

CHAPTER 1

The Shifting Definition of Terrorism

Learning Objectives

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After reading this chapter, students should be able to:

1. Explain the reason terrorism is difficult to define.
2. Summarize the impact of context on definitions of terrorism.
3. Explain the importance of defining terrorism.
4. Outline contemporary attempts to define terrorism.
5. Explain where the term *terrorism* originated and how the meaning changed during the history of the nineteenth century.
6. Explain how socialism, anarchism, and communism were mistakenly associated with terrorism.
7. Summarize the differing meanings of terrorism in Russia from the Peoples' Will through the Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin.
8. Summarize the early history of the Irish Republican Army.
9. Define the term *selective terrorism* as used by Michael Collins.

Key Terms

Social construct, p. 3
Academic consensus definition, p. 4
Social context, p. 4
Selective terrorism, p. 5
Nidal Malik Hasan, 6
Committee of Public Safety, p. 17
Reign of Terror, p. 17
Spain in 1807, p. 18
Radical democrats, p. 20
Socialists, p. 20
Anarchists, p. 20
Communists, p. 20
Joseph Stalin, p. 31

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Vladmir Lenin, p. 31
Vladmir Putin, p. 31
Workers' Councils or Soviets, p. 34
Leon Trotsky, p. 35
Royal Irish Constabulary, p. 41
Supreme Council of the IRB, p. 42
Sinn Fein, p. 44
Free State, p. 46

Academic consensus definition is a complex definition based on the work of Alex Schmid. It combines common elements of the definitions used by the leading scholars in the field of terrorism.

Anarchists: Those in the nineteenth century who advocated the creation of cooperative societies without centralized governments. There were many forms of anarchy. In the popular understanding of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, anarchists were seen as violent socialist revolutionaries. Today anti-globalists, calling themselves anarchists, have little resemblance to their earlier counterparts.

Bourgeois: The middle class. *Bourgeoisie* (plural) in Marxist terminology refers to trades-people, merchants, artisans and other non-peasants excluded from the upper classes in medieval Europe. Marx called the European democracies, after the French Revolution, bourgeois governments, and he advocated a democracy dominated by workers.

Committee for Public Safety: Assembled by Maximilien Robespierre (1758–1794) to conduct the war against invading *monarchal* powers, it evolved into the executive body of France. The Committee for Public Safety initiated the Reign of Terror.

Communists: Socialists who believed in a strong centralized economy controlled by a strong central government. Their ideas were summarized in *The Communist Manifesto*, written by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in 1848.

Free State: The name given to the newly formed Republic of Ireland after Irish independence in the Tan War.

Nidal Malik Hasan (1970-) an American soldier of Palestinian descent. Hasan was an Army psychiatrist who apparently became self-radicalized, embracing militant Islam. He went on a shooting spree at Fort Hood in Texas on November 5, 2009, killing thirteen people and wounding almost three-dozen others. He was wounded, arrested, and charged with several counts of murder.

Radical democrats: Those who tried to bring democracy to all classes. They sought a more equitable distribution of wealth throughout all economic classes, believing that

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concentrated wealth and class inequities prevented societies from becoming truly democratic.

Reign of Terror: The name given to the repressive period in France 1794–1795. The revolutionary government accused thousands of French nobles and clergy of plotting to restore the monarchy. Executions began in Paris and spread throughout the countryside. Large mobs attacked and terrorized nobles in rural areas. Summary executions (executions on the spot without a trial) were quite common.

Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC): The police force established by the United Kingdom in Ireland. It was modelled after the London Metropolitan Police, but it represented British interests. After the Free State formed, the RIC became the RUC, Royal Ulster Constabulary. In turn, the RUC gave way to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) as part of Irish and British attempts to bring peace to Northern Ireland after 1995.

Vladimir Lenin: The Russian revolutionary who helped lead a revolution in February 1917, and who led a second revolution in October, bringing the communists to power. Lenin led the communists in a civil war, and set up a dictatorship to enforce communist rule in Russia.

