



The Civilian Response to 9/11

Mary Mannion & Rachel Rowley, Jonathan Law High School, Milford, CT
This lesson is part of a larger curriculum on 9/11 created by Milford Public Schools

Grade level: 12

Number of class periods: 1

Objective

Students will learn that a big part of the response to the terror attacks of 9/11 was a spirit of unity, perseverance and a resolve to overcome ignorance, hate and radicalism by fostering a spirit of community activism worldwide. Students will be able to identify the responses of individuals who lost loved ones on September 11th and will be able to describe the actions of the world community in the aftermath of the attacks.

Common Core Standards

Comprehensive Common Core Alignments at end of lesson plan.

- Reading Standards for Informational Text 2, 3
- Speaking and Listening Standards 3, 5

Resources

- [September 11th : Personal Stories of Transformation, 9/11 Tribute Center \(especially Susan Retik, Jim Laychak, and Gordon Felt\)](#)
- [List of organizations \(cut into strips\)](#)
- [Organization profile worksheet](#)

Activity

- Display photograph of people standing on the World Trade Center site on September 12th and ask the students to examine it in silence and reflect on it.
- Ask students what their initial thoughts are about the picture.
- Teacher begins framing the discussion (*possible prompts*)-
 - Do you see anything beautiful in this picture?
 - Is it possible to create beauty from such devastation?
 - Can you give examples of positive things that have come recent tragedies? (*Hurricane Sandy, Sandy Hook, Boston Marathon, Oklahoma tornado or other recent examples from your community*)
- Discuss 9/11 specifically with the class, share with the class that though the attacks had the most profound effect on families who lost loved ones, people around the world not just in the United States were personally impacted by the tragedy.
- Explain how in the days following 9/11 a “world community” emerged; people from very diverse backgrounds from all around the world joined together to help. Ask the students with a partner to brainstorm a list of some of the initial responses (For example, blood donations, as well as monetary and supply donations, volunteers who helped with recovery and cleanup efforts, etc...).
- Distribute “Connect and Reflect” worksheet from the Susan Retik and Jim Laychak/Gordon Felt stories.
- Review the “Connect and Reflect” worksheet with students; instruct students that they are responsible for answering the reflection questions for each section.



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- Show the bio information on Susan Retik. Watch part 1 of Susan's video (approximately 3 minutes); give students time to answer questions 1-2 individually in writing.
- Before discussing reflection questions, have a student read aloud the accompanying fact that goes with the question then discuss student responses to question, repeat process until all facts and reflections are discussed.
- Show part 2 of the video (approximately 4 minutes); give students time to individually answer questions 3-5. Have students read each fact aloud and discuss student responses to questions.
- The next vignette is on Jim Laychak and Gordon Felt, show their bios, and discuss. Review the, "connect and reflect" worksheet that accompanies this video.
- Watch part 1 of the video; give students time to answer question 1 individually in writing
- Before discussing the reflection question, have a student read aloud the accompanying fact that goes with the question then discuss student responses to question.
- Show part 2 of the video, give students' time to individually answer questions 2-5. Have students read each fact aloud and discuss student responses to questions.

Homework

Will need to be explained in detail as part of the lesson, it will be the focus of tomorrow's lesson

- Students will be assigned varying foundations, organizations, benefits, and campaigns etc...that have emerged in our country due to the attacks
- You can cut the paper listing the organizations into strips and have the students pick out of your hand or a hat etc... .
- Explain to students that they will need to look up the organization on the internet and complete the profile sheet about the organization for homework. Go over the worksheet expectations. If a student does not have a computer, two organization bios are attached, you may provide them with one of the worksheets. Make clear the assignment is due tomorrow and will be the basis of class activities

Assessment/Reflection

Conduct writing assignment- Were the individuals discussed today successful in creating beauty from ashes? Why or why not?

Common Core Alignments

These were written for a 12th grade class but can easily be adjusted for use in other high school classes. Student assessments and expectation may vary depending upon grade level and ability. This lesson aligns with the following Common Core Standards:

Reading Standards for Informational Text

Key Ideas and Details

Standard 2: Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.



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- Students will be analyzing the central ideas and themes of the family members' narratives. They will be exploring the themes of loss, redemption, resilience, generosity and selflessness as they relate to the different narratives and examine how these themes play out over the course of the narratives.

Standard 3: Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

- Students will be analyzing the complex idea of how a person who has suffered such tragedy can overcome that tragedy and make something positive in response. They will explore this theme throughout the several narratives and compare how different people responded to the tragedy in different ways.

Speaking and Listening Standards

Comprehension and Collaboration

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.

- Students will be evaluating the point of view of the family members and how they tell their stories. They will be analyzing the events that shaped the speaker's point of view and how they use evidence rhetoric and tone to tell their story in a certain way.

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.

- Students will be discussing their opinions on the family members' stories and sharing their responses to the questions with the class. They will be using digital media (i.e., the video clips) in order to justify their answers and may also use other digital media provided in the September 11th personal stories toolkit to express their opinions.