

9/11 MEMORIAL

UNIT: Mourning, Memorializing, and Meaning-Making of 9/11

GRADE LEVEL/S: 9-12

TIME NEEDED: 1-2 sessions

TEACHER: Reba Petraitis

LESSON TITLE:

THE SYMBOLIC NATURE OF A FLAG DURING TURBULENT TIMES

Common Core Standards

R 2 Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

W 7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

W 8 Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

Key Questions/ Issues Addressed

What is the importance/significance of a flag to a country's citizens?

Lesson Goals/ Objectives

Students will be able to compare and contrast the use of the U.S. flag during the War of 1812, World War II (Battle of Iwo Jima), and 9/11.

Key Terms

Nationalism*, Patriotism**

* Loyalty and devotion to a nation; especially: a sense of national consciousness exalting one nation above all others and placing primary emphasis on promotion of its culture and interests as opposed to those of other nations or supranational groups (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

** Love for or devotion to one's country (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

Materials

Images of the American Flag on the 9/11 Memorial website: www.911memorial.org

www.star-spangled-banner.info/who-wrote

www.star-spangled-banner.info/lyrics

www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/iwoflag.htm

Computer with internet capabilities

Background for lesson

For basic background of 9/11, see [9/11 FAQ: www.911memorial.org/faqabout911](http://www.911memorial.org/faqabout911).

**Instructional
Activity/
Procedures**

1. Divide students into groups of four.
2. Ask them to answer the following questions for discussion:
 - *What is a flag?*
 - *What is the significance of a flag?*
 - *What symbols are used in the design of a flag?*
 - *When does a flag get displayed at half-staff?*
 - *What is proper flag etiquette?*

Note: Answers to many of these questions can be found at: www.usflag.org.
3. Students then re-group as a class and discuss their answers to these questions.
4. Begin a discussion centered around the symbolic nature of the flag during war and/or turbulent times. *Do you think the flag is flown more during these times than in others? Why? Does everyone fly a flag during these times? Why or why not?*
5. Students will begin to analyze and compare the importance of the U.S. flag during three events in history. Break the class into three groups, each electing a note-taker and a presenter.
 - Group 1 researches: www.star-spangled-banner.info/who-wrote and www.star-spangled-banner.info/lyrics. Focus on the background information about the defense of Ft. McHenry and analyze the lyrics of the National Anthem in order to answer the question posed in Question 4.
 - Group 2 researches: www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/iwoflag.htm. Focus on the background information about the battle for Iwo Jima and analyze the photograph in order to answer the question posed in Question 4.
 - Group 3 researches: www.911memorial.org. Find photographs of the flag at the World Trade Center on 9/11 and in the months following in order to answer the question posed in Question 4.
6. The students reconvene with each group presenting their information and findings to the class.
7. Have students write an essay, answering the question: *What is the symbolic nature of the flag during war and/or turbulent times?*
8. After essays have been turned in, assign one final essay asking students to research and compare another country's experience and usage of their own national flag. *Does the flag's symbolism and meaning differ between this country and the United States? How so? If there are differences, why do you think they exist?*

Evidence of Understanding

Students' understanding will be displayed through their research projects and final essay.

Extension Activities

Students research other times in United States or World History where a nation's flag has been prominently and significantly used. *Have those uses changed over time? How so?*

Create a flag for "your" country and discuss its symbolism.