

# Examining the Iran-Contra Affair

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**Grade Level** High School  
**Duration** 2-3 class periods

## National Standards

### Element 4: Human Systems

**9.** The characteristics, distribution, and migration of human populations

**13.** How the forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of Earth's surface.

## AZ Standards

### ELA

#### Reading

##### Craft and Structure

9-10.RI.6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

11-12.RI.6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the effectiveness of the text.

##### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

9-10.RI.7 Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.

11-12.RI.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in print in order to address a question or solve a problem.

9-10.RI.9 Analyze seminal/primary documents of historical and literary significance, including how they address related themes and concepts.

11-12.RI.9 Analyze foundational U.S. and world documents of historical and literary significance for their themes, purposes, and rhetorical features.

#### Writing

##### Text Types and Purposes

9-10.W.2 and 11-12.W.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

a. Introduce a topic and organize complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

## Arizona Social Studies Standards

### GEOGRAPHY

**Examining human population and movement helps individuals understand past, present, and future conditions on Earth's surface.**

HS.G3.5 Evaluate the impact of social, political, and economic decisions that have caused conflict or promoted cooperation throughout time.

**Global interconnections and spatial patterns are a necessary part of geographic reasoning.**

HS.G4.2 Analyze patterns of global power and influence in respect to trade, demographics, politics, and resource availability and use.

### HISTORY

**Cycles of conflict and cooperation have shaped relations among people, places, and environments.**

HS.H2.1 Explain multiple causes of conflict.

HS.H2.2 Analyze approaches to conflict management and resolution.

HS.H2.3 Evaluate the short- and long-term impacts of conflicts and their resolutions.

**Economic, political, and religious ideas and institutions have influenced history and continue to shape the modern world.**

HS.H3.1 Analyze how societies, leaders, institutions, and organizations respond to societal needs and changes.

### DISCIPLINARY SKILLS AND PROCESSES

**Chronological reasoning requires understanding processes of change and continuity over time, which means assessing similarities and differences between historical periods and between the past and present.**

HS.SP1.1 Evaluate how events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader contexts.

b. Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.  
e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation provided (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

**Production and Distribution of Writing**

9-10.W.4 and 11-12.W.4 Produce clear and coherent functional writing (e.g., formal letters, envelopes, technical directions, experiments, labels, timelines, graphs/tables, procedures, charts, maps, captions, diagram, sidebar, flow chart) in which the development, organization and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**Historians and Social Scientist gather, interpret, and use evidence to develop claims and answer historical, economic, geographical, and political questions and communicate their conclusions.**

HS.SP3.2 Gather relevant information from multiple sources representing a wide range of views while using origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the source to guide the selection.

HS.SP3.4 Evaluate the credibility of a source by examining how experts value the source.

HS.SP3.7 Construct and present explanations using sound reasoning, correct sequence (linear and non-linear) examples, and details with significant and pertinent information and data, while acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of the explanation.

**Thinking within the discipline involves the ability to analyze relationships among causes and effects and to create and support arguments using relevant evidence.**

HS.SP4. 1Analyze multiple and complex causes and effects of events in the past and present.

## Overview

Key political, social, environmental, and economic events in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century such as the rise of communism in Latin America, the need for reliable oil supplies, and the on-going strife in the Middle East are good topics for understanding how interrelated the world has become.

## Purpose

In this lesson students will gain a better understanding of the Iran-Contra Affair by interpreting and evaluating primary and secondary sources, constructing a timeline of the events, and making connections between the events to get an overall picture of the Iran-Contra Affair.

## Materials

- Iran-Contra Affair PowerPoint
- Keys to Understanding the Documents—Teacher Only

- World Map and Notetaking Boxes worksheet
- Group 1 through 12 Documents
- Timeline Project worksheet
- Poster boards, markers and tape
- Scoring Guide for Document Analysis Posters (optional)
- Scoring Guide for Essay

## Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. interpret and evaluate primary and secondary sources.
2. construct a timeline of events.
3. describe connections between events.

## Procedures

### SESSION ONE and TWO

1. Have students do a quick write on what they already know about the Iran-Contra Affair on a small sheet of paper. Tell them to put the paper in their book/notebook.

2. Distribute the World Map and Notetaking Boxes to each student. Tell them that they will be given information in a PowerPoint about the U.S. CIA, Nicaraguan Government, and American hostages in two countries: Iran and Lebanon. They need to take notes in the boxes as information is shared.
  3. Show the Iran-Contra PowerPoint explaining each slide. Stop at slide 30. If time permits, have students share key details that they have written in the boxes so others can add to their own set of notes.
  4. Show slide 31 and divide the students into 12 separate groups. Each group will have a number and be assigned the appropriate document to analyze.
  5. Explain that they will be making a poster on their assigned document. Show slide 32. The Document Analysis Poster will consist of:
    - ✓ Title
    - ✓ Key details of the document (See Keys to Understanding the Documents so the teacher can circulate and guide students' understanding of what they are reading.)
    - ✓ Large Writing
    - ✓ Good grammar and spelling
    - ✓ **HIPP** Analysis
      - H**-Historical context of document (What's happened or happening?)
      - I** -Intended Audience (Who was this document mean for?)
      - P**- Point of View (Whose side is portrayed?)
      - P**- Purpose (What is the purpose of this document?)
- Share the Scoring Guide for Document Analysis Poster if you plan to grade the group projects. Distribute poster boards and art supplies.
6. Show slide 33 and explain that once each group has created their poster, the groups will take turns placing them in the correct order (making a timeline) and explaining how their document adds to the entire story of the Iran-Contra Affair.
  7. Once students have made their posters, have them present their posters to the class in chronological order. Students are to fill in the Timeline Project worksheet as the presentations take place.

8. Once the timeline is completed- it is VERY important to help the students make the connections between the documents. The teacher can either do this as the groups are presenting or afterwards.
9. Have students take out their quick write from the beginning of class. Have them share with a partner two differences between the quick write and their Timeline Project worksheet.

### SESSION THREE

10. Give the essay assignment by showing slide 34 and explaining the Scoring Guide for Essay.

## Assessment

The World Map and Notetaking Boxes worksheet can be graded for completeness. Mastery will be considered 90% of the boxes are completed with solid information.

The group poster project can be graded with Scoring Guide for Document Analysis Posters. Mastery will be 80% or higher on the scoring guide.

The essay can be graded with the Scoring Guide for Essay. Mastery will be 80% or higher on the scoring guide.

## Extensions

Other possibilities:  
Students can make electronic posters using Glogster or Popplet by getting a free student account.

<https://www.glogster.com/>

<http://popplet.com/>

## Sources

### Documents

<http://herb.ashp.cuny.edu/items/show/1582>

[https://www.brown.edu/Research/Understanding\\_the\\_Iran\\_Contra\\_Affair/documents.php](https://www.brown.edu/Research/Understanding_the_Iran_Contra_Affair/documents.php)