Vladimir Putin: (1952–) a former KGB officer and second President of the Russian Federation from 1999 to 2008. He began serving as Russia's prime minister after the end of his presidential term.

Leon Trotsky: A Russian revolutionary who led foreign affairs in Stalin's government, and later became the commander of the Red Army. He espoused terrorism as a means for spreading revolution. He was thrown out of the Communist Party for opposing Stalin, and was assassinated by communist agents in Mexico City in 1940.

Selective terrorism is a term used by Michael Collins during the Irish War of Independence (1919-1921). Collins did not launch indiscriminate terror attacks; he selectively targeted the British military, the police force it sponsored, and people who supported the United Kingdom.

Sinn Fein: The political party of Republicans. Critics claim it represents terrorists. Republicans say it represents their political interests. Despite the debate, Sinn Fein historically has close connections with extremism and violence.

Social construct refers to the way people view reality. Groups construct a framework around a concept, defining various aspects of their lives through the meanings they attribute to the construct.

Social context describes the historical, political, and criminological circumstances at a given point in time. The social context affects the way terrorism is defined. The text examines the impact of history, war, political power and repression, media coverage, crime, religion, and specific forms of violence on the definition of terrorism.

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Socialists: Radical democrats who sought wealth equality in capitalist societies. Some socialists sought governmental guarantees of living standards. Others believed that the state should control industry and divide profits among all members of society. Others believed that people would form cooperative relationships on their own with no need of a government.

Spain in 1807: The Peninsula War (1808–1814), which began when Spanish and French forces divided Portugal in 1807. Napoleon, whose army entered Spain in 1807, attempted to use his forces to capture the Spanish throne in 1808. British forces under Sir Arthur Wellesley, later Duke of Wellington, joined Spanish forces, loyal to the king of Spain, and Spanish partisans to fight the French.

Joseph Stalin: The dictator who succeeded Lenin. Stalin solidified communist control of Russia through a secret-police organization. He purged the government of all suspected opponents in the 1930s, killing thousands of people.

Supreme Council of the IRB: The command centre of several Republican terrorist organizations, including the Irish Republican Army and the Provisional Irish Republican Army. The name was transposed from the Irish Republican Brotherhood.

Workers' Councils or Soviets: The lowest-level legislative body in the Soviet Union following the October Revolution. *Soviet* is the Russian word for “council.”

Chapter Outline

I. Difficulties with Definitions.

LO 1: Explain the reason terrorism is difficult to define.

LO 2: Summarize the impact of context on definitions of terrorism.

- A. Defining terrorism has generated numerous debates.
- B. Terrorism is difficult to define in that the meaning changes within social and historical contexts.
- C. The term terrorism is a *social construct* – groups construct a frame work around a concept, providing a definition through the meanings they attribute to the construct. The *social context* surrounding the term terrorism influences how it is defined – the historical, political, and criminological circumstances at a given point in time affect the way in which terrorism is defined.
 1. U.S. State Department considers Hezbollah to be a terrorist organization while the Jordanian police consider Hezbollah to be a militia fighting Israeli Defense Forces.
 2. Given their past experiences with terrorism, Israel keeps a close eye on militant activities in Lebanon, including violating Lebanese air space. Lebanese consider this an act of terrorism.

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3. The definition becomes more complicated in war zones. NATO forces are fighting two major enemies in Afghanistan; however, the military, politicians and the media combine the two groups as one organization.
 - a. al Qaeda
 - b. Taliban
4. *Nidal Malik Hasan*, a U.S. Army Major went on a shooting spree at Fort Hood in Texas. Some view Hasan as a terrorist; others view him as a mentally deranged soldier.

Class Discussion/Activity

What is meant by the social construct and social context as applied to terrorism?

Class Discussion/Activity

Historical circumstances have had a powerful impact on the meaning of terrorism. Do you believe that the meaning of terrorism will change again in the future? What would need to occur in order to change the definition? Explain.

See Assignments 1
and 2

II. Attempts to Define Terrorism

LO 3: Explain the importance of defining terrorism.

LO 4: Outline contemporary attempts to define terrorism.

