MODULE 2

Intelligence, Surveillance, and Privacy in America

Nevada Youth Security Initiative

NYSI
NEVADA YOUTH SECURITY INITIATIVE

Welcome

The Nevada Youth Security Initiative (NYSI) gives young people the resources, knowledge, and skills to understand national security issues and take part in democracy as engaged, informed community members. Through classroom resources, facilitated conversations, and stories from professionals in the field, NYSI helps students see how global issues connect to where they live, and how their voices can shape the decisions that affect them.

About NYSI's Educational Modules

NYSI modules are free, ready-to-use lessons for teachers and students. Each one takes a national security topic, explains it in plain language, and asks students to think critically, weigh evidence, and form their own views. No background knowledge is needed. Modules can be taught in a classroom or explored independently.

About This Module

Intelligence, Surveillance, and Privacy in America traces how the United States has gathered secrets, from George Washington's Revolutionary War spy ring to today's digital surveillance. Along the way, students explore the laws that limit government power and debate one of the most important questions in a democracy: how much privacy should we give up to stay safe? There is no single right answer. The goal is to help students reach their own conclusions and back them up.

NYSI is nonpartisan and does not support or oppose any political party, candidate, or legislation.

NYSI LEARNING PRINCIPLE

Good national security thinking requires more than choosing a side. It means asking precise questions, weighing evidence, admitting what we don't know, considering consequences for real people, and asking who holds power accountable.

Intelligence, Surveillance, and Privacy in America

From George Washington's secret agents to today's digital surveillance: how the U.S. gathers intelligence and where to draw the line between security and privacy.

At a Glance

Central question	When does surveillance protect the public, and when does it threaten the freedoms it is meant to protect?
Audience	High school students (grades 9 to 12) and their teachers, or college students. No background in national security needed.
Length	One school day (about 5 hours), two class days, or self-paced over a few sessions
Format	Short videos, readings, discussion questions, hands-on activities, and a structured debate

By the End, Students Will Be Able to

1. Define surveillance, espionage, and intelligence, and explain how they relate to national security.
2. Describe how intelligence-gathering methods have changed from the American Revolution to the digital age.
3. Identify key institutions and legal frameworks and summarize what three major surveillance laws do and why Congress passed them.
4. Evaluate competing arguments about public safety, privacy, civil liberties, and democratic accountability.
5. Name at least three careers connected to intelligence and privacy.

Schedule

Part	Topic	Purpose
1	What is intelligence?	Establish key terms and purpose
2	Historical Case: Culper Spy Ring	Compare historical and modern collection
3	Modern surveillance and law	Explore methods, authorities, and oversight
4	The privacy and ethical debate	Consider public opinion and competing values
Wrap-up	Reflection and careers	Apply concepts to a fictional scenario and assess understanding and reasoning

Facilitator Preparation

- Read the core resources in the resource list before teaching, especially the ODNI intelligence overview, Culper Spy Ring materials, NSA signals intelligence page, FISA overview, and Pew Research Center privacy report.
- Invite students to disagree with ideas respectfully. Do not explicitly ask them to disclose personal experiences, political affiliations, or private digital habits.
- For a short session, shorten the historical comparison and use only a few debrief questions. For a longer session, allow more time for the simulation.

Classroom Materials

- Projector and internet access for videos
- Printed copies of one Culper Ring letter (Part 2)
- Four signs for the corners of the room: Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree (Part 4)

Key Terms

These words come up throughout the module. Each is also explained the first time it appears.

Term	What it means	Example
Intelligence	Information that has been collected *and analyzed* to help leaders make decisions	A report telling the President what a rival country is likely to do next
Espionage	Spying: secretly getting information someone wants to keep hidden	Copying secret military plans
Counterintelligence	Stopping other countries' spies from stealing your secrets	The FBI catching a foreign spy inside the CIA
Intelligence Community (IC)	The 18 U.S. government organizations that do intelligence work, led by the Director of National Intelligence (DNI)	CIA, NSA, FBI, Defense Intelligence Agency
HUMINT	Human intelligence: information gathered from people	A spy who meets a secret source
SIGINT	Signals intelligence: information from intercepted communications and electronic signals	Listening in on radio messages
GEOINT	Geospatial intelligence: information from satellite images and maps	Photos showing a new military base
OSINT	Open-source intelligence: information that is	News articles, social media,

