



Personal Accounts of 9/11

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Grade level: 9-12

Length: 2 weeks

Introduction

A global tragedy like September 11th can sometimes obscure the impact it had on individual lives. As demonstrated in this excerpt from the HBO documentary [What Happened on September 11](#), hearing a personal story can shine a light on the effects of terrorism on people's everyday lives, and allows the students to relate to someone who was directly affected by the attacks.

Watch the [Understanding 9/11 Through Personal Stories](#) excerpt, then explore this lesson plan to see how an oral history can be a tool to teach 9/11.

Objective

The purpose of this lesson is to not only learn about the events of 9/11 but also to learn about the people impacted by them.

Common Core Standards

Comprehensive Common Core Alignments at end of lesson plan.

Reading Standards for Informational Text: 7

English Language Arts Standards for Writing: 1D, 2, 4, 7, 8

English Language Arts Standards for Speaking & Listening: 1, 4

Resources

- [Understanding 9/11 Through Personal Stories](#) Excerpt
- "[What Happened on September 11](#)", HBO
- [Active Listening Handout](#)

Preparation

Students will be assigned one of the following questions, which must be answered in depth. Students will need to conduct research in order to answer their question. It should be one page typed, and a work cited page with a minimum of 3 websites used to gather information is required, formatted in MLA. Students will then present their findings for their question, and fill out the Active Listening Handout as peers present.

- Who claimed responsibility for 9/11?
- What happened at the North Tower?
- What happened at the South Tower?
- What happened at the Pentagon in Washington D.C.?
- What happened at Somerset County, Pennsylvania?
- How did the first responders, the mayor, the president, Port Authority and the FAA react?
- How long did recovery effort after 9/11 take and what health effects occurred to 9/11 first responders?
- Describe in detail the 9/11 Memorial and the 9/11 Tribute Museum.
- What changes occurred in America as a result of 9/11?
- How many years have passed since 9/11 and what type of commemorations, charities, events, movies have there been?

Activity 1

Students will be required to talk to adults in their life and ask them where they were when they heard about 9/11. Interview 3 adults, but may ask only one immediate family member (mother, father, brother, sister). They should



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be prepared to video their responses. Each interview should be approximately 3 minutes. Once filming is complete, students will choose one video to share with the class.

Interview questions (students may choose a few or all questions):

- Where were you when you first heard the news about 9/11?
- What were you doing when you first heard about 9/11?
- What was your immediate reaction when you heard the news?
- What short-term impact did 9/11 have on your life?
- What long-term impact has 9/11 had on your life (only if applicable)?
- What have you learned about intolerance from this tragedy?

Interviewing Tips:

- Start off your interview by introducing yourself and your project.
- Ask for the person's name and title.
- Try to make the person you interview (and yourself) comfortable. Some casual conversation is appropriate as an icebreaker: express your appreciation for their time and willingness.
- Treat the interview like a conversation with structure. Begin with questions and then actively listen to the responses. You may ask for clarification if there is something you don't understand.

Filming and sharing your videos:

- When filming with your phone, hold it horizontally.
- Make sure to conduct the interview in a quiet spot so there are as few distractions as possible.
- Make sure to speak clearly.

Activity 2

Students will have the opportunity to put a face to a name of one of the 9/11 victims. Through research, students are required to choose one victim they connect with and write up a bio on their chosen person.

Assessment/Reflection

Students will read over the following questions and will answer only 5. Responses should be based on all the parts of the project that have been completed thus far. The more introspective the response, the more relevant the project will be.

- How much did you know about 9/11 before we started?
- Did you learn a new skill or clarify an interest?
- How is your experience the same/different from what you expected?
- What problems did you encounter while you were working on this project? How did you solve them?
- What was the most and least enjoyable component of this project?
- What was the most important thing you learned while working on this project?
- What would you like to learn more about, related to this project or issue?
- What information do you feel you can now share with your peers/family?
- What do you wish we had spent more time on or done differently?
- What part of the project did you do your best work on?
- What did you learn about yourself as you worked on this project?
- What's one goal you would like to set for yourself for the next part of the project?
- How can your teacher change this project to make it better?

Common Core Alignments

These alignments were written for the 9-12th grade level. However, this lesson can easily be adjusted for use in other grades and corresponds to the following Common Core Standards. Student assessments and expectation may vary depending upon grade level and ability.

Reading Standards for Informational Text

Key Ideas and Details

- Standard 7: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

ELA Standards for Writing

Text Types and Purposes

- Standard 1D: Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
- Standard 2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Production and Distribution of Writing

- Standard 4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

- Standard 7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- Standard 8: Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

ELA Standards for Speaking & Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration

- Standard 1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

- Standard 4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.