Contemporary World Issues
Research Topic – National Security Agency Central Security Service

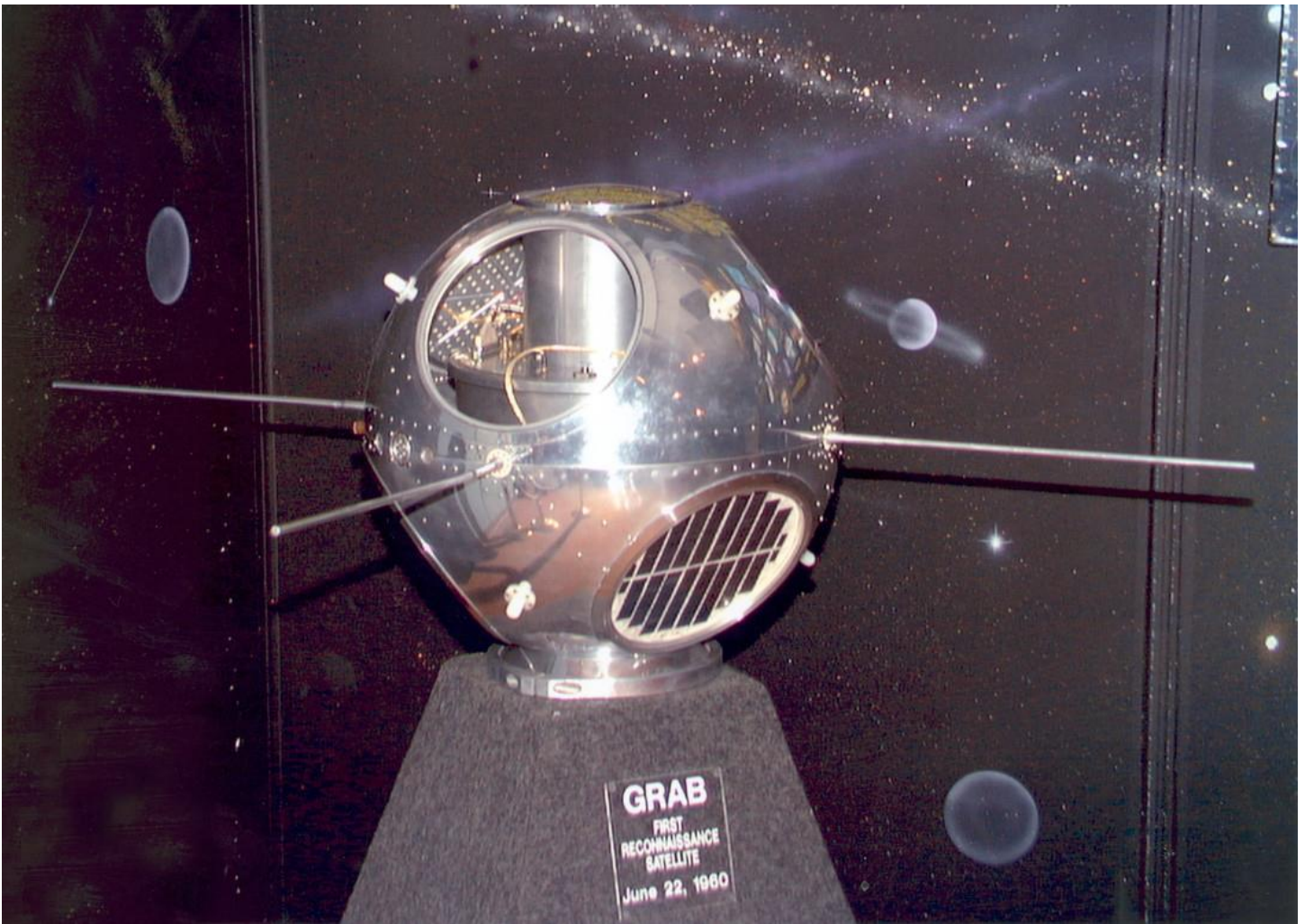| Research Topic | NSA | CSS
National Security Agency Central Security Service |
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| Grade Level | High School/Grades 9-12 |
| Time Requirement | 1 class period (60 minutes) |
| Ohio's Learning Standards | Contemporary World Issues – Topic: National Security and International Diplomacy – The political, economic and social goals of nations, international associations and nongovernmental organizations may be incompatible with each other and lead to conflicts. |
| Common Core Standards | 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.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. |
| Objective | Students will examine methods and strategies implemented by the National Security Agency Central Security Service that cover threats against the United States from foreign entities and protect us through military support, intelligence and cybersecurity. |
| Research Statement | The NSA/CSS has played a very large role in both military and civilian intelligence gathering operations and traces its roots back to just before the US involvement in WWI. From its humble beginnings of a small military unit, the NSA is now the largest intelligence service operated by the US Government. By looking at its role, how it accomplishes its mission, and the real world impacts from its missions is key to understanding the present and navigating the future. |
| Introduction | The Mission of NSA/CSS:

The National Security Agency/Central Security Service (NSA/CSS) leads the U.S. Government in cryptology that encompasses both signals intelligence (SIGINT) and information assurance (now referred to as cybersecurity) products and services, and enables computer network operations (CNO) in order to gain a decision advantage for the Nation and our allies under all circumstances.

The NSA/CSS's Core Values are:

Commitment to Service - Knowing that the country, our friends and allies are relying on us, we are dedicated to fulfilling our commitment to serve and to excellence in the pursuit of our critical mission.
Respect for the Law - Everything we undertake in our missions is grounded in our adherence to the U.S. Constitution and compliance with the U.S. laws, regulations and policies that govern our activities.
Integrity - We are committed to communicating honestly and directly, acting ethically and fairly and carrying out our mission efficiently and effectively. |

	Transparency - We are committed to fostering public understanding of NSA's mission and to providing complete transparency to those who authorize and oversee NSA's work on behalf of the American people. **Respect for People** - We are committed to ensuring that all NSA personnel are respected, included and valued for their diverse backgrounds, experiences, skills and contributions to our mission and culture. **Accountability** - We are accountable for our actions and take responsibility for our decisions, practicing wise stewardship of public resources and placing prudent judgment over expediency.
Supporting Idea I	Establishing and expansion The NSA, now the largest in both personal and budget of US intelligence organizations, traces it origins back to April 28, 1917 just after the US entered WWI. At first, it was a small military unit that focused on intercepting enemy communications, which was demobilized after the war. The State Department saw the benefits of keeping such an organization and pushed for a new, civilian branch. It would be created in 1919 and called the Cipher Bureau, tasked with securing US diplomacy messages and deciphering other nations. It is notable that this was the first national, civilian intelligence organization that had been established during peacetime. It would be disbanded in 1928. The following year, Army Signal Corps would be given the responsibility for cryptology but would focus on military communications, not civilian. The Signal Intelligence Service (SIS) was established to relieve that and was staffed by civilian personnel. But SIS would not begin to rebuild their interception services for another six to eight years, instead being tasked with making codes for the Army. They would be renamed twice during WWII, first to Signal Security Agency in 43' and Army Security Agency in 45'. It, along with all other cryptologic organizations, would be centralized under the Armed Forces Security Agency (AFSA) in 1949, working under the Department of Defense and Joint Chiefs of Staff. AFSA failed in several notable areas, such as centralization of its activities and coordination with other agencies such as the FBI/CIA. The final name change would come when President Truman called for the creation of the NSA in 1952. The Central Security Service would be created and integrated in 1972 with the NSA to better support and facilitate intelligence sharing with the armed forces and their troops at the tactical level.
Supporting Idea II	What does the NSA do? As stated before, the NSA and all its previous iterations focus on securing their messages, message interception, and decryption. How this differs from another intelligence branch is that the vast majority of their gathering is done by intercepting communications out right through the use of hacking, catching wireless messages, or tapping lines. This is called Signals Intelligence (SIGINT). Other agencies, like the CIA to contrast, are more focused on using people on the ground to gather intelligence from other people (HUMINT). Message and system security, more prominently known as Cybersecurity, involves making sure your computer systems are proofed against other nations attempts to access it. This also involves securing your own transmissions in a way that makes them harder to intercept and difficult to turn into a useful, coherent message. For example, emails and phones might have an extra layer of security or must go

| | through some type of equipment to have the message encrypted by the sender and decrypted by the receiver.