- A. There is no standard meaning of *terrorism*. Schmid (2005) posits an academic consensus definition, stating that most definitions of the term have two characteristics:
 1. Someone is terrorized
 2. The meaning of the term is derived from the terrorists' targets and victims.
- B. Definitions and Policy
 1. Terrorism is a *pejorative term*, meaning that the term is laden with derogatory meanings.

2. Ayla Schbley (2003) believes that it necessary to emphasize the criminal nature of terrorism and move the focus beyond debates about politics
3. Boaz Ganor (2002) sees attacks on civilians as the key element differentiating terrorists from legitimate revolutionaries.
4. A clear definition is crucial for a nation's policy and international cooperation.
5. Ganor argues that confusion arises because policy makers in the West use incorrect terms and phrases to describe terrorism.
6. The solution, Ganor believes, is to focus on non-combatant civilians. Eric Reitan (2010) argues that attacks on military and security forces can be acts of terrorism.
7. Jacqueline Hodgson and Victor Hodges (2013) write that the defining terrorism is crucial because it identifies the people who are terrorists and it defines the specific acts that can be legitimately called terrorism.
8. Walter Laqueur (1987) offered a simple definition of terrorism. Terrorism is the use or threatened use of force against innocent victims for political purposes.

Media Tool

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bYVR6j6NPZ0>

What was Hasan's motivation for the attack? How was this terrorism? How might this attack differ from an incidence of workplace violence?

Class Discussion/Activity

In small groups have the students create a chart that displays the evolution of modern terrorism.

What If Scenario

What if you somebody asked you to define terrorism? What would you say?

III. Shifts of Meanings in History

LO 5: Explain where the term terrorism originated and how the meaning changed during the history of the nineteenth century.

LO 6: Explain how socialism, anarchism, and communism were mistakenly associated with terrorism.

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- A. The Origin of Terrorism in Western History: Historical Circumstances
1. Meaning of terrorism has changed with political tides in Western history.
 2. Modern terrorism originated from the French Revolution.
 - a. Term used to describe the repressive actions of the French government.
 3. The meaning of terrorism soon transformed to refer to guerilla tactics in the Napoleonic wars.
 - a. In guerrilla war, guerrillas use terrorist tactics against their enemies, and may terrorize enemies and their supporters into submission.
 4. Mid-19th century, the term shifted to encompass the actions of revolutionaries, which were copied by Nationalists.
 5. The meaning is seen as having come full circle, when Communists in the Soviet Union used terrorism to subjugate the population.

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- B. The French Revolution, 1789-1799
1. Based on the same principles of enlightenment as the American Revolution. France represented a radical shift in power structures.
 - a. Inequitable class structure – nobles and clergy paid no taxes.
 - b. Class violence ripped through France as middle- and working-class revolutionaries tore power from the hands of the social elite and the state-sponsored Roman Catholic Church.
 - c. Committee of Public Safety formed in 1793, executed thousands of nobles and clergy – period known as *Reign of Terror*.

C. Guerrillas and the Spanish Peninsula

1. Napoleon invaded Spain in 1807.
 - a. The French army encountered a new style of battle, guerilla warfare, - being waged by the Spaniards.
 - b. The Napoleonic Wars continued until 1815.
 - c. The Spanish called the partisans patriots, but the French referred to them as terrorists.
 - d. The meaning of *terrorism* shifted away from governmental repression to the resistance of some people to governments

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D. 1848 and the Radical Democrats

1. Western minds began to view terrorism differently, due in large part to the nature of European violence, in the 1800s.
2. Europe continued to experience political struggles and demands for freedom in spite of the flourished democracies in Britain and America.

