

Remembering September 11, 2001

Name _____

Summary: On September 11, 2001, 19 terrorists associated with the extremist group al Qaeda hijacked four airplanes and carried out suicide attacks against targets in the United States. Two of the planes were flown into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, the third plane hit the Pentagon near Washington, D.C., and the fourth plane crashed in a field near Shanksville, PA. Almost 3,000 people were killed in these attacks. The hijackers were acting in retaliation for America's support of Israel, its involvement in the Persian Gulf War and its continued military presence in the Middle East.



The morning of September 11, 2001, a large plane crashed into the north tower of the World Trade Center. The impact left a big, burning hole near the 80th floor of the 110-story skyscraper, instantly killing hundreds of people and trapping hundreds more on the higher floors. Television cameras were on the scene immediately to broadcast what appeared to be a freak accident.

Eighteen minutes after the first plane hit, another one appeared out of the sky, turned sharply toward the World Trade Center, and crashed into the south tower near the 60th floor. This caused another huge explosion! Shortly after, the tower collapsed, showering burning debris onto the streets below. It became clear that America was under attack!

As millions of people watched the events unfolding in New York, another passenger plane circled over downtown Washington, D.C. and crashed into the west side of the Pentagon, the headquarters of the U.S. Department of Defense.

A fourth plane was hijacked about 40 minutes after leaving Newark Airport in New Jersey. Its take-off had been delayed, so passengers had already heard about the other three crashes. As their fate became apparent, a group of passengers and flight attendants planned a rebellion. They are believed to have fought the four hijackers with a fire extinguisher and pitchers of boiling water from the galley. The plane flipped over and eventually crashed in a field near Shanksville, PA. The intended target of that plane is not known, but theories include the White House, the U.S. Capitol Building, Camp David presidential retreat or one of several nuclear power plants along the East Coast.



A total of 2,996 people were killed in the 9/11 attacks in 2001 – including the hijackers, passengers on the planes, office workers from 78 countries, firefighters, paramedics, and police officers. By 2018, an additional 10,000 people were diagnosed with 9/11-related cancer.

At 9:00 pm on September 11, President George W. Bush delivered a televised speech from the Oval Office, declaring, "Terrorist attacks can shake the foundations of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America. These acts shatter steel, but they cannot dent the steel of American resolve." In a reference to the eventual U.S. military response President Bush declared, "We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them."



The first memorials to September 11 came in immediately after the attacks, with candlelight vigils and flower tributes at U.S. embassies around the world. In Great Britain, Queen Elizabeth sang the American national anthem during the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace. Rio de Janeiro put up billboards showing the city's Christ the Redeemer statue embracing the New York City skyline.

Eventually, a World Trade Center Site Memorial Competition was held to select an appropriate permanent memorial to the victims of 9/11. The winning design by Michael Arad, "Reflecting Absence," now sits outside the museum in an eight-acre park. There are two reflecting pools with waterfalls rushing down where the Twin Towers once rose into the sky. The names of all 2,996 victims are engraved on the bronze panels surrounding the pools, arranged by where individuals were on the day of the attacks. Co-workers and people on the same flight are memorialized together.



Osama bin Laden, the mastermind behind the attacks, remained at large until May 2, 2011, when he was finally tracked down and killed by U.S. forces at a hideout in Pakistan.

On the anniversary of the September 11 attack, two beams of light shine in place of the World Trade Center towers.





Imagine what it must have been like to be in the area of one of the crash sites, or to know someone who's life was affected by the attacks on September 11, 2001. What feelings would you have had?

Listen to two of the many songs/pieces that were written to commemorate 9/11.

WTC 9/11 by Steve Reich

- Composed in 3 movements for the Kronos Quartet and premiered March 19, 2011
- Reich’s apartment was 4 blocks from the World Trade Center
- The 1st movement begins and ends with a violin imitating the beeping sound a landline phone makes when it is left off the hook
- Voice recordings from the air traffic controllers and first responding fire fighters have been manipulated and used in the piece
- Watch the first movement (0:00-3:39) performed by Cuarteto Quiroga

<https://youtu.be/e49h2zUKEts>

1. What do you notice in the music?

2. What does **WTC 9/11** remind you of?

3. What feeling do you get from **WTC 9/11**?

4. What about the sound of the music helps create that feeling?

“Freedom” by Paul McCartney

- McCartney had been in New York City and witnessed the 9/11 crashes from a plane parked on the tarmac at New York’s JFK Airport; He was waiting for his own flight to take off
- Sir Paul donated all proceeds from this song to 9/11 victims; He also wrote anonymous checks to several New York police officers to help with their medical expenses

<https://youtu.be/zFFLlpC9f9Q> (3:24)

1. What do you notice in the music?

2. What does “Freedom” remind you of?

3. What feeling do you get from “Freedom”?

4. What about the sound of the music helps create that feeling?

5. Talk about your written observations with a partner and then think together how these pieces show two different perspectives of the same event.