



The Survivor Tree

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Grade level: 6-12

Length: 2-3 days

Introduction

One way to explore a topic like September 11th is by allowing students to explore their emotions creatively. As demonstrated in this excerpt from the HBO documentary *What Happened on September 11*, students can create beautiful works of art using sadness, empathy, and hope to express what they have learned in constructive and critical ways.

Watch the [Exploring 9/11 In Creative Arts](#) excerpt, then review this lesson plan to see how your students can explore 9/11 in a creative way.

Objective

Students will learn about the events of 9/11 through an interdisciplinary approach that inspires them to “think higher and feel deeper,” and encourages them to make an emotional connection to the historic tragedy.

Common Core Standards

Comprehensive Common Core Alignments at end of lesson plan.

English Language Arts Standards for Writing: 3, 4

English Language Arts Standards for Speaking & Listening: 1, 3, 5

English Language Arts Standards for History/Social Studies: 3, 7

Resources

- [Exploring 9/11 in Creative Arts Excerpt](#)
- [“What Happened on September 11”](#), HBO
- [Survivor Tree PowerPoint](#)

Preparation

1. Students will watch “What Happened on September 11.” After watching the documentary, lead a class discussion about what they just viewed.
2. Show the Survivor Tree PowerPoint. Students will create word maps to help facilitate their understanding of new vocabulary encountered during the presentation. Their word maps should contain definitions, synonyms, sentences using the word correctly, and illustrations.

Activity

Students will create a poem using the vantage point of the Survivor Tree to extract imaginative analogies about the events of 9/11. Students will imagine the experience of that day as if they were the tree.

Assessment/Reflection

Students will take turns sharing their poetry with the class, explaining the analogies used and the intent behind their descriptions. After, students will write a reflection based on what they learned regarding 9/11 and the Survivor Tree.

Common Core Alignments

These alignments were written for the 9th-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 expectations may vary depending upon grade level and ability.

ELA Standards for Writing

Text Types and Purposes

- Standard 3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

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.

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 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- Standard 3: Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

- Standard 5: Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

ELA Standards for History/Social Studies

Key Ideas and Details

- Standard 3: Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- Standard 6: Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- Standard 7: Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.