

Modern-Day America: Teacher's Guide

Grade Level: 6-8

Curriculum Focus: U.S. History

Lesson Duration: Two class periods

Program Description

Take a look at Ronald Reagan's presidency and the legacy of his reforms. Investigate how globalization has led to conflicts between countries. Meet the heroes who risked their lives on 9/11. And discover how Americans united in a display of solidarity after that fateful day.

- A President's Legacy (5 min.)
 - Challenges for our Century (4 min.)
 - Heroes at Ground Zero (5 min.)
 - Stories from the Ruins (31 min.)
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Onscreen Questions

- How did President Reagan's military reforms affect the United States?
 - How has globalization led to international conflict?
 - Why is it important to remember the heroes of September 11th?
 - How have artifacts found at Ground Zero helped victims' families cope with their losses?
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Lesson Plan

Student Objectives

- Discuss the September 11th terrorist attacks and talk about how the victims should be remembered.
- Research and present a famous American memorial from the 20th century.
- Design a memorial for the World Trade Center site.

Materials

- *Modern-Day America* program
- Poster board

- Colored pencils and markers
- Internet access

Procedures

1. After watching *Modern-Day America*, review what students know about the terrorist attacks of September 11th. Ask: Where did the attacks take place? Who carried out the attacks? Who were some of the victims who lost their lives at the World Trade Center that day?
2. Next, ask students how they think police officers, firefighters, office workers, and other victims of the September 11th attacks should be remembered. Should there be a memorial? What would be the purpose of a memorial? Explain that memorials are being planned for each site of the September 11th attacks – the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and Shanksville, Pennsylvania. For the World Trade Center site, a competition was held for a design for a single memorial. Thousands of submissions were sent from 63 nations.
3. Explain that students will work in groups to design a memorial for the World Trade Center site. First, they'll explore the designs and symbols behind some famous American memorials from the 20th century. Divide the class into nine small groups and assign each group one of the memorials below:
 - Vietnam Veterans Memorial
<http://www.nps.gov/vive/>
 - Oklahoma City National Memorial
http://www.oklahomacitynationalmemorial.org/memo_outd_deta.htm?id=2572880
http://www.oklahomacitynationalmemorial.org/memo_outd_deta.htm?id=2686401
 - The Holocaust Memorial
<http://www.holocaustmmb.org/>
 - National World War II Memorial
<http://www.wwiimemorial.com/>
 - Civil Rights Memorial
<http://www.tolerance.org/memorial/>
 - Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery
http://www.arlingtoncemetery.org/visitor_information/tomb_of_the_unknowns.html
 - USS *Arizona* Memorial (Pearl Harbor)
<http://www.nps.gov/usar/home.htm>
 - Korean War Veterans Memorial
<http://www.nps.gov/kwvm/>
 - John F. Kennedy gravesite at Arlington National Cemetery
http://www.arlingtoncemetery.org/visitor_information/JFK.html
4. Have the groups visit their memorials' Web site to learn more about the its design and meaning. They should pint any relevant pictures and answer the following questions:
 - What is the name of this memorial?

- What event does it commemorate?
 - Describe the memorial's design—What elements does it include? Do each of these elements represent something significant? If so, what?
 - Do you think this memorial is successful? Why or why not?
5. Have the groups present their memorials to the class. After the presentations, discuss the elements used in memorials, such as reflecting pools, engraved walls, sculptures or statues, gardens, fountains, and flames. Ask students: What were some of the most powerful symbols? Which memorials do you believe are most effective? Why?
 6. Working in the same groups, explain that students will use what they've learned about memorials and the terrorist attacks of September 11th to design a memorial for the World Trade Center site. They should begin by determining the purpose, audience, and overall message of the memorial they want to design. Then, they should select one or more elements or symbols to convey their intended message and develop a concept.
 7. Once the groups have agreed on a concept, have each student create one or more sketches. Have students share their sketches with the group and then select one of them—or combine elements from a few of them—to create a final design. Have the groups draw their final design on poster board and label, with brief annotations, the memorial's important elements.
 8. Have the groups present their designs, and hang the posters around the room. Then, show students the winning design for the World Trade Center memorial. It can be found, along with all the submissions, at <http://www.wtcsitememorial.org/fin7.html>.

Assessment

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

- 3 points: Students researched their assigned memorial carefully and thoroughly; answered all the questions; demonstrated a strong understanding of the designs and symbols behind American memorials; designed a creative, thoughtful memorial for the World Trade Center site; were active in class discussions.
- 2 points: Students researched their assigned memorial; answered most of the questions; demonstrated a satisfactory understanding of the designs and symbols behind American memorials; showed an adequate amount of thought and consideration in their memorial design; participated in class discussions.
- 1 point: Students had difficulty researching their assigned memorial; answered few of the questions; demonstrated a weak understanding of the designs and symbols behind American memorials; showed little thought or consideration in their memorial design; did not participate in class discussions.

Vocabulary

artifact

Definition: An object created by humans, usually for practical purposes

Context: Many personal artifacts have been returned to the families of those who died in the September 11th attacks.

globalization

Definition: The process by which institutions or businesses work together on an international scale

Context: Globalization has meant a huge increase in international trade.

legacy

Definition: Something that is handed down or remains from an ancestor, a predecessor, or the past

Context: Ronald Reagan's political legacy influenced subsequent presidents.

terrorist

Definition: A person or group who uses violence to achieve goals, such as to intimidate or persuade for political reasons

Context: On September 11th, 2001, four airplane hijackings by terrorists caused incalculable death and destruction in the United States.

