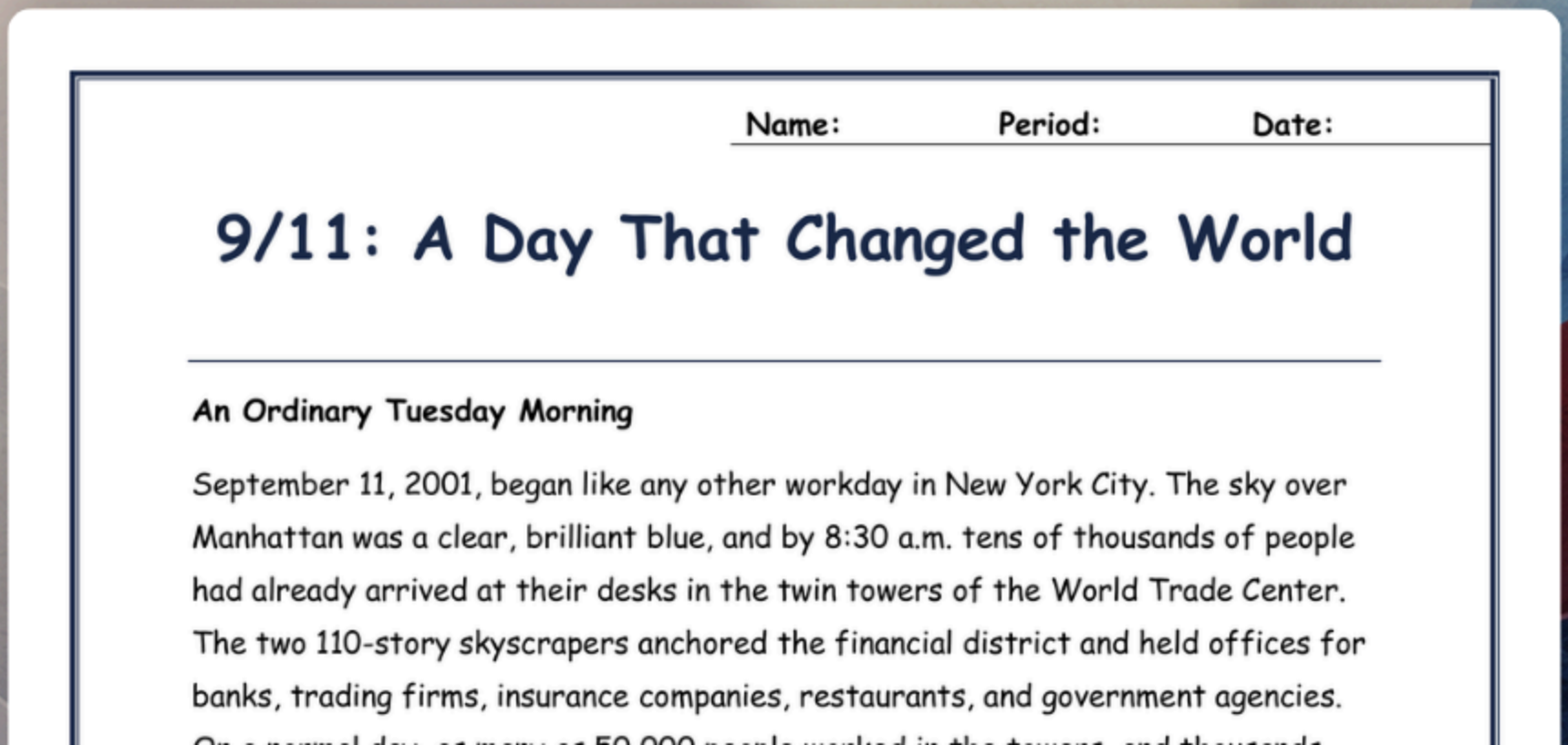
NO PREP

A Day That Changed the World

9/11

Includes: Student reading, case study, differentiated questions, teacher key



Name: Period: Date:

9/11: A Day That Changed the World

An Ordinary Tuesday Morning

September 11, 2001, began like any other workday in New York City. The sky over Manhattan was a clear, brilliant blue, and by 8:30 a.m. tens of thousands of people had already arrived at their desks in the twin towers of the World Trade Center. The two 110-story skyscrapers anchored the financial district and held offices for banks, trading firms, insurance companies, restaurants, and government agencies.

