Common Core Standards

RL 7 Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

W 1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

SL 1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

SL 4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Key Questions/Issues Addressed

• What is a hero? What qualifies someone as a hero?
• What kinds of people/animals can be heroes?
• Why were the 9/11 heroes so important?
• How does one show gratitude for their heroic acts?

Lesson Goals/Objectives

• Students will grasp the concept of a hero, expanding their knowledge beyond superheroes.
• Students will write a letter about something important in society.
• Students will understand that 9/11 is an important historical event that changed New York City and the country.

Key Terms

9/11**, Bravery, Community, Hero, Twin Towers**

**See 9/11 FAQ for more information

Materials

• Englar, Mary. September 11 (We the People). (Compass Point books, 2006)
• Chart paper
• Writing Paper, specifically designed for letter writing
1. Begin the activity by asking students to define a ‘hero.’ Chart students’ answers on a chart labeled “What Makes a Hero?” This conversation will greatly vary depending on the level of the students. Have them stay focused on the characteristics of heroes, rather than just providing examples of heroes.
   • If they name a hero, you can reframe the question to ask, What about them seems heroic? Did they do or say something important?

2. After they brainstorm a list of a hero’s characteristics, move into articulating examples of heroes. Can we all think of some examples of heroes? They may not be alive anymore, but they can’t be fictional characters. I am asking for people who are living, or who once lived. Write the list on the bottom of the other chart.

3. Try and get about 5-10 names down. As the kids list the people who they deem a hero, ask: What makes them a hero?

4. Have students choose one person, either from this list or someone else who they think is a hero (including a family member, a family friend, a neighbor, etc.) and write that person a letter. The letter should express why they are a hero, and why they are important to the student.
   • If the person is alive, let students know that we can send the letter. But, if the person is not alive, save the letters as a reminder of how the important things one does are remembered.

5. After the activity, choose a few students to share their letters.

6. About a week later...Read September 11 (We the People).

7. Remind students about last week’s lesson: “We learned about heroes. We talked about what makes someone a hero, and we even named a bunch of heroes. We also chose one person who we thought was a hero, and wrote a letter to them.”

8. After the read aloud, bring out the definition of the word ‘heroes’ that the class created in the previous lesson. Ask the students: Are there any people who are described in this book who would be considered a hero?

9. Start a chart titled “9/11 Heroes,” and list the student responses, asking each: What makes them a hero? If they are no longer living, how can we remember and honor them? Why is remembering them, and that day, so important?

10. Create a follow-up activity, where the students can make a memorial for 9/11 heroes, either individually, with partners, or as a whole class (see Memorials and Memorialization lessons for suggested activities).
### Evidence of Understanding

Students will demonstrate their understanding through their letter writing, discussion, and through the final memorial activity.

### Extension Activities

- See other “Heroes and Service” lessons; specifically, *The Heroic Actions of the Passengers of Flight 93*, *Brave Individuals*, and *Remembering Heroes*. 