

# 9/11 MEMORIAL

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UNIT: History of the World Trade Center

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GRADE LEVEL/S: 9-12

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TIME NEEDED: 1-2 sessions

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TEACHER: Jill McCracken

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LESSON TITLE:

## HISTORY OF THE WORLD TRADE CENTER

### Common Core Standards

**R 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.

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

**W 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.

**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.

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### Key Questions/ Issues Addressed

Why was the World Trade Center (WTC) and the Twin Towers built?

What did the WTC and the Twin Towers mean to New York City and Americans?

Who worked at the WTC complex on 9/11?

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### Lesson Goals/ Objectives

Students will be able to define the iconic importance of the WTC as a symbol of America's stature as a world power.

Students will be able to appreciate the importance of the WTC's symbolism by successfully completing the Critical Thinking Questions.

Students will be able to describe the tenants that worked in the Twin Towers on 9/11 in discussions or journaling about the reading.

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### Key Terms

Slurry wall\*

\* An architectural technique used to build reinforced-concrete walls in areas of soft earth close to open water such as a river or bay. Such a wall was part of the construction at the WTC.

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### Materials

[www.911memorial.org](http://www.911memorial.org)

Reading: [1958- 2001: History of the World Trade Center](#) (See [Appendix A](#))

**Background  
for lesson**

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

This may be done as a whole class activity using a projector and computer, or it may be done in a computer lab as an individualized student activity. As an individualized activity, students will choose which links to explore on their own. A time for sharing what they learned with the rest of the class should be planned as the closure activity.

**Instructional  
Activity/  
Procedures**

1. Read [1958-2001: History of the World Trade Center Plaza](#) individually, in groups, or as a class.
2. Explore links as they become evident. This may be done after completing the entire reading or during different sections of the reading.
3. Students should thoughtfully explore the critical thinking questions as a journaling activity or as a class discussion according to teacher preference.

Critical Thinking Questions

Note: To be answered as journal questions or in class discussion.

- *How did neighborhoods in lower Manhattan initially react to the news of a new "world trade mart"? Has anything similar happened in your town or neighborhood recently?*
- *How did events alter the perceptions of New Yorkers about the World Trade Center? Why do you think this is the case?*
- *Why did the World Trade Center become a symbol of New York City and America? What type of symbol was it? Explain.*
- *Who were some of the tenants in the Twin Towers on 9/11?*
- Throughout the reading, there are links supplied for additional information about various subject matters. Click on at least three of them. Then, explain six additional pieces of information you did not know previously about the World Trade Center.
- There are some important artifacts connected to this reading and activity. *Which was the most important to you? Why?*

**Evidence of  
Understanding**

Students understanding will be highlighted by their answers to the critical thinking questions.

**Extension  
Activities**

Explore artifacts and stories from the Museum's collection at WTC History by accessing the 9/11 Memorial website at:  
[www.911memorial.org/world-trade-center-history](http://www.911memorial.org/world-trade-center-history).

Find a name on the 9/11 Memorial: <http://names.911memorial.org>

## APPENDIX A

## 1958-2001: HISTORY OF THE WORLD TRADE CENTER

By Jill McCracken

The idea of developing Manhattan's lower east side began in the mid-1940s. However, it was not until 1958 that Chase Manhattan Bank's Vice Chair David Rockefeller announced plans to construct a 70-story building that it began to take on momentum. The problem, however, was that this area of Manhattan was known as "Radio Row" from all the electronic 'Mom and Pop' stores inhabiting the neighborhood. They would need to close shops and tear down the buildings to make room for this new project. Not everyone was welcoming the "world trade mart," as the New York State Legislature called it, to the neighborhood. Protests erupted from Radio Row and continued, delaying the project for over four years.

By 1964, after evaluating many plans, a plan by architect Minoru Yamasaki was approved. His vision for the area deviated significantly from the single 70-story building concept. Instead, it called for a plaza of seven buildings, anchored by two large towers standing 110 stories each, exceeding the Empire State Building by 100 feet. They would be the tallest buildings in the world. So different would they be architecturally, they came to represent a triumph of the human imagination and will, a symbol of American pride and ingenuity.