	publicly available	public records
Classified / declassified	Classified information is officially secret. Declassified information has been released to the public.	Old CIA files now posted online
Asset / handler	An asset is a person secretly providing information. A handler is the officer who manages them.	A foreign official passing secrets to a CIA officer
Mole / double agent	Someone who appears to work for one side while secretly working for the other	Aldrich Ames, a CIA officer who spied for the Soviet Union
Tradecraft	The methods and tricks spies use	Codes, invisible ink, disguises, dead drops
Code / cipher	Ways to hide a message. A code swaps whole words for symbols; a cipher scrambles individual letters.	711 = General Washington (code)
Primary source	A document or object created at the time of the events	A letter written by a Revolutionary War spy
Surveillance	Closely watching or monitoring people, places, or communications	Recording who calls whom
Metadata	Data about data: who, when, where, and how long, but not what was said	Your phone log shows you called a number at 9 PM for 20 minutes
Warrant	Permission from a judge for the government to search or monitor someone	A judge approving a phone tap on a suspect
FISA Court (FISC)	A special federal court that approves surveillance for foreign intelligence; it meets in secret	Approving surveillance of a suspected foreign agent
Bulk collection	Gathering huge amounts of data about everyone, not just suspects	Collecting records of nearly every phone call in the U.S.
Fourth Amendment	Part of the Bill of Rights that protects people from unreasonable searches by the government	Police usually need a warrant to search your home
Civil liberties	Basic freedoms the government cannot take away, like free speech and privacy	
Whistleblower	Someone who exposes wrongdoing inside an organization	Debated: Edward Snowden (Part 4)

Part 1: What Is Intelligence?

Intelligence is not just spying. It is information that has been gathered *and* analyzed so a leader can make a more informed decision. Often, intelligence work happens at a desk, not in a car chase.

TRY IT · Spy or Not? (10 min warm-up)

Read each statement aloud. Students stand up for **true** or stay seated for **false**. Reveal answers after all five (answer key in Teacher Notes).

1. Spy movies like James Bond show what *most* intelligence work is really like.
2. Some intelligence comes from information anyone can find, like newspapers.
3. The United States had spies before it was officially a country.
4. The CIA is the only U.S. agency that does intelligence work.
5. Intelligence agencies need a judge's permission for some kinds of surveillance.

READ · Intelligence basics (15 min)

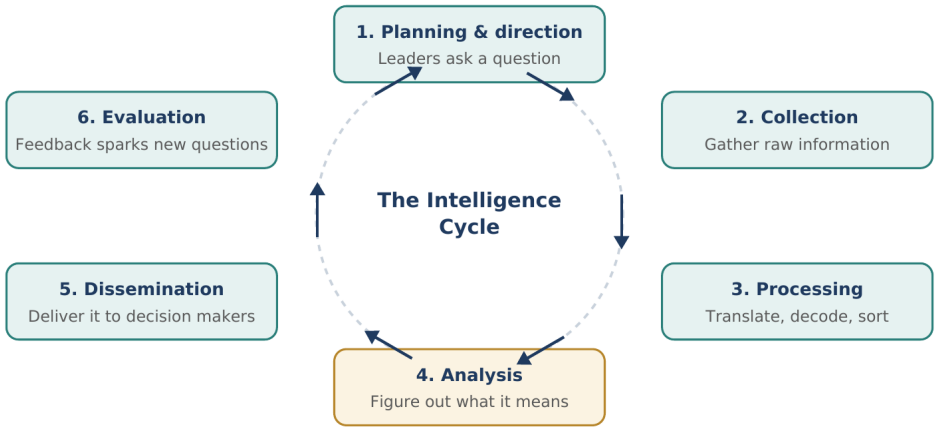
What is Intelligence? (Office of the Director of National Intelligence) and **Espionage Facts** (International Spy Museum).

WATCH · Quick history (8 min)

The Washington Post's **America's Intelligence Community, Explained.**

The intelligence cycle

Intelligence agencies follow a repeating process. It starts with a question from a leader and ends with an answer that usually leads to new questions.



Analysis is where raw information becomes intelligence. It is the step most intelligence careers center on.