Message interception has become a massive job for the NSA. With the advent of wireless and satellites, signals are being sent at incredible rates. Aside from simply finding the message, it then has to be deciphered if encrypted and analysis to determine if it is usable. Many of those employed by the NSA are math and computer science focused. |
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| **Supporting Idea III** | What have they done recently?
The NSA has had a checkered past in the last twenty years. Warrantless wiretaps, intercepted communications of US citizens, and Edward Snowden's leaks caused a split in American public. During the months that followed this 2013 event, the public became more disapproving of the surveillance program and whose data it collected and how it was being used. By 2016, 49% of those polled said they were not confident in the government's ability to protect their data and that their personal data was less secure. Cybersecurity is one of the largest growing and changing fields in the world right now. Our computers are constantly being updated, patched, or made obsolete by newer technology.

On the other hand, the public does not know how many attacks or threats that the NSA has stopped because it is all classified. Leaks only reveal what the agency is doing wrong – and those deserve to be addressed – but there is very little about the tangible efforts the agency makes. |
| **Conclusion** | The NSA started out as a military necessity to provide the war effort with accurate intelligence. As the use of electronics and signals evolved, its use to gain an upper hand in diplomacy and to secure their own transmissions became invaluable. Today, the NSA has had several controversies occur and privacy rights are the focus of discussion behind its activities, and how far it can go.

The National Veterans Memorial and Museum honors the service and sacrifice of our nation's Veterans by sharing their stories and connecting students to the Veteran experience. Visit our website www.nationalvmm.org for more educational resources. |
| **Recommended Readings** | Report on the NSA, December 2013
https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2013-12-12_rg_final_report.pdf
Patriot Act. https://www.congress.gov/107/plaws/publ56/PLAW-107publ56.pdf |
| **Resources** | https://www.nsa.gov/
https://www.newyorker.com/news/john-cassidy/inside-the-white-house-n-s-a-report-the-good-and-the-bad
https://www.nsa.gov/about/cryptologic-heritage/center-cryptologic-history/pearl-harbor-review/black-chamber/
https://www.nsa.gov/about/cryptologic-heritage/center-cryptologic-history/pearl-harbor-review/sis/
https://www.newyorker.com/news/john-cassidy/inside-the-white-house-n-s-a-report-the-good-and-the-bad |
| **Visual Thinking Strategies** | Visual Thinking Strategies transforms the way students think and learn by providing training and curriculum for people to facilitate discussions of visual art that significantly increase student engagement, performance and enjoyment of learning.
https://vtshome.org/about/ |
| **Assignment** | Have students take 3-5 minutes to look at the images.
Ask students to describe what they see in the images.
Ask students what more they can tell you about the images. |

	Ask why?
Assessment	Using visual cues, student should observe and discuss people, the way individuals are dressed, the activity of individuals, if individuals look familiar landscapes, backgrounds, etc. Students should be able to articulate what they see in each image using visual thinking strategies.
Critical Thinking Questions	1. Why has the NSA grown to be the largest of the US's intelligence gathering agencies? 2. Is there such a thing as privacy when it comes to data anymore, especially with the advances in technology? 3. With the current state of globalization, is there potentially anything that could replace the function of the NSA moving forward?

U.S. Army Signals Intelligence Service Personnel at Arlington Hall (c. 1943), obtained from
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Signal_Intelligence_Service

Cold War: GRAB II Elint Satellite Exhibit, National Cryptologic Museum,
https://www.nsa.gov/Resources/Everyone/Digital-Media-Center/Image-Galleries/Cryptologic-Museum/Current-Exhibits/igphoto/2002138189/

Mobile ASAE station in German (c. 1960). From
https://www.jstor.org/stable/26478805?seq=19#metadata_info_tab_contents page 24