About his creation, Minoru Yamasaki said, *"I feel this way about it. World trade means world peace and consequently the World Trade Center buildings in New York ... had a bigger purpose than just to provide room for tenants. The World Trade Center is a living symbol of man's dedication to world peace ... beyond the compelling need to make this a monument to world peace, the World Trade Center should, because of its importance, become a representation of man's belief in humanity, his need for individual dignity, his beliefs in the cooperation of men, and through cooperation, his ability to find greatness."*

In total, the World Trade Center (WTC) complex would hold 12 million square feet of space. It was determined that the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey would jointly oversee the construction project. The model of the World Trade Center designed by Yamasaki can be seen at: [www.911memorial.org/wtc-history](http://www.911memorial.org/wtc-history).

Construction began in 1966. Until the design of 1 WTC (North Tower) and 2 WTC (South Tower), very tall buildings usually required very thick structural supports and elevators along the interior of the space, making the buildings too inefficient above a certain height. Yamasaki departed from this in the plan for the Towers. The external load bearing walls supported much of the weight of the tower, with an inner core of supports that housed the elevators. They also had narrow office windows 22 inches wide, due to Yamasaki's fear of heights and his desire to make building tenants feel secure. The building facades were covered in aluminum-alloy. The 'Twin Towers,' as they were nicknamed, were completed in 1973, though tenants began to arrive in December 1970. The other buildings of the complex were built over the next 14 years. The 360 ft. antenna was added in 1978 to the North Tower.

Listen to more about the construction effort from Guy Tozzoli, a career Port Authority employee, who was responsible for planning, design, construction, leasing, and ultimately, the operations at the World Trade Center:

[www.911memorial.org/sites/all/files/audio/Guy\\_Tozzoli.mp3](http://www.911memorial.org/sites/all/files/audio/Guy_Tozzoli.mp3)

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Also unique to the construction of the WTC Plaza was the slurry wall. Slurry walls are needed to hold back adjacent water bodies from construction sites, such as the Hudson River from the WTC site. The planned buildings were so heavy and big that traditional pilings would not be sufficient. Pumping the water away would also be insufficient, so the construction of the slurry wall was deemed necessary. The slurry wall creates a water-tight enclosure, like a 'bath tub,' that would allow excavation and exposure of the bedrock as well.

Listen to Arthur Ressi explain how the slurry wall worked, as well as the danger to lower Manhattan on 9/11 should the slurry wall have failed:

[www.911memorial.org/sites/all/files/DocServer/Arturo\\_Ressi\\_final\\_podcast.mp3](http://www.911memorial.org/sites/all/files/DocServer/Arturo_Ressi_final_podcast.mp3)

Once completed, the site spanned 16 acres, contained an underground shopping mall, and served as a transit hub for New Jersey PATH trains and New York City subway riders. Approximately 35,000 people worked at the WTC, with another 70,000 passing through daily. Prior to 9/11, upscale retail stores such as Banana Republic, Coach, The Gap, Casual Corner, and The Limited were tenants in the shopping mall. Others such as Duane Reade, Warner Brothers Studio Store, and Lens Crafters also held retail space in the mall, serving thousands of customers each day in the thriving, upbeat environment.

To see a map of the mall of the World Trade Center, click here: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Map\\_of\\_the\\_Mall\\_at\\_the\\_World\\_Trade\\_Center.svg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_the_Mall_at_the_World_Trade_Center.svg).

On February 26, 1993, at 12:18 p.m., terrorists set off a truck bomb in the car garage below 1 WTC. The bomb was intended to cause the tower to fall over into 2 WTC, causing the deaths of tens of thousands. The explosion did not cause 1 WTC to collapse, but it did cause extensive damage to the area, carving out a large crater several stories deep. Smoke and flames rose upward into the building which lost power, plunging the stairwells into darkness. It made climbing down from the upper floors nightmarish for tens of thousands of people, many fearful and panicking.

Listen to Director of Fire Safety Mike Hurley's account of the 1993 bombing from the 107th Floor of the South Tower: [www.911memorial.org/sites/all/files/audio/hurley.mp3](http://www.911memorial.org/sites/all/files/audio/hurley.mp3)

Six people were killed in the bombing, over a thousand were injured, many from smoke inhalation. The following lost their lives:

1. **Monica Smith**, age 35, a secretary, who was seven months pregnant, who was in her office working.
2. **Robert "Bob" Kirkpatrick**, age 61, a locksmith who was eating lunch in a room next to Smith's office.
3. **Bill Macko**, age 47, a maintenance worker, who also was eating lunch.
4. **Stephen Knapp**, age 48, maintenance supervisor who'd joined Macko and Kirkpatrick for lunch that day.
5. **John DiGiovanni**, age 45, a dental products salesperson, who was parking in the underground garage as the blast occurred.
6. **Wilfredo Mercado**, age 37, a receiving agent for Windows on the World restaurant, was checking on deliveries.

