

COMMEMORATING SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

HOW-TO GUIDE FOR SCHOOLS



The tragic events of September 11, 2001 changed the U.S., and the world, forever. For those who were old enough to watch those events unfold, that day and the aftermath of the attacks has left an indelible mark. For those too young to remember, the legacy of 9/11 shapes their lives as a central event in world history.

Many schools will want to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of September 11, 2001 and find some way to honor and remember those who lost their lives. HISTORY® offers this guide to provide suggestions for 9/11 activities and commemorations.

ALL SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

1. Organize an all-school assembly with simple readings or announcements about why we should remember 9/11 and those who lost their lives. Since September 11th falls on a Sunday, schools may want to organize these assemblies on Friday, September 9th or Monday, September 12th.
2. Many communities were affected by 9/11 and lost family and friends in this tragedy. If any children at your school lost family members or friends, dedicate a memorial of some kind to honor those who were lost. You may also want to plant a tree to symbolize new life.
3. Many brave Americans – from firefighters to police to everyday citizens— courageously helped others on 9/11 and in the aftermath of the attacks. Schools may want to establish a “Community Spirit Award” to honor those in your community who have contributed to making your school a better place. These awards can be offered in honor of the outpouring of sacrifice and generosity after 9/11 that so many Americans remember.
4. Collect small contributions for the National September 11 Memorial & Museum, the Flight 93 National Memorial, the National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial, or another 9/11 Memorial of your choice.
5. Another way to honor the memory of 9/11 is for students to donate time through service projects. Visit Service Nation or Operation Honor Cards to get started, or organize a service project at your school or nearby.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

1. In classroom time, have students review a timeline of what occurred on September 11th, 2001. Review on a map where and when the 9/11 attacks took place. Advanced high school and college students can also review the 9/11 Commission Report. Visit the September 11 Memorial & Museum online at www.911memorial.org to locate a timeline.
2. Have students take time for a free-writing exercise about what they remember about 9/11/2001, or what they have learned about that day from others. Have students share these writings, if they feel comfortable, in a larger class or group.
3. Creative projects can be an effective way for students to work through their emotions about difficult topics such as 9/11. Working in small groups, have students design a mural or poster about 9/11 and what it means to them. Students may also want to design their own 9/11 memorial.



ALL SCHOOL ACTIVITIES (CONT'D)

4. Have students locate newspaper articles published in the days after 9/11 online or at the library and create a 9/11 scrapbook or notebook. The New York State Archives 9/11 Memory & History site has great tips for preserving related items: <http://www.nyshrab.org/memory/index.shtml>
5. Middle school and high school students can play a role in preserving the history of 9/11 by interviewing community members about their memories of what happened that day. You may want to link with a local history museum or historic society to organize a 9/11 oral history project.

HISTORY: DOCUMENTING 9/11

HISTORY has produced several important specials that capture the experiences of those who lived through 9/11. These programs also give context for the timeline of events and insight gathered in the aftermath. Visit us online at www.history.com/classroom for classroom guides to many of these programs.

Please note: many of these programs have sounds and images of 9/11 that are graphic in nature and difficult to watch. They are not recommended for students below high school age; adults should watch all programs before showing them to their students or children.

9/11: The Days After (premieres on 9/9/2011)
Making the 9/11 Memorial (premieres on 9/11/2011)
102 Minutes That Changed America
The Day the Towers Fell
9/11: State of Emergency
Relics from the Rubble

REMEMBERING 9/11: MUSIC

Schools can consider integrating music into 9/11 assemblies or classroom activities. Songs such as Bruce Springsteen's "Empty Sky" captured emotions post-9/11. Students can play a role in choosing meaningful songs that can help commemorate 9/11 or honor those who were lost.

REMEMBERING 9/11 THROUGH POETRY

Poems and other short readings can spark discussions or can be a meaningful contribution to assemblies. After 9/11, many Americans read W.H. Auden's poem "September 1, 1939" to find meaning or solace. Below is the last stanza of that poem. Students can choose their own poems, or write their own, related to 9/11.

*Defenseless under the night
Our world in stupor lies;
Yet, dotted everywhere,
Ironical points of light
Flash out wherever the Just
Exchange their messages:
May I, composed like them
Of Eros and of dust,
Beleaguered by the same
Negation and despair,
Show an affirming flame.*

- W.H. Auden, September 1, 1939 (excerpt)
From Another Time by W. H. Auden, published by Random House.
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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Background, video, and photos from History.com:
www.history.com/topics/9-11-attacks

Tips for talking to children, from the National September 11 Memorial and Museum:
www.911memorial.org/talking-your-children-about-911

Flight 93 National Memorial:
www.honorflight93.org

National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial:
<http://pentagonmemorial.org>

Service Nation and Operation Honor Cards:
www.servicenation.org
www.honorcards.org

September 11th Education Trust
www.learnabout9-11.org/

9/11 Commission Report:
www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report.pdf
(Another useful version of this report: Jacobson, Sid and Ernie Colon, *The 9/11 Report: A Graphic Adaptation*. (Hill & Wang, 2006).