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- a. The democrats of the early 1800s were not united.
 - b. Royalists were reasserting their power in the rest of Europe.
 - c. Facing continued failure, democratic forces began to think radically.
- 3. Formation of radical democrats, socialists, anarchists and capitalists.
 - a. Radical democrats demanded immediate and drastic change. They were not only interested in developing constitutions, but also wanted to distribute evenly the wealth created by trade and manufacturing.
 - b. Socialists argued for centralized control of the economy.
 - c. Anarchists sought to reduce or eliminate centralized government
 - d. When the level of terrorism is identified, the level of response can be determined.
- 4. Radical democrats called for class revolution.
 - a. Constitutional movements had failed in many countries.
 - b. Parisians revolted in 1848, followed by almost every other European capital, as working-class distaste for the distribution of wealth and power increased.
 - c. The rebel efforts failed, creating an underground movement, signaling the beginning of modern terrorism.
- 5. Socialists
 - a. Three strains of radical democrats coalesced after the failed revolutions of 1848: communists, socialists, and anarchists.
 - b. Socialists wanted to completely democratize society and assume control of industrial production.
 - c. Karl Marx (father of communism) advocated a strong centralized government, the elimination of all classes except the working class, and a complete state monopoly over all forms of industrial and agricultural production.
 - d. Anarchists viewed government as evil and sought to eliminate it.
- 6. Anarchists
 - a. The term anarchy originated with Greek philosophers speaking of government elimination.
 - b. Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809–1865) was one of the advocates of modern anarchism. He called for:
 - i. An extension of democracy to all classes.
 - ii. The elimination of property and government.
 - iii. Property was to be commonly held.
 - c. Families living in extended communes were to replace centralized government.
 - d. Anarchists of the era came to see themselves as revolutionaries.

- e. Anarchists favored strikes, demonstrations, and other mass actions.
- f. They would have growing influence on terrorism in the second half of the nineteenth century.

E. Violent Anarchism

1. Socialists and anarchists debated the efficacy and morality of violence, and most of the people who called for revolution spoke of mass action, not individual violence.
2. Walter Lacquer says socialists and anarchists rejected terrorism on practical and theoretical grounds.
3. Richard Jensen believes that the initial calls in history for revolution cannot be associated with terrorism.
4. Several factors merged to create a culture of terrorism among some members of the anarchist movement.
5. With the invention of dynamite, a small group had a technological force multiplier that allowed it to launch a major attack. Rhetoric gave birth to propaganda by the deed, but dynamite fostered the philosophy of the bomb.

F. Anarchism and Nationalism

1. The 1800s witnessed the growth of anarchism and the rise of Nationalism in the West. Terrorism in the modern sense came from violent anarchists in the late 1800s.
2. Anarchists called for an end to government.
3. Nationalists demanded the right to self-government.
4. Nationalists, who adopted “philosophy of the bomb”, began using the terrorist tactics of violent anarchists. Nationalists believed that they were fighting patriotic wars. They adopted only the tactics of the anarchists, not their ideology.

G. The nineteenth-century anarchists caused a panic.

1. Terrorist activities, such as assassinations and bombings, were routine.
2. Their activities were sensationalized by the press.
3. People feared anarchism.
4. People believed that anarchists were involved in an international conspiracy designed to topple Western governments.

H. Noam Chomsky (2002) argues governments define terrorist acts as immoral, but they tend to respond by acting outside the bounds of morality.

1. Chomsky finds this approach unacceptable because the same moral framework that allows a society to define an illegal act as terrorism requires that the response be conducted within the bounds of morality.
2. The United States operates within a moral definition of terrorism only when its own interests are served.

3. As a result, oppression, violence, and illegal actions are rarely defined as terrorism when they are condoned by the United States or its allies.

Media Tool

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vsy-IWJeTJ0>

What was the objective of these anarchists? What were their ultimate goals? How realistic do you think it was? How do these modern-day anarchists compare to their latter-day brethren?

What If Scenario

What if you were upset by the political, social, or economic order and voting in elections did not seem to matter? Would you take up violent anarchism? Why or why not? Would you support others who did on behalf of the cause?

IV. Terrorism and Revolution in Russia: 1881-1921

LO 7: Summarize the differing meanings of terrorism in Russia from the Peoples' Will through Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin.

