

# 9/11 MEMORIAL

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UNIT: Heroes and Service

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GRADE LEVEL/S: 6-8

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TIME NEEDED: 2 sessions

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TEACHER: Deanna D'Onofrio

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LESSON TITLE:

## HONORING OUR HEROES

### Common Core Standards

**RH 1** Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

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

**W 9** Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

**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.

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### Key Questions/ Issues Addressed

- What was the origin and purpose of Tanya Hoggard's Dear Hero Collection?
- What are qualities of a hero?
- Who are past and modern-day heroes, and what can we learn from them?
- How can we honor and thank our heroes?

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### Lesson Goals/ Objectives

- Students will learn about and discuss the Dear Hero Collection, as it relates to the 9/11 attacks.
- Students will learn about past and modern-day heroes who risked their lives to help others.
- Students will create their own Dear Hero letter or artifact.

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### Key Terms

Hero, Honor, Service, Twin Towers\*\*, World Trade Center\*\*

\*\*See 9/11 FAQ for more information

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### Materials

- Computer and speakers, or other technology suitable for listening to the Dear Hero podcast via the 9/11 Memorial website, to view samples from the collection: [www.911memorial.org/dear-hero-collection](http://www.911memorial.org/dear-hero-collection)
- Text or internet resources to provide "hero" biography information
- Assorted materials for students to create Dear Hero letters or artifacts (paper, writing utensils, art supplies, construction paper, colored pencils, photos, etc).

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**Background  
for lesson**  
(if necessary)

Any prior knowledge of the 9/11 attacks will assist students in this lesson. However, all necessary information is provided through readings and discussion.

Decisions about whether readings and activities should be whole-group, small-group, partner or individual can be based on available time as well as students' needs, abilities, and levels of engagement.

This lesson may take place in one consecutive block or split across two sessions/ periods, according to scheduling needs.

**Instructional  
Activity/  
Procedures**

1. Explain to students that today they will learn about the attacks of 9/11, and explore how the events of that day have been remembered and honored. Solicit background knowledge by asking, *What do you already know about the 9/11 attacks?* Have students share their responses.
2. View (or print out beforehand) the [Dear Hero Collection](#) page on the 9/11 Memorial website. Based on students' needs and abilities, you may read it as a class, individually, or with partners. Discuss the reading to ensure that students' have understood it.
3. Introduce the [Dear Hero](#) podcast, which features Tanya Hoggard explaining her experiences in gathering the materials for the [Dear Hero Collection](#). Play the podcast for the class.
4. Lead students in a brief discussion around the following questions:
  - *Why do you think so many children, from around the world, sent letters and gifts to firefighters and other "heroes of ground zero"?*
  - *What qualities did these people display that made them heroes?*
5. Point out that these heroes were willing to risk their lives to help other people, and this is partly why so many children chose to honor them. Explain that we will think about how other individuals have shown this same kind of bravery in the face of danger or conflict.
6. During this portion of the lesson, students will think about other "heroes" who have shown bravery and honor. Heroes may be chosen from a variety of sources:
  - Drawn from students' current and past units of study—for example, abolitionists during the Civil War, figures of Nazi resistance during WWII, etc.
  - Drawn from students' own lives or background knowledge
  - Internet or text-based research could be conducted to learn about heroic individuals. Some excellent suggestions of heroes that students can research include Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, Dalai Lama, Mother Teresa, Harriet Tubman, Abraham Lincoln and Sojourner Truth. Encourage students to choose individuals that made brave choices to help other people.

7. Once students have chosen a hero to focus on, they should respond, in writing or in conversation, to the following questions:
  - *Who is this person, and what did he/she do?*
  - *Why can this person be considered a hero?*
8. Introduce task: Students will create their own Dear Hero letter or artifact, in honor of one of the heroes they learned about today. They may also create it in honor of a 9/11 hero, if they choose to. Review with students the kinds of things that were included in the Dear Hero collection—letters, artwork, etc. Share examples of Dear Hero artifacts as shown on the museum website. Introduce students to the materials available for them to work with. Students may work in pairs or individually, accordingly to their preference.
9. Finally, have students share their creations, either through individual/partner presentations or, a gallery walk. If time permits, ask students to explain the inspiration behind their work and how it honors/relates to the hero they chose.

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**Evidence of Understanding**

Evidence of understanding is based on students' successful completion of a Dear Hero letter or artifact.

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**Extension Activities**

- This lesson may be combined or paired with any other lesson dealing with the history, events, or aftermath of the 9/11 attacks.