The "INTs": Four Ways To Collect Intelligence

Type	Stands for	Source
HUMINT	Human intelligence	People: spies, informants, interviews
SIGINT	Signals intelligence	Intercepted communications and electronic signals
GEOINT	Geospatial intelligence	Satellite images, maps, aerial photos
OSINT	Open-source intelligence	Anything public: news, social media, reports

TRY IT · Sort the source (10 min)

In pairs, label each scenario HUMINT, SIGINT, GEOINT, or OSINT.

1. A satellite photographs new runways at a foreign airfield.
2. An officer has coffee with a foreign diplomat who shares her government's plans.
3. An analyst reads foreign newspapers and social media posts about a protest.
4. A listening station intercepts radio messages between ships.
5. In 1778, a farmer on Long Island writes down what he sees British soldiers doing.
6. Codebreakers decode encrypted emails sent by a foreign military.

STOP AND THINK

- Why does a leader need *analysis*, not just raw information?
- Which INT do you think is most valuable today? Which was most valuable in 1776?
- Why might a country want to keep some intelligence secret even from its own citizens?

ON YOUR OWN

Complete the Sort the Source activity on paper. Then write a 3-sentence answer to one Stop and Think question.

Part 2: The Culper Spy Ring

In 1778, George Washington needed to know what the British army was planning inside occupied New York City. His solution was a secret network of ordinary people: farmers, a merchant, a tavern keeper, and a boat captain. They became known as the Culper Spy Ring.

Background

Washington's early attempts at spying faced serious challenges. In 1776, a young officer named Nathan Hale was caught behind British lines and hanged. His fate illustrated the dangers of espionage during the Revolutionary War.

By 1778, Washington learned that a single spy working alone was easy to catch. He needed a network of people with ordinary reasons to travel and trade, who could pass information in small pieces.

Major Benjamin Tallmadge, Washington's head of intelligence, recruited people he knew from his hometown of Setauket, Long Island. Their identities were so well protected that historians did not confirm who "Culper Junior" was until 1930, when a researcher matched his handwriting to old letters.

Who was in the ring

Person	Code name	Role
Benjamin Tallmadge	John Bolton	Organized the ring and reported to Washington
Abraham Woodhull	Samuel Culper Sr.	A Setauket farmer who gathered and passed along reports
Robert Townsend	Samuel Culper Jr.	A New York City merchant who collected information from British officers and shops
Austin Roe	(courier)	A tavern keeper who rode about 55 miles each way carrying messages
Caleb Brewster	(courier)	Rowed messages by whaleboat across Long Island Sound to Connecticut
Anna Strong	(signals)	According to local tradition, hung laundry in patterns to signal where Brewster's boat was hidden
Agent 355	355	A woman mentioned in one letter. Her real identity is still a mystery.

Tradecraft: how they stayed hidden

- **A number code.** Tallmadge created a codebook that replaced key words with numbers. For example, 711 meant General Washington, and 727 meant New York.
- **Invisible ink.** The ring used a "sympathetic stain" that only appeared when a second chemical was brushed on it. Messages were often written between the lines of ordinary letters.

- **Ordinary cover.** Each member had a normal reason to travel, shop, or sail, so nothing looked suspicious.
- **No need to know.** Even Washington did not know the identity of every member.

What they accomplished

In 1780, the ring warned Washington that the British planned to attack French troops arriving at Newport, Rhode Island. Washington moved his army as if to attack New York, and the British called off their plan. Many historians also connect the ring to the exposure of Benedict Arnold's plot to surrender the fort at West Point, though they debate how large its role was.

WATCH · Choose one (14 min or less)

The Story of America: Culper Spy Ring (The White House, 2025, 14 min).

Or: **How a Secret Spy Ring Influenced the Birth of the US** (BBC)

TRY IT · Become a primary source detective (20 min)

Find one letter in **George Washington and the Culper Spy Ring: Primary Sources** or the **Culper Gang** collection at the University of Michigan's Clements Library. In small groups, fill in this chart:

See	Think	Wonder
What do you notice? Who wrote it, when, to whom? Any numbers or strange words?	What do you think the writer was worried about or trying to accomplish?	What questions do you still have? What would you want to ask the writer?

STOP AND THINK

- Why would ordinary people risk being hanged to spy for Washington?
- What made the Culper Ring so hard for the British to catch?
- Compare the Culper Ring's tradecraft to how people keep messages private today. What is similar?

