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, Sid Jacobson and Ernie Colon\*](#)
- [CIA World Factbook](#)
- [Online news media sites](#)
- [Elements of the policy paper](#)

### Preparation

Students read current CIA info sheets on the country for which they are preparing a policy brief. They are also asked to follow stories in the news media about current challenges in the country or region they are analyzing.

### Activity

National Security Council Testimony – oral presentations before panel of council members (3 faculty members)

- 8 minute summary of the Policy Brief
- Presentation, including Presidential Briefing Binder and Power-point Preview should Emphasize policy recommendations
- Each desk will be asked follow up question by the NSC.

### Project for course

The Policy Brief. Students will prepare policy briefs for the president. As analysts for the CIA each student will be assigned to desk. Each desk will have 2-3 analysts. The desk will prepare a policy brief on the assigned region, organization, or issue.



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### *Desks*

Af – Pak / Iran / Iraq and Syria / Homeland Security / Yemen / Al Qaeda Worldwide

### *Presidential Briefing Binder*

- Policy Brief (8 – 10 pages, including Executive Summary)
- Appendices
- Works Consulted Page
- Recommended Readings (Annotated)

### *National Security Council Testimony*

- 8 minute summary of the Policy Brief
- Presentation should emphasize policy recommendations
- Each desk will be asked follow up question by the NSC.

### *Deadlines*

- Executive Summary
- Recommended Readings (annotated)
- First Draft of Policy Brief (8-10 pages)
- Presidential Briefing Binder
- Power-point Preview
- Testimony to the National Security Council

## **Assessment/Reflection**

Class discusses as a whole each policy brief presentation. The students compare and contrast the plans for each desk, discussing why there are different and specific approaches being recommended by the analysts for each briefing.

Teacher's assessment is based upon each student's synthesis of information, development of a point of view and writing a clear policy with recommendations.

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## **Common Core Alignments**

*While this lesson is really designed for an elective course where students have substantial time to research topics outside of preparation for a state exam, this lesson could be adjusted for younger students or for a special project.*

*This Lesson aligns with the following Standards:*

### **Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies**

#### **Key Ideas and Details**

Standard 3: Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

- Students will explore various sources on their given topic and will use those texts, including objective fact based assessments as well as subjective opinion and editorial pieces, in order to evaluate the evidence and come to a conclusion about what actions are in the United States' best interest.



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### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

Standard 7: Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

- Students will be using a variety of sources as well as a variety of types of sources (CIA factbook, News stories, editorials, etc) in order to solve the problem of which actions are in the United States best interest.

### Writing Standards for Literacy in History/ Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects

#### Text Types and Purposes

Standard 1: Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.

- a. Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences the claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
  - Students will be forming an argument in terms of a “policy recommendation” before the mock National Security Council meeting. They will need to prove their knowledge of the subject matter, and present the information, both orally, visually and in writing, in a logical and coherent way.

#### Production and Distribution of Writing

Standard 5: Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

- Students will be conduct a long and sustained writing and presentation assignment and will need to turn in a rough draft. Students will spend a considerable amount of time researching, planning, revising and rewriting while working collaboratively within their groups.

Standard 6: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.

- Throughout the planning, collaboration and editing process students will be publishing and updating their writing in response to feedback on the rough drafts and will use technology, including the internet.

#### Research to Build and Present Knowledge

Standard 8: Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the specific task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.

- Students will be expected to research and gather all relevant information into a single report, as well as an oral presentation and a PowerPoint. They will need to familiarize themselves with these different sources and know the provenance, uses and limitations of those sources for the task at hand. Students will be expected to present their findings in accordance with a standard citation format such as MLA.

### Speaking and Listening Standards

#### Comprehension and Collaboration

Standard 1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

- a. Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.
- b. Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.



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c. Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.

- Throughout this project, students will be engaged in a variety of collaborative discussions. Students will be working with their partners and/ or groups and will engage in a discussion with their teacher and other faculty members on the National Security Panel. Students will collaborate and share ideas and opinions within their groups, and students will have respond to issues suggested by their peers and teachers. Students will be assessed on their preparedness for these discussions and how well they work collaboratively and engage actively in discussions.

### **Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas**

Standard 4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

Standard 5: Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest

- Students will be required to make a presentations and will need to supplement these presentations with digital media (PowerPoints) and most will include textual, graphical, audio, visual and/or interactive elements. This will underscore student learning about their topic and add interest to the presentation.