



## ***Teacher's Guide***

### **Biochemical Weapons: A Modern Threat** **World At War**

**Grade Levels:**

7 - 12

**Subject Areas:**

World History

**Synopsis:**

Explains that biochemical weapons have existed since the 14<sup>th</sup> century and are difficult to control because they are produced from readily available materials. Traces the use of gas warfare in World War I and in the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980's. Switches to contemporary uses of biological warfare and the efforts being made to detect pathogens and decontaminate large populations that may be involved. These methods include the use of U.S. military decontamination units and the training of first responders in the use of decontamination gear and decontamination methods that prevent them from becoming victims themselves.

**Learning Objectives:** Students will:

- Understand that biological warfare is a very serious threat.
- Describe the use of poisonous gases in 20<sup>th</sup> century warfare.
- Distinguish between biological warfare and the use of biological weapons by fringe groups.
- Describe how biological agents can be detected and how contaminated populations can be treated safely.
- Understand that governments are doing all in their power to cope with the threat of biological weapons.

**Vocabulary:**

Saran, catapult, pulmonary agent, phosgene, prohibitions, lethal, attrition, virulence, payloads, prophylaxis, spectrometer

**Pre-Viewing Discussion:**

When did we first begin to understand that biological weapons were a serious threat to the safety of our citizens?

Have biological weapons ever been used in war during the 20<sup>th</sup> century?

What kind of people or groups may resort to the use of biological agents?

What is the most serious biological agent of our day? Why has it gained its infamous reputation?

**Post-Viewing Discussion:**

Why was Saran gas used in a Tokyo subway?

How does the incident in Japan compare with the use of poisonous gas in World War I & World War II?

What countries today have vast stockpiles of biological weapons?

How is the United States preparing for a possible biological weapons attack?

Why are biological weapons still a very serious problem in our global society?

**Further Activities:**

Investigate the effects of the Tokyo subway attack. Check documentary evidence and articles from the world's press.

Investigate the effects of Saddam Hussein's use of biological weapons against the Kurds. How many people were killed? What were the political ramifications of his actions?

Find valid statistical information about the stockpiling of biological weapons today.

Find several scenarios of the probable events in a widespread anthrax attack.