ON YOUR OWN

Watch one video, read one letter, and complete the See-Think-Wonder chart yourself. Then write a coded message and its decoded version.

Part 3: Modern Surveillance Laws

The Culper Ring carried secrets by whaleboat. Today, most intelligence is collected electronically, much of it by the National Security Agency (NSA), which specializes in SIGINT. Because modern tools can collect information on millions of people, Congress has passed laws that limit what the government can collect and who must approve it.

READ · Choose at least one (15 min)

Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) (Congress.gov) · **The USA PATRIOT Act: Preserving Life and Liberty** (Justice.gov) · **USA Freedom Act** (Congress.gov) · **Signals Intelligence** (NSA)

How the Rules Changed Over Time

Year	Event	What happened and why it matters
1975–76	**Church Committee**	A Senate investigation revealed that intelligence agencies had spied on Americans, including civil rights and anti-war activists, without proper oversight.
1978	**FISA** (Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act)	Required the government to get approval from a new secret court (the FISA Court) before electronically monitoring people for foreign intelligence purposes.
2001	**USA PATRIOT Act**	Passed about six weeks after the September 11 attacks. Greatly expanded surveillance powers. Its Section 215 let the government collect "business records," which was later used secretly to gather records of Americans' phone calls in bulk.
2008	FISA Amendments Act (**Section 702**)	Allowed the government to collect communications of foreigners outside the U.S. through American tech and phone companies. Americans who talk with those foreigners can be swept in too.
2013	**Snowden disclosures**	NSA contractor Edward Snowden leaked documents revealing bulk phone-record collection and other programs, sparking a national debate.
2015	**USA Freedom Act**	Ended the NSA's bulk collection of phone records. Phone companies keep the records, and the government must get court approval to request specific ones.
2024–26	**Section 702 renewals**	Congress renewed Section 702 in 2024 for two years. In 2026, lawmakers passed short extensions while debating whether to require warrants before searching Americans' communications. *Check the current status before teaching (see Teacher Notes).*

STOP AND THINK

- Notice the pattern: a crisis or scandal happens, then Congress changes the rules. Which events expanded surveillance and which limited it?
- Why do you think some laws were written to expire unless Congress renews them?

TRY IT · What does your metadata say? (15 min)

Remember: **metadata** shows who, when, where, and how long, but *not* what was said. Here is one day of metadata from a fictional student, Jordan. No messages were read. What can you figure out about Jordan's day and life?

Time	Activity	With	Length
7:05 AM	Text	Mom	3 messages
7:50 AM	Call	School attendance line	1 min
12:15 PM	Call	Dental office	4 min
3:30 PM	Location	City Park sports fields	2 hours
3:32 PM	Text	Coach Rivera	1 message
6:20 PM	Call	Tony's Pizza	2 min
9:40 PM	Call	Sam	48 min
11:45 PM	Text	Sam	14 messages

STOP AND THINK · After the metadata activity

- List three things you guessed about Jordan. How confident are you?
- Now imagine a full year of this data. What could someone learn?
- Should the government need a warrant to see metadata, or only to read the actual messages?

KNOWLEDGE CHECK

Think about an ordinary day. What information might someone infer from public posts, location records, photographs, or public documents? Which examples are deliberately shared, and which might be generated in the background?

- Potential benefit: Information can help investigators or analysts identify patterns, assess risks, and respond to threats.
- Potential risk: Information can be incomplete, inaccurate, taken out of context, misused, or collected about people who are not suspected of wrongdoing.

ON YOUR OWN

Read two of the sources above (from “How the rules changed over time”), then complete the metadata activity and answer its questions.

Part 4: The Ethical Debate

There is no single answer for how much surveillance is too much. Your job in this part is not to find the "correct" or "right" side, but to build a position you can support with evidence and to understand the strongest arguments on the other side.

WATCH · (16 min)

Edward Snowden: Whistleblower or Traitor?

As you watch, write down one argument supporting that Snowden helped the country and one that he harmed it.

TRY IT · Four corners (15 min)

Post the Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree signs in the corners of the room. Read each statement; students move to the corner that matches their view. Ask two or three students in different corners to explain. Students may switch corners after hearing others.