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The Attack Spreads Beyond New York

The World Trade Center was not the only target. At 9:37 a.m., a third hijacked plane, American Airlines Flight 77, crashed into the Pentagon, the headquarters of the United States military, located in Arlington, Virginia, just outside Washington, D.C. The impact tore a hole in the massive five-sided building and killed 184 people, including everyone aboard the plane. Federal officials scrambled to figure out how many more planes might be in the air and headed toward targets. For the first time in history, the government ordered every civilian aircraft over the United States to land immediately. More than 4,500 planes were guided out of the sky within a

few hours. A fourth hijacked plane, United Airlines Flight 93, never reached its target. Passengers on board learned through phone calls that other hijacked planes had been flown into buildings, and they understood what their hijackers intended. A group of passengers voted to fight back and rushed the cockpit. At 10:03 a.m., the plane crashed into an empty field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, killing all forty passengers and crew members. Investigators later concluded that the hijackers were likely aiming for the U.S. Capitol or the White House. The passengers of Flight 93 almost certainly saved hundreds of additional lives.

The Towers Fall

In Lower Manhattan, the crisis grew worse by the minute. The jet fuel from the two planes ignited fires that burned at extreme temperatures, weakening the steel structure of both towers. At 9:59 a.m., less than an hour after it was struck, the South Tower collapsed in about ten seconds, sending a rolling cloud of dust and debris through the streets. At 10:28 a.m., the North Tower fell as well. Hundreds of firefighters, police officers, and paramedics who had rushed into the buildings to rescue workers were killed when the towers came down. In total, 2,977 victims died in the attacks, including 343 New York City firefighters, 23 New York City police officers, and 37 Port Authority police officers. The victims came from more than 90 countries and included office workers, restaurant employees, airline passengers, military personnel, and rescue workers. It remains the deadliest terrorist attack in world history and the deadliest single day for firefighters and law enforcement officers in the history of the United States. For days afterward, smoke rose from the sixteen-acre site, which rescue workers came to call Ground Zero, as crews searched the wreckage for survivors. Engineers later explained that no skyscraper had ever been designed to survive what the towers faced that morning: the impact of a fully fueled jetliner followed by fires hot enough to soften structural steel.

Who Was Responsible

Within days, investigators identified the nineteen hijackers as members of al-Qaeda, an extremist network led by a wealthy Saudi exile named Osama bin Laden. Al-Qaeda had spent years planning the operation and had already attacked American targets overseas, including two U.S. embassies in East Africa in 1998 and a Navy ship, the USS Cole, in 2000. Bin Laden opposed the presence of American troops in the Middle East and the country's support for Israel, and he believed that a spectacular attack on American soil would force the United States to retreat from the region. He was wrong about the retreat, but the attack did change the country's direction for decades. On the evening of September 11, President George W. Bush addressed the nation and promised that the United States would find those responsible. Less than a month later, American forces invaded Afghanistan, whose Taliban government had sheltered bin Laden and allowed al-Qaeda to run training camps there. That war would become the longest in American history. Bin Laden himself evaded capture for nearly ten years before American forces found and killed him in Pakistan in May 2011. The men who carried out the attacks were not soldiers of any country. Fifteen of the nineteen hijackers were citizens of Saudi Arabia, an American ally, and all of them had entered the United States legally on visas. Several trained at ordinary civilian flight schools, paying cash for lessons on how to steer a large jet without ever learning to land one. A bipartisan commission created by Congress in 2002 spent two years reconstructing how the plot succeeded, and its report concluded that the government's failure was less a shortage of information than a failure to share it across agencies.