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Designed by Elyn Zimmerman, a granite memorial fountain was dedicated to the victims of the bombing. In 1995, it was placed in Austin J. Tobin Plaza, directly above the site of the explosion. It contained the names of those killed in the attack and an inscription that read:

*"On February 26, 1993, a bomb set by terrorists exploded below this site. This horrible act of violence killed innocent people, injured thousands, and made victims of us all."*

More can be read about the 1993 memorial on the 9/11 Memorial's website: [www.911memorial.org/1993-wtc-bombing-victims](http://www.911memorial.org/1993-wtc-bombing-victims).

The FBI and its partners in the New York Joint Terrorism Task Force immediately began investigating the cause of the explosion. Rubble, heavy debris, and water from broken pipes were everywhere. While examining the wreckage, a VIN number from the truck was discovered, leading the FBI to identify a Ryder truck. This truck had been rented in Jersey City by Mohammad Salameh, one of the conspirators. Salameh had reported the truck stolen and when he went to get his deposit back from the rental agency, the police arrested him.

From Salameh, the police unraveled the trail to arrest the remaining conspirators, Ramzi Yousef, Nidal Ayyad, Mahmud Abouhalima and Ahmad Ajaj. In March 1994, four men were tried, convicted of carrying out the bombing, and sentenced to life in prison. Following this attack, numerous security improvements were implemented at the WTC complex. A new "normal" regarding security was achieved.

Another memorable day in World Trade Center history came on August 7, 1974, when Philippe Petit tightrope walked on a cable strung between the Twin Towers. To combat the wind and swaying, he carried a 55-pound balancing pole. During his 45 minute 'walk' a quarter of a mile above the ground, he crossed eight times, sat on the wire, and did 'knee bends.' On returning to the South Tower, he was promptly arrested for his performance. The media frenzy that ensued resulted in all charges being dropped. Instead of jail time, Petit entertained children for community service. In addition, Petit was presented with a lifetime pass to the Twin Towers' Observation Deck by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. He autographed a steel beam close to the point where he began his walk. Oddly enough, in the aftermath of this stunt, coupled with the 1993 bombing, there grew in most New Yorker's an affection for the World Trade Center. While previously it had been viewed by some as 'ugly and utilitarian,' by the end of the 1990s, the "Twin Towers" were boasting an occupancy rate of 95%.

See Petit's walk here: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=uEU7lrtehDs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uEU7lrtehDs). (You can also see a report on the walk here if youtube is not available in your classroom: [www.history.com/news/the-twin-towers-high-wire-walk-40-years-ago](http://www.history.com/news/the-twin-towers-high-wire-walk-40-years-ago).)

On December 15, 1975, the Observation Deck on the 2 WTC opened, permitting one to see 45 miles away on a clear day. See a ticket to the Observation Deck on its opening day and from September 10, 2001, its last day. In April 1976, on floors 106-107 of the North Tower, the Windows of the World Restaurant opened. It offered scenic views of New York City and tourists came every day to enjoy the sights of the city. Read more about the modernization of the towers, the shopping mall, and more at: [www.911memorial.org/aftermath-1](http://www.911memorial.org/aftermath-1)

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The World Trade Center towers would become iconic symbols of America's prosperity. They represented America's unparalleled financial power and the rugged individualism of the American spirit. Thus, the World Trade Center became an important target for America's enemies, as was demonstrated first in 1993. The terrorists came back in 2001. The resulting disaster would dramatically alter the familiar skyline of New York City, known around the world, forever destroying the twin steel buildings that over the years had come to embody the city itself.

Tuesday, September 11, 2001 was a crystal clear sunny day in New York City. It would also be one of the most watched and documented days in history. Terrorists from the Islamist extremist group, al-Qaeda, crashed airliners into both towers, causing a cascade of events ending in the collapse of the North and South Tower, the destruction of the entire World Trade Center complex, as well as devastation at the Pentagon outside of Washington, D.C and in a field outside of Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

Tenants in the Twin Towers on 9/11 represented a diverse range of workers, from bankers and law firms to computer specialists and medical offices to retailers and cable networks. Cantor Fitzgerald Securities, a bond brokering firm, occupied the 101-105 floors of 1 WTC. Every one of the 658 Cantor Fitzgerald brokers, traders, technology specialists, and secretaries who were at their desks that morning were killed in the attack. It was the single greatest loss suffered by any company or organization on 9/11.

The American Bureau of Shipping occupied the 91st floor with Office manager, Claire McIntyre, was sitting at her desk at 8:46 a.m. when the first plane hit. *"I was working at my computer and first heard this horrendous roar of a jet engine,"* she recalled. *"I thought it couldn't possibly be this close. Then I saw the wing and tail of a plane."* She jumped up immediately, screaming, and ran out her office to alert the rest of the staff. *"I thought: 'Oh my God, all my people'. I ran out into the hallway and just screamed: 'Everyone, get out now.'"* Claire's quick response likely saved many lives that day, for not long after exiting the building and heading for an ambulance with some injured co-workers, the South Tower began to collapse. *"We thought: 'We made it down 91 flights of stairs and now we are going to die,'"* said Claire.

Just as they realized they were safe from debris, a huge cloud of dust approached, reaching them halfway up the block. *"We were in total blackness and couldn't breathe at all."* They took refuge in Chase Bank next to the Millennium Hilton Hotel until the dust cloud subsided. Later, Claire learned all 11 ABS employees who had come to work on 9/11 had miraculously survived the attack.

It was later realized that there was no escape for everyone in and above the impact zone in the North Tower after the first jet smashed into the 93rd through 99th floors.

Once the first plane struck the North Tower, people in the South Tower soon learned of this 'event,' most thinking it was an accident rather than a terrorist attack. However, some were suspicious given the earlier WTC bombing in 1993. Critical decisions had to be made,

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especially by the thousands of people at working above the 78th floor in the South Tower. Time was ticking and unbeknownst to them, they had only 17 minutes before United Flight 175 would crash into the 77th-85th floors of the South Tower. In that time, many people from those floors and upward would flee the building. The decision to leave, which carried them to safer levels below the impact zone, saved their lives. Most of the hundreds who remained at their desks would lose their lives on 9/11.

AON Corporation, an insurance firm, had offices on the 92, 99 and 100th floors of the South Tower. Trainee Andrecia Douglin-Traill had only started with the company on September 1st. Smelling smoke while on the phone with her husband, screaming erupted around her. Wondering what was happening, Andrecia turned to look out the window, catching fragmented images of falling debris from the North Tower. Shocked, she quickly came to the realization that it was not debris. Desperate people were jumping to their deaths. Andrecia ran for her life and would survive on 9/11.

Financial firm Keefe Bruyette Woods was located on the 89th floor of 2 WTC. CEO Joseph Berry, would remain in his office after hearing the public-address announcements telling South Tower workers that they didn't need to get out and that the building was safe. Keefe Bruyette's head of accounting, Mike McDonnel, called the building's fire command center asking for information on what to do. He was told to stay put. 67 people would do just that, including Berry, while 14 would decide to exit the South Tower. They survived. As a group, financial traders from Keefe Bruyette, Sandler O'Neil, EuroBrokers and Fiduciary Trust accounted for 284 deaths, nearly half of the total number in the South Tower.

Holding offices between the 79-82nd floors, Fuji Bank and Fuji Capital Market's three managers saw the explosion in the North Tower. They ran to the trading floor on the 80th floor, a windowless room, frantically urging everyone to get out as quickly possible. 120 employees survived, taking Keiji Takahashi's urgent advice. Takahashi and the other executives stayed to help evacuate others, and were killed in the collapse.

The attacks on 9/11 caused reactions that were mixed with horror at their violence, as well as pride at the courage, heroism, and grit of those who responded and saved lives. Gone was this symbol of American strength and power, this unparalleled world hub of finance and banking, an identifying marker of New York City itself. It shocked the nation, its people, and the world.

Explore artifacts and personal stories from the Museum's collection about the history of the World Trade Center by visiting: [www.911memorial.org/world-trade-center-history](http://www.911memorial.org/world-trade-center-history).

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