

LESSON TITLE: **INTRODUCING THE 9/11 MEMORIAL**

Common Core Standards

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

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.

W 2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

**Key Questions/
Issues Addressed**

How is the World Trade Center site being rebuilt?

What is the 9/11 Memorial?

Why do we create memorials? What is their purpose? How does that purpose inform their design?

**Lesson Goals/
Objectives**

Students will recognize the 9/11 Memorial design, its elements and symbolism.

Students will examine and explore the function and role of memorials.

Key Terms

Memorial

Memorialization

Parapet

Materials

Depending on the nature of the activity:

Paper and markers, crayons, pens

Cardboard, markers, tape

**Background
for lesson**

This lesson serves as an introduction to the 9/11 Memorial. Further information can be found on our website: www.911memorial.org/memorial. In addition, for information on the 1993 bombing, see www.911memorial.org/world-trade-center-bombing-1993.

9/11 Memorial Mission

Remember and honor the thousands of innocent men, women, and children murdered by terrorists in the horrific attacks of February 26, 1993 and September 11, 2001.

Respect this place made sacred through tragic loss.

Background for lesson (cont'd)

Recognize the endurance of those who survived, the courage of those who risked their lives to save others, and the compassion of all who supported us in our darkest hours.

May the lives remembered, the deeds recognized, and the spirit reawakened be eternal beacons, which reaffirm respect for life, strengthen our resolve to preserve freedom, and inspire an end to hatred, ignorance and intolerance.

Instructional Activity/ Procedures

1. Tell students that they are going to be visiting a Memorial to remember these attacks and honor those that were killed. The Memorial is located at the site of the attacks, making it a very special and sacred place.
2. Ask students to discuss why communities create memorials. *Who do we make them for? What is their function?*
3. Show students photographs of the Memorial (see attached images in the appendix). Ask what they notice.
4. Tell students that many elements have meaning and were included for a reason. Work together as a class to figure out why each element was included:

Trees: Grown in nurseries around the three crash sites (New York, Arlington, VA, and Shanksville, PA), the trees provide a sense of rebirth and calm in the midst of the city.

Pools: The Memorial pools mark the footprints of the towers. This is where each tower used to stand. Waterfalls – the largest manmade waterfalls in North America – cascade down their sides into a reflecting pool, finally disappearing into a center void. Now, instead of looking up at the towers, we look down at what is left behind.

Names: Each pool is surrounded by bronze parapets (edges) inscribed with the names of the victims of the September 11, 2001 and February 26, 1993 attacks. The names are grouped according to “meaningful adjacencies” that highlight the victim’s connections and relationships in life. For example, Cantor Fitzgerald employees are grouped together, while co-workers with close relationships are listed side-by-side. The names are cut into the parapets, allowing visitors to make paper impressions or rubbings of the individual names, similar to the Vietnam Memorial.

5. Ask students what they think of the memorial design. *Do they like it? Does it successfully convey the Memorial’s mission (see below)? Why or why not? Would they have made different choices? If so, what different choices would they have made?*
6. **Activity** Create their own memorial to 9/11. What elements and symbols would they incorporate? Why? Create a class exhibition displaying the different designs, having each student describe their work and its intent.

Evidence of Understanding

Students’ memorials and justifications will offer understanding of memorials, their functions, and the choices inherent in their design.

Extension Activities

See the [Memorialization](#) lessons in the *Teaching Guide* section of our website.

Investigation Questions

Elementary School

Symbols are images or objects that represent something else. For example, a ♥ can represent a *heart* or *love*. Can you think of other symbols? What do they stand for? Some of the elements in the 9/11 Memorial serve as symbols that make us feel a certain way and also help tell the story of what happened on 9/11. What symbols can you find in the 9/11 Memorial? What do they symbolize? Why do you think they were included?

The Twin Towers were important buildings where many people worked and visited every day. Many people saw them as symbols of American strength and power. What makes a building important? Can you think of important buildings in your community? What are they used for? Why do you think they're important? Compare those buildings to the Twin Towers. How are they the same? How are they different? Can a building be big and unimportant? Why or why not?

Middle School

Some memorials are created spontaneously in the immediate aftermath of an event with little eye towards their posterity. Others, like the 9/11 Memorial, are intended to be permanent. What are examples of temporary memorials? Does the function of a temporary memorial differ from that of a permanent one? Can one turn into the other?

What other memorials have you visited? What are they commemorating? An event? A person? A war? What are similarities and differences between the memorials you have seen? Do any stand out as especially powerful? Why?

There were lots of conversations in the years after 9/11 about how the WTC site should be rebuilt. Some thought that the Twin Towers should be rebuilt; others thought there should be no tall buildings at all. The final plan is a compromise of those ideas. Do you agree with the compromise? What are the pros and cons of each side?

High School

The 9/11 Memorial opened 10 years after the 9/11 attacks. The Vietnam Memorial was completed in 1982, seven years after the war's end, while the World War II Memorial was created in 2004, almost 60 years following that conflict. The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin, Germany, and the National Peace Memorial Halls for the Atomic Bomb Victims in Hiroshima and Nagasaki were also built nearly 60 years after World War II. Why might some memorials be built sooner than others? What factors play a role in a memorial's timing and creation? Research separate memorials to other events: what similarities and differences emerge?

Some memorials incorporate representational or figurative elements, such as statues, to convey meaning, while others, such as the Vietnam Memorial, incorporate more abstract aspects. How would you describe the 9/11 Memorial? Why do you believe the Memorial designers made that choice? Do different types of events lend themselves to different types of memorials?

One of the defining features of the 9/11 Memorial is its authentic location: it is built on the actual site it is memorializing. Not all memorials, though, exist at the locations where the memorialized event took place. What are the advantages and disadvantages of having a memorial at an authentic site?

Appendix

Selected Images of:

Photographs of the 9/11 Memorial

- a. Aerial view of the 9/11 Memorial
- b. North Pool of the 9/11 Memorial



An aerial view of the 9/11 Memorial.
Photograph by Joe Woolhead.



North Pool of the 9/11 Memorial.
Photograph by Amy Dreher.