1. The government should be able to read anyone's messages if it might stop a terrorist attack.
2. I would give up some privacy to feel safer.
3. Schools should be allowed to monitor students' school email accounts and devices.
4. Edward Snowden did the right thing.
5. Tech companies should have to hand over user data when the government asks.

TEACHER TIP

Keep the tone curious, not combative. Remind students they are having dialogue about ideas, not about each other. No one has to share personal experiences with surveillance or law enforcement.

READ · Expert jigsaw

Split the class into four groups. Each group reads or watches one source and reports back the author's **main argument** and **best piece of evidence**.

Group	Source	Perspective
A	**How the Anti-Terrorism Bill Puts Student Privacy at Risk**	Civil liberties and student privacy
B	**Government Surveillance: The National Security Perspective**	National security
C	**Ethics of Surveillance Technologies: Balancing Privacy and Security in a Digital Age**	Ethics and technology
D	**Americans' Attitudes About Privacy, Security and Surveillance** and **Views of data privacy risks**	Public opinion data

Structured Debate (25 min)

Resolution: *The benefits of government surveillance programs to Americans' safety outweigh their costs to Americans' privacy.*

Step	Time	What happens
Prepare	8 min	Teams (for and against) fill in the evidence planner below
Opening statements	2 min each	Each side explains its position and two main reasons
Rebuttals	2 min each	Each side responds to the other's strongest point
Closing statements	1 min each	Each side sums up why it should win
Audience vote	2 min	Did anyone change their mind? Why?

Evidence Planner

My claim	Evidence (source)	Why it supports my claim
Strongest argument from the other side:		**My response:**

Encouraged sentence starters: "I believe ___ because ___." · "According to ___, ___." · "I understand that ___, but ___." · "This matters because ___."

BALANCED ANALYSIS

Supporters of intelligence collection emphasize threat detection, timely warning, and the need to understand adversaries. Critics and civil-liberties advocates raise concerns about overcollection, secrecy, misuse, unequal impacts, and limited individual control. A rigorous assessment asks what the specific program does, what law authorizes it, how it is overseen, and what evidence shows about its effectiveness and harms.

ON YOUR OWN

Read two jigsaw sources from different perspectives. Then write a one-paragraph argument for or against the resolution, including one source and a response to the other side.

Wrap-Up: Reflection and Careers

TRY IT · 3-2-1 exit ticket

- **3** things you learned today
- **2** ways the Culper Ring and today's NSA are similar or different
- **1** answer to the big question: How much privacy should Americans give up to stay safe?

Where Could this Lead? Careers in Intelligence and Privacy

Intelligence and privacy work involves far more than spies. Many of these jobs start with skills students are building right now: languages, writing, math, computer science, and history.

Career	What they do	Skills that help
Intelligence analyst	Turns raw information into reports for decision makers	Research, writing, critical thinking
Linguist / translator	Translates and interprets foreign-language material	Foreign languages, cultural knowledge

Cryptologist	Makes and breaks codes	Math, computer science, puzzles
Cybersecurity specialist	Protects networks from hackers and foreign attacks	Computer science, problem solving
Geospatial analyst	Studies satellite images and maps	Geography, data, attention to detail
FBI special agent	Investigates threats, including counterintelligence cases	Law, accounting, languages, leadership
Privacy or civil liberties lawyer	Protects people's rights and checks government power	Debate, writing, government
Congressional staffer	Helps lawmakers oversee intelligence agencies and write laws like FISA	Government, writing, public speaking
National security journalist	Investigates and reports on intelligence and surveillance	Writing, research, interviewing

Explore real job listings and student programs at **intelligencecareers.gov.** Watch for NYSI's professional story spotlights to hear from people working in these fields.

STOP AND THINK · Final reflection

- Did your answer to the central question change from the start of the module? Why or why not?
- Which career on this list surprised you the most?

Teacher Notes

Pacing

- **One-day version (60-75 min class period):** Use a condensed lesson plan, which includes one activity from each part. For 60 minutes, skip the warm-up and use the three four-corner statements.
- **Two-day version:** Day 1 = Parts 1 and 2. Day 2 = Parts 3, 4, and wrap-up.
- **Short on time?** Assign the jigsaw as homework and shorten the debate to opening statements plus a vote.
- **Self-paced students** can complete the On Your Own boxes over three or four sessions.