The World Responds

The shock of September 11 reached far beyond American borders. World leaders from London to Tokyo condemned the attacks, and spontaneous vigils appeared outside American embassies around the globe, where strangers left flowers, candles, and handwritten notes. A French newspaper captured the mood with a

famous headline declaring, "We are all Americans." For the first time in its history, the NATO alliance invoked Article 5 of its founding treaty, the provision declaring that an attack on one member is an attack on all. Countries that had spent the Cold War on opposite sides offered intelligence, airspace, and military help for the campaign against al-Qaeda that followed. At home, the days after the attacks revealed a country determined to respond with more than grief. Rescue workers pulled the last survivor from the rubble twenty-seven hours after the collapse, and though hopes of finding more faded quickly, crews worked around the clock for months; the fires beneath the pile burned until December. Americans lined up for hours to donate blood, sent so much money to relief funds that charities struggled to distribute it, and hung flags from overpasses and porches in every state. The New York Stock Exchange, located blocks from the destruction, reopened after six days as a signal that the attacks had failed to stop American life. Even the wreckage itself was given new purpose: seven and a half tons of steel recovered from the towers were later forged into the bow of a Navy ship, the USS New York, so that a piece of the World Trade Center would sail under the American flag. The attacks of September 11 reshaped daily life in ways Americans still experience. Congress created the Transportation Security Administration to screen airline passengers, established the Department of Homeland Security, and passed new laws expanding the government's power to investigate suspected terrorists. Two long wars, in Afghanistan and Iraq, followed the attacks. At the site of the fallen towers, the National September 11 Memorial now honors every victim by name, with two enormous reflecting pools set in the footprints where the buildings once stood. Each year on the anniversary, the nation pauses at 8:46 a.m., the moment the first plane struck, to remember a Tuesday morning when everything changed.

Key Information: The September 11 Attacks

Fact	Details
Date of the attacks	Tuesday, September 11, 2001
Planes hijacked	Four passenger jets: American Flights 11 and 77, United Flights 175 and 93
Targets struck	North and South Towers of the World Trade Center; the Pentagon
Flight 93	Crashed near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, at 10:03 a.m. after passengers fought back
Total victims	2,977 people from more than 90 countries
First responders killed	343 FDNY firefighters, 23 NYPD officers, 37 Port Authority officers
Group responsible	Al-Qaeda, led by Osama bin Laden
Immediate U.S. response	All civilian flights grounded; invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001

Case Study: Thirty-Four Floors Down

Danielle Reyes, a paralegal at a law firm on the 34th floor of the North Tower, felt the building lurch at 8:46 a.m. hard enough to knock her coffee off her desk. The lights flickered, and a strange smell, like burning fuel, drifted through the vents. Her supervisor told everyone to stay calm and wait for instructions, but an older attorney who had survived the 1993 World Trade Center bombing stood up and said, "We are not waiting. Everybody to the stairs, now." Danielle joined a slow, orderly river of people walking down thirty-four flights. Around the 20th floor, the line pressed against the wall to make room for firefighters climbing up, loaded with hoses and oxygen tanks. One of them, sweating under his helmet, told her group, "Keep moving, you're doing great." Danielle reached the street at 9:40 a.m. and was three blocks away when the South Tower fell behind her.

1. Why do you think the attorney who survived the 1993 bombing reacted differently than Danielle's supervisor, and what does that difference suggest about the value of past experience in an emergency?

_____

_____

2. Danielle's group walked down while firefighters climbed up. Using details from both the narrative and the reading, explain what those firefighters were walking into and why their choice mattered.

_____

_____

Multiple Choice

1. What finally made it clear to the nation that the plane crashes were a deliberate attack rather than an accident?
    a) The collapse of the South Tower
    b) The second plane hitting the South Tower on live television
    c) President Bush's televised address to the nation that evening
    d) The grounding of all civilian aircraft

2. Investigators concluded that the hijackers of United Flight 93 were most likely targeting which location?
    a) The U.S. Capitol or the White House
    b) The Pentagon
    c) A nuclear power plant in Pennsylvania
    d) The Statue of Liberty

3. Which of the following was a direct response by the United States government to the September 11 attacks?
    a) Closing the New York Stock Exchange permanently
    b) Ending all air travel for a full year
    c) Withdrawing American troops from the entire Middle East
    d) Creating the Transportation Security Administration

Matching

Write the letter of the correct definition on the line next to each term.

Term	Definition
1. ___ World Trade Center	A) Hijacked plane that crashed in a Pennsylvania field after passengers fought back
2. ___ Pentagon	B