- A. Late-nineteenth-century Russia differed significantly from the other great powers of Europe.
 1. As opposed to other European countries, class distinctions remained intact.
 2. Russia was inadequately prepared to manage the impact of the industrial revolution.
 3. Three groups in Russia after 1850 felt that they could reform and modernize the Russian state:
 - a. One group aligned with Czar Alexander for modernizing Russia from the top down.
 - b. A second, intellectuals, wanted Russia to become a liberal Western democracy.
 - c. A third, Narodnaya Voyla (the People's Will), advocated violent socialist revolution.
- B. The People's Will followed the philosophy of Mikhail Bakunin and Sergey Nechaev.
 1. They murdered the police chief of Moscow, and went on a campaign of bombing and murder.

2. In May 1881, they succeeded in striking their ultimate target; they killed Czar Alexander II.

C. Czar Nicholas and the Revolutions of 1905 and 1917

1. Russia experienced a revolution in St. Petersburg in 1905—a time of economic and political turmoil following a lost war with Japan. The rebellion was suppressed by Czar Nicholas' forces. After entering WWI, a second revolution broke out, as Russian citizens grew tired of the economic state and Czarist rule. The army joined the people this time, creating a new government.
2. Workers Councils (Soviets) were established.
3. The February revolutionaries (Mensheviks) were unpopular as they kept Russia in the war.
4. Vladimir Lenin (1870–1924), backed by Germans, pulled Russia from the war, and began forging policy by force of will, in his desire to create a better socialist state. He saw terrorism as a useful instrument to overthrow governments and control enemies.

D. Lenin and Trotsky

1. The Russian Revolution utilized terrorism in a new manner.
2. Leon Trotsky (1879–1940) believed that terrorism should be used as an instrument for overthrowing middle-class, or bourgeois, governments.
3. Lenin and Trotsky instilled the fear of communist revolution in the minds of many people in the West.
4. Western leaders began to fear that communist terrorists were on the verge of toppling democratic governments.

E. Outdated History?

1. Michael Scheuer (2006) believes that the focus on history is often misplaced.
2. Jihadist terrorism comes from a different tradition.
 - a. It does not rely on political and theoretical developments in the West.
 - b. They come from a religious tradition dating from the twelfth century in the Western calendar.
 - c. Jihadists operate in a manner far different from terrorist groups in the late twentieth century.
 - d. Expertise on the old-style groups is not applicable to the jihadists.

Media Tool

The FBI's Terrorism Screening Center. Retrieved from the Web Jun 29, 2012 at <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/nsb/tsc>. This site offers a substantial array

of information on terrorism related topics including postings of most Wanted Terrorists and Domestic Terror Fugitives. It additionally provides several links to related agencies in the War on Terror. In addition, the site also offers information on careers with the FBI, virtual tours, as well as a fun & games page. Have students visit the photo gallery section and select three photos that they feel best represent America's War on Terror." Have students create a PowerPoint presentation that includes each photo as well as commentary on why they chose the way they did. Be sure to give instruction on source citation for images.

What If Scenario

What if someone you worked with became angry with management because they did not get a raise? The person hacks into the company's database causing the system to crash. Would you consider this to be an act of terrorism? Explain.

V. Selective Terrorism and the Birth of the Irish Republic

LO 8: Summarize the early history of the Irish Republican Army.

LO 9: Define the term *selective terrorism* as used by Michael Collins.

- 22-23
- A. The Irish have never ruled their island as a single political entity.
 - 1. The Irish have experienced some type of foreign domination since a series of Viking incursions in 800 A.D.
 - 2. English colonization of Ireland in the 1500s created friction on two fronts: colonizers vs. colonized, and Protestants vs. Catholics. The tension increased in 1801 as the UK formed and absorbed Ireland, forcing British rule upon the Irish.
 - a. Unionists - people who wanted to remain in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.
 - b. Republicans - people who wanted independence from Britain.
 - B. The Early Irish Republican Army (IRA).
 - 1. Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) formed in the 1850s (made up primarily of Irish Catholic exiles and ex-patriots).
 - 2. Due to Irish nationalistic feeling in the homeland, and the hope of home rule, the IRB waged a campaign of bombing and assassination from 1870 until 1916.

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C. The Easter Rising.