Content Advisories

- Several recommended films are rated R (*Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy*; *Argo*). They are listed for independent viewing only.
- Edward Snowden is a politically divisive figure. Present both views fairly and let students reach their own conclusions.
- Surveillance can be a personal topic for some students and families. Never require students to share personal experiences.

Keeping Part 3 Current

FISA's Section 702 has been in flux. Congress renewed it in 2024 for two years. In spring 2026, Congress passed short-term extensions while debating reforms, and in June 2026 the House failed to pass another extension, leaving the law set to lapse, though court-approved collection was expected to continue until March 2027. Check a current news source or government platform before teaching so the timeline reflects the latest action. A current, unresolved debate in Congress is also a great real-world hook for the Part 4 debate.

Differentiation

- **Language and reading support:** Pre-teach the Key Terms page; pair students for readings; use the sentence starters; allow drawn or oral answers to Stop and Think questions.
- **Advanced students:** Assign one scholarly article from Explore Further and have them present it, or have them research a Cold War spy case and compare its tradecraft to the Culper Ring.
- **Visual learners:** Have students draw their own version of the intelligence cycle using the Culper Ring as the example.

Answer Keys

Spy or Not? 1. False: most work is research and analysis. 2. True: this is OSINT. 3. True: the Culper Ring operated during the Revolution, before the Constitution. 4. False: the Intelligence Community has 18 organizations. 5. True: FISA requires FISA Court approval for many types of surveillance.

Sort the sources: 1. GEOINT · 2. HUMINT · 3. OSINT · 4. SIGINT · 5. HUMINT · 6. SIGINT

Metadata activity (possible inferences): Jordan is a student who was late or absent that morning (call to attendance), may have a dental appointment, plays a sport (park plus a message to a coach), ordered pizza for dinner, and has a close

relationship with Sam (long late-night call and many texts). The point: none of the content was read, yet metadata reveals a detailed picture of someone's life, health, habits, and relationships.

Assessment Ideas

- Exit ticket (all students)
- Evidence planner and debate participation (Part 4)
- Optional: a one-page to two-page written argument answering the Central Question, citing at least two sources from the module.
  - Optional reflection questions:
    - What is one argument in favor of or against surveillance that you understand better now?
    - What is one concern about surveillance that you think decision-makers should take seriously?
    - If you could establish three principles for surveillance in a democratic society, what would they be?
    - What additional evidence or perspectives would you want before forming a firm opinion?

Explore Further

Optional resources for students and teachers who want to go deeper.

Videos (Digital Stories)

#	Title	Length	Topic	Link
1	The World's Second Oldest Profession: History of Spying	28 min	Overview of spying through history	youtube.com/watch?v=g7Y_bQoae5g
2	The Story of America: Culper Spy Ring (The White House, 2025)	14 min	Revolutionary War	youtube.com/watch?v=xs7tRxbNa0Q
3	The Spy Inside the Confederate White House: Mary Bowser	16 min	Civil War	youtube.com/watch?v=4ikpMQ_WcLA
4	How One Japanese Spy Inside America Changed the War's Direction	13 min	Pearl Harbor	youtube.com/watch?v=c-H-IyKeOhs
5	The Complete History of the CIA	8 min	Quick history of the CIA	youtube.com/watch?v=7yv1j72od6k
6	Former CIA Operative Explains How Spies Use Disguises (Jonna Mendez)	9 min	Cold War to today	youtube.com/watch?v=JASUsVY5YJ8
7	Edward Snowden: Whistleblower or Traitor?	16 min	Privacy vs. security	youtube.com/watch?v=eILRyreZFa8

Lesson Plans

- Lesson Plans | International Spy Museum
- CIA | EYES ONLY: Parents and teachers - Spy Kids
- Cold War Espionage | Spies, Organizations & Events - Lesson | Study.com
- The New York Times: Espionage Everywhere, Spying in the News and Popular Culture
- Bill of Rights Institute: Cold War Spy Cases

Primary Source Collections

- George Washington and the Culper Spy Ring: Primary Sources
- General Sources - Primary Sources: Espionage - LibGuides at Christopher Newport University
  - Primary Sources: Espionage: Rosenbergs
- The Pentagon's Spies: Military Human Intelligence (HUMINT) Activities
- National Security, Espionage, and Intelligence in American History: 20th Century Primary Sources
- Intelligence and Espionage | National Security Archive

