

Social Studies

Lesson Plan

MEMORIAL MAPPING: TRANSNATIONAL 9/11 MEMORIALS

LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students will examine and analyze the many 9/11 memorials outside of the United States-- transnational 9/11 memorials-- by using the digital scholarship website memorialmapping.com. Using this online interface, students will be able to explore these memorials on both a broad level using the interactive global memorial mapping tool, but also on a more detailed and specific level using the pages dedicated to each memorial. Through this online tool, students will see firsthand how different people around the world remember and memorialize the same event.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to

- develop a clear understanding of the transnational nature of the September 11th terrorist attacks
- broaden their understanding of memorialization as a powerful force of cultural work that provides insight into cultural priorities and identity
- demonstrate their skills through digital media use, critical thinking, and class discussion

NUMBER OF CLASS PERIODS

One 45-minute class period

GRADE LEVEL

Grades 8-12

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2](#)
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1](#)
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.10](#)

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

On September 11, 2001, a group of nineteen terrorists attacked the United States. In separate yet coordinated incidents, they hijacked four airplanes in mid-flight. They flew two of these planes into the two skyscrapers of New York's World Trade Center in Lower Manhattan, which destroyed the buildings and much of the surrounding neighborhood. They flew another plane into the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia. A fourth plane, originally intended to target either the White House or the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., crashed in a remote hillside location near Shanksville, Pennsylvania. In total, 2,996 people were killed in the 9/11 attacks, including 246 people on the four airplanes, 2,606 in the Twin Towers at the World Trade Center, and 125 people at the Pentagon. Overall, people from 92 countries died in the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Accordingly, the global circulation of 9/11 memorials is unusual, as permanent commemorations of the tragedies of particular nations are typically confined to those nations. This pilot project, Memorial Mapping: Transnational 9/11 Memorials explores where and why these memorials were made, and what implications they have on different cultures' priorities, values, and identities.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

As this website shows, different countries remember 9/11 differently. Discuss these differences considering choices of materials, themes, subjects, and geographic location for these memorials. How and why do different countries remember 9/11 differently?

MATERIALS

- Laptop, tablet, or desktop where students can access <http://www.memorialmapping.com/>
- Projector for teacher to display his or her screen
- Notecards for exit cards

PROCEDURE

1. Students jot responses to these questions written on the board using digital or paper notes:
 - Do you remember 9/11? What is your first memory of 9/11?
 - How many countries do you think lost one or more citizen on 9/11?
 - What is the point of making a memorial?
2. Have the students think-pair-share their answers.
3. Discuss historical memory and memorials from an American Studies perspective. Introduce historical memory as a cultural force that can shape the past, present, and future.
 - The *International Encyclopedia of Political Science* states, “The concept of ‘historical memory,’ often expressed as ‘collective memory,’ ‘social memory,’ or for political scientists, ‘the politics of memory,’ refers to the ways in which groups, collectivities, and nations construct and identify with particular narratives about historical periods or events. Historical memories are foundational to social and political identities and are also often reshaped in relation to the present historical-political moment.”
 - i. Question to class: What has been the “present historical-political moment” at home and abroad in the time between 9/11 and now-- when these memorials were being constructed?

- In her book *Memorial Mania*, Erika Doss states, “At the most basic level, memorials are designed to recognize and preserve memories. They are typically understood as acts and gifts that honor particular people and historical events.” She then discusses the widespread use of memorials around the world today. Doss states, “Their omnipresence can be explained by what I call *memorial mania*: an obsession with issues of memory and history and an urgent desire to express and claim those issues in visibly public contexts... Driven by heated struggles over self-definition, national purpose, and the politics of representation, memorial mania is especially shaped by the affective conditions of public life.”
 - i. Question to class: What are some examples of struggles about national purpose and definition?
 - In another book titled *The Emotional Life of Contemporary Memorials*, Erika Doss states, “Understood as collective social ritual, redemptive agent, subaltern expression, and/or mode of identity politics, memory’s montage of meanings dominate contemporary cultural sensibilities.”
 - i. Question to class: What are some of America’s “cultural sensibilities?”
4. In light of the above quotes, discuss how different people can remember the same event differently. Further, consider who and what is remembered and forgotten.
 5. The attacks of 9/11 occurred in the United States but had global impact. Show students video about the Mexican victims of 9/11:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z34rhAULiVc>
 6. Allow students to explore the Memorial Mapping: Transnational 9/11 Memorials website for 10-15 minutes. Guide them to the “Map” page and the “Memorials by Country” page. As they do so, put the following guiding questions on the shared screen and have them look for the answers on the site.
 - How many countries lost one or more citizen in the September 11th terrorist attacks?
 - i. 92 countries
 - What do the different memorials share?
 - i. Subject matter, location in public space, text, materials.
 - How do the memorials differ?
 - i. Materials, size, scale, style, sponsors, purpose.
 - Compare and contrast two different memorials from two different countries.
 - Which country has the most 9/11 memorials outside of the United States?
 - i. Israel
 - Where are the memorials in Afghanistan? Why do you think they are here?

- i. The memorials in Afghanistan are located on United States military bases.
 - What countries experienced casualties on 9/11 but lack public memorials?
 - i. Citizens from 92 countries lost lives during 9/11 and we have tracked 9/11 memorials in 23 of these countries. Have students look at the Casualties by Country list and discuss which countries built 9/11 memorials and which did not.
7. Assemble the class into seminar-style seating (in a circle, or whatever is most conducive to your classroom). Ask students to respond to the guiding questions in #6 (above), and when done, ask them the following reflection questions (below).
- Were there more or less transnational 9/11 memorials than you thought before exploring the website?
 - Why do countries outside of the United States memorialize 9/11?
 - Some countries that have 9/11 victims do not have 9/11 memorials. Consider why and what factors are involved in building a memorial.
 - What are the implications of memorializing 9/11 globally? What impact do transnational 9/11 memorials have on domestic and international politics?
 - Does this website change the way you think about 9/11? If so, explain how and why.

ASSESSMENT AND SUMMARY

Students will complete an exit card by answering two questions:

1. What factors are involved in the making of a memorial?
2. Pick one example of a transnational 9/11 memorial and explain how it reflects the cultural values and priorities of its representative country.

CITATIONS AND ADDITIONAL READING MATERIALS

Doss, Erika. *Memorial Mania*. Chicago and London: the University of Chicago Press, 2010.

Doss, Erika. *The Emotional Life of Contemporary Public Memorials*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008.

Hite, Katherine. "Historical Memory." In *International Encyclopedia of Political Science*, edited by Bertrand BadieDirk Berg-Schlosser and Leonardo Morlino, 1079-1082. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2011.