

Bioterrorism: Becoming an Informed Citizen

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a *bioterrorism* attack is the deliberate release of viruses, bacteria, toxins or other harmful agents used to cause illness or death in people, animals, or plants.

Lesson Objectives:

Student will:

- Identify six biological agents used for bioterrorism and understand the causes, the symptoms, the treatments for each.
- List steps the US government is making to protect its citizens from such attacks.
- Summarize and organize information from several sources.
- Create original text in the style of a science text.
- Evaluate credibility of web information.

Introduction:

Students will work in groups of 2 – 3 to investigate eight of the most common biological weapons to gain a better understanding of the threat of bioterrorism.

Procedures:

1. Each group will be assigned a biological agent to become an expert on. Choices include: anthrax, influenza, SARS, meningitis, cholera, plague, viral hemorrhagic fevers, HIV/Aids, botulism. Experts must find the following information on their topic:
 - a. Cause of disease
 - b. History and frequency of occurrence
 - c. Symptoms/treatment of disease
 - d. Reasons it is a good choice as a weapon
 - e. How it would be used as a weapon
 - f. What US can do to protect its citizens and/or treat its citizens if this weapon is used

Useful websites:

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/Agent/agentlist.asp>

<http://www.nap.edu/shelves/first>

<http://www.hopkins-biodefense.org>

*If you search on your own, make sure you evaluate the website for validity of content. Write down **every website** that you retrieve information from. Use at least three sources.

2. Project Choices:
 - a. Since bioterrorism is a fairly new topic, everyone should be familiar with particular diseases and their threat. It is up to you to create a

short section in what will become the class book on bioterrorism. The following scoring guide will show you what needs to be included in your book section.

Format: (12 points)

- a. Section heading
- b. Leading questions
- c. Subsection headings
- d. New vocabulary identified with bold or italics
- e. Illustrations with captions

Content: 8 points/ biological weapon (to get full credit you must have complete information on all topics listed above)

- b. You work for homeland security council and your group needs to create a PowerPoint presentation to inform the Senate and House of:
 - One of the six biological agents that may be used as weapons (information from procedure 1)
 - what your group proposes be done to protect/prevent/treat citizens