Nonfiction Books

Title	Author	About
The Sisterhood: The Secret History of Women at the CIA	Liza Mundy	Women's roles at the CIA
Circle of Treason	Sandra V. Grimes and Jeanne Vertefeuille	The hunt for Aldrich Ames (free at archive.org)
Southern Lady, Yankee Spy	Elizabeth R. Varon	Elizabeth Van Lew, Civil War
Family of Spies	Christine Kuehn	How Japan knew what to bomb at Pearl Harbor
Code Name: Lise	Larry Loftis	WWII's most highly decorated spy
The Princess Spy	Larry Loftis	An American model who spied for the Allies
An Impeccable Spy	Owen Matthews	Richard Sorge, Stalin's master agent
Double Cross	Ben Macintyre	The D-Day spies
Agent Sonya	Ben Macintyre	The Soviet spy who helped Stalin get the bomb
Need to Know	Nicholas Reynolds	WWII and the rise of American intelligence

Novels For High School Students

Title	Author	About
*Code Name Bad*ss* (nonfiction)	Heather Demetrios	Virginia Hall, Allied spy
Rebel Spy	Veronica Rossi	Imagined life of Agent 355 of the Culper Ring
Code Name Verity	Elizabeth Wein	WWII
A Spy in the House	Y.S. Lee	A young female spy in Victorian London
Sekret	Lindsay Smith	Psychic teens spying for the KGB in the 1960s
The Book Spy	Alan Hlad	Librarian spies in WWII

Feature Films (Independent Viewing)

Film	Year	Rating
North by Northwest	1959	PG
The Hunt for Red October	1990	PG
Bridge of Spies	2015	PG-13
Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy	2011	R
Argo	2012	R

Scholarly Articles (for Teachers and Advanced Students)

- Usdin, S. (2024). "The Face of Soviet Espionage in the United States during the Stalin Era: Vladimir Pravdin, 'Man of Truth.'" *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 26(2), 78–122.
- Pun, D. "Rethinking Espionage in the Modern Era." *Chicago Journal of International Law*.
- Halverson, S. (2010). "Dangerous Patriots: Washington's Hidden Army during the American Revolution." *Intelligence and National Security*, 25(2), 123–146.
- Wheelwright, J. (2019). "Poisoned Honey: The Myth of Women in Espionage." *Queen's Quarterly*, 126(4), 598–613.
- Hammond, A. (2015). "Through a Glass, Darkly: The CIA and Oral History." *History*, 100(2), 311–326. onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1468-229X.12098.

Source and Fact-Checking Notes

- **Sources.** This module summarizes information from the resources listed in Explore Further, including government agencies, museums, news outlets, advocacy groups, and research organizations. It is a teaching overview, not a research paper. Readers who want to verify a specific claim should go to those original sources.
- **Perspectives.** Sources about intelligence and surveillance often reflect the views of the organizations that publish them. Government agencies, civil liberties groups, and journalists may describe the same issue differently. Students are encouraged to compare sources and consider who is speaking and why.
- **Legal information.** Summaries of laws such as FISA, the USA PATRIOT Act, and the USA Freedom Act are introductory and simplified. Surveillance law changes often, so check the current status of these laws before teaching. Nothing in this module is legal advice.
- **Survey data.** Public opinion surveys, such as those from Pew Research Center, describe what a group of Americans believed when each survey was taken. Note the year of any survey you use. Survey results show public attitudes, not legal facts or evidence of whether a program works.
- **Neutrality.** This module presents multiple viewpoints on contested issues, including government surveillance and Edward Snowden. It does not endorse any political position, and students should not be graded on which side they take.
- **Links and affiliation.** External links and videos were current as of October 2026 and may change. NYSI is not affiliated with or endorsed by the CIA, NSA, FBI, or any other organization referenced, unless stated otherwise.

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About NYSI

The Nevada Youth Security Initiative (NYSI) is nonpartisan and gives young people the resources, knowledge, and skills to understand national security issues and take part in democracy as engaged, informed participants. Through classroom resources, facilitated conversations, and stories from professionals in the field, NYSI helps youth see how global issues connect to their own communities, and how their voices can shape the decisions that affect them. To learn more, click here.