1. At Easter in 1916, Patrick Pearse and James Connolly (1868–1916) led a revolt in Dublin.
2. The revolt failed so the pair sought terms with the British.
3. Sinn Fein, the political party of Irish republicanism, continued its activities in spite of the failure of the Easter Rising.
4. The IRB had transformed itself into an army: the IRA, with Michael Collins soon to take the lead.
5. Forcing the issue of self-rule, the British fought with IRA forces in the Black and Tan War.

D. Selective Terror.

1. Michael Collins, leader of the IRA, studied the tactics of the Russian Peoples' Will, and the writings of earlier anarchists and terrorists.
3. He felt revolution could be successful, but not from a popular uprising. He felt that it needed to be systematic, organized, and ruthless.
4. Collins developed a strategy called “selective terrorism.” To be effective, terrorism had to selectively, and ruthlessly, target security forces and their symbols of authority.

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Class Discussion/Activity

As a review, play jeopardy using the key terms and/or theorists.

What If Scenario

What if someone asked you if there was a difference in violent groups attacking civilian targets as opposed to military ones? What would you say?

See Assignments 3 and 4

Chapter Summary

- Terrorism is difficult to define because it is a social construct and not a physical entity. Furthermore, the term is pejorative because it evokes a variety of politically charged responses. The way terrorism is defined often has life or death consequences.
- Terrorism is defined within social and political contexts, and it means different things in different time periods. The meaning even changes within a historical

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time frame as contexts change. This is the primary reason that no single definition of terrorism will ever be successful.

- Definitions of terrorism are important because they guide policy, but there are differing frameworks for definitions. Some approaches emphasize the criminal nature terrorism. Others focus on the types of targets that terrorist select. While many academics offer definitions, they are probably not as important as policy definitions.
- Terrorism originated during the French Revolution. It described the actions of the government. In the nineteenth century the French applied it to guerrillas in Spain, and it was used to describe the actions of radical democrats in the 1848 revolutions. By the century's end it was used as a label for anarchists and nationalists.
- Socialism refers to controlling an economy by direct democracy and utilizing economic profits to ensure the well being of citizens. Anarchism is a philosophical concept originating in ancient Greece. In the eighteenth century anarchists generally disavowed the power of national governments. Some anarchists were violent, engaging in bombing and assassination. Communism in its ideal form is socialism where economic production and profits are owned and distributed by workers.
- Modern revolutionary terrorism is closely associated with a series of revolutionary activities that began with the People's Will and continued through the Russian Revolution. After the communists seized power, they returned to the practice of the French revolutionaries and used terrorism to maintain political power.
- Irish revolutionaries fought for independence for several centuries. The Irish Republican Brotherhood was created in the mid-nineteenth century. They soon adopted the tactics of the 1848 revolutionaries, waging a campaign of terror that culminated in the Black and Tan War.
- Selective terrorism was a term used by Michael Collins after the failure of the Easter Rising. His intention was to target specific government officials and supporters. He sought to terrorize them until they accepted IRA terms.

Assignments

1. At the start of class, have your students write on a piece of paper a definition of terrorism in their own words. Have the students share their definitions with the class. Allow time to discuss student responses, as well as to discuss how the responses align with what White has written, or post a Discussion Question addressing this topic on Blackboard or Moodle, and have the students discuss via this medium. (LO 1)

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2. Have students monitor nightly news, news magazines, or newspapers (local, national and/or international) in regard to broadcasts/stories on terrorism. Have them report their findings at the end of the course, or have them present a weekly current events article summary on a terrorism related article. (LO 1-9)
3. Have each student comb through <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/browse/publications> (or another virtual library or website as approved by the instructor) for terrorism related news, and select an article that relates to one or more of the chapter's core concepts. Have students provide a journalistic summary and a personal opinion/reaction to the article. Have students orally present the article to the class, field Q & As from their fellow students, and provide a copy of the original source article following the presentation. Optional: Have students complete peer assessments at the end of each presentation. (LO 1-9)
4. Have students create a PowerPoint presentation that includes each photo as well as commentary on why they chose the way they did. Be sure to give instruction on source citation for images. (LO 1-9)