Academic Standards

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)

McREL's Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education addresses 14 content areas. To view the standards and benchmarks, visit

<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp>.

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- U.S. History: Era 10 – Understands developments in foreign policy and domestic politics between the Nixon and Clinton presidencies; Understands economic, social, and cultural developments in the contemporary United States
- Arts: Visual Arts – Understands the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) has developed national standards to provide guidelines for teaching social studies. To view the standards online, go to

<http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/strands/>.

This lesson plan addresses the following thematic standards:

- Time, Continuity, and Change
 - People, Places, and Environments
 - Power, Authority, and Governance
 - Science, Technology, and Society
 - Global Connections
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Support Materials

Develop custom worksheets, educational puzzles, online quizzes, and more with the free teaching tools offered on the [Discoveryschool.com](http://school.discovery.com) Web site. Create and print support materials, or save them to a Custom Classroom account for future use. To learn more, visit

- <http://school.discovery.com/teachingtools/teachingtools.html>
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DVD Content

This program is available in an interactive DVD format. The following information and activities are specific to the DVD version.

How to Use the DVD

The DVD starting screen has the following options:

Play Video – This plays the video from start to finish. There are no programmed stops, except by using a remote control. With a computer, depending on the particular software player, a pause button is included with the other video controls.

Video Index – Here the video is divided into four segments (see below), indicated by video thumbnail icons. Watching all parts in sequence is similar to watching the video from start to finish. Brief descriptions and total running times are noted for each part. To play a particular segment, press Enter on the remote for TV playback; on a computer, click once to highlight a thumbnail and read the accompanying text description and click again to start the video.

Curriculum Units – These are specially edited video segments pulled from different sections of the video (see below). These nonlinear segments align with key ideas in the unit of instruction. They include onscreen pre- and post-viewing questions, reproduced below in this Teacher's Guide. Total running times for these segments are noted. To play a particular segment, press Enter on the TV remote or click once on the Curriculum Unit title on a computer.

Standards Link – Selecting this option displays a single screen that lists the national academic standards the video addresses.



Teacher Resources—This screen gives the technical support number and Web site address.

Video Index

I. A President's Legacy (5 min.)

Responsible for creating the largest federal debt in U.S. history, President Ronald Reagan also helped restore America's faith in its national leaders.

II. Challenges for our Century (4 min.)

Modern technologies have changed life all over the planet, resulting in globalization. However, problems associated with globalization have created international conflicts, including terrorism.

III. Heroes at Ground Zero (5 min.)

Most people ran from the World Trade Center following the attacks on September 11. But some brave people ran into the site to fulfill the demands of their jobs and help others.

IV. Stories from the Ruins (32 min.)

Examine personal artifacts found at Ground Zero and listen to family members share memories of loved ones lost on September 11, 2001.

Curriculum Units

1. The Great Communicator

Pre-viewing question

Q: What do you know about Ronald Reagan's presidency?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What did Reagan accomplish as president?

A: Reagan reduced government regulations, slowed inflation, revived a faltering U.S. economy, and restored public faith in the presidency. He also increased the military budget, which resulted in the largest peacetime increase in military spending in U.S. history. He pushed for a laser-guided defense system that would shoot down missiles from space, in part causing the Soviet Union to negotiate and reduce the number of nuclear weapons in both countries. But Reagan's military spending and deep tax cuts plunged the country deeply into debt by the end of his presidency.

2. Globalization and Conflict

Pre-viewing question

Q: What technological advances have hurt and helped the world?

A: Answers will vary.



Post-viewing question

Q: How can terrorism and other problems associated with globalization be resolved?

A: Answers will vary.

3. September 11, 2001

Pre-viewing question

Q: What is the bravest thing you have ever done?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: How did the terrorist attacks on September 11 affect you?

A: Answers will vary.

4. At Ground Zero

Pre-viewing question

Q: Why would people volunteer to work at Ground Zero?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What would you like to ask people who worked at Ground Zero?

A: Answers will vary.

5. Documenting 9/11

Pre-viewing question

Q: In addition to 9/11, what tragic events have occurred in U.S. history?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What purpose do personal artifacts serve?

A: Answers will vary.

6. Todd Ouida's Story

Pre-viewing question

Q: What do you collect or save?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: How did Todd Ouida's family feel about the recovery of his personal effects?

A: The Ouida family prizes the small reminders of Todd because it makes them feel like they have brought him home. Todd's father said that it was important to the family's emotional recovery.



7. The Initial Stages of the Recovery Process

Pre-viewing question

Q: What do you think would be difficult about working at a disaster site?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What were police officers looking for in the Fresh Kills Landfill?

A: Answers should include human remains, personal property, and evidence.

8. Moira Smith's Story

Pre-viewing question

Q: What characteristics do heroes possess?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: How did Moira Smith and other police officers help people in the World Trade Center?

A: Answers will vary.

9. Artifacts in Hangar 17

Pre-viewing question

Q: Have you ever witnessed an explosion or other disaster?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What do the artifacts in Hangar 17 represent?

A: Answers will vary.

10. Touring the Remains

Pre-viewing question

Q: What feelings do pictures of the World Trade Center evoke?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What feelings do pictures of Ground Zero evoke?

A: Answers will vary.

11. Firefighter Brian Hickey

Pre-viewing question

Q: Have you ever lost someone or something you loved?

A: Answers will vary.



Post-viewing question

Q: What characteristics do firefighters possess?

A: Answers will vary.

12. Remembering 9/11

Pre-viewing question

Q: What are good ways to honor the deceased?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What kind of memorial would you create to honor those who died on 9/11?

A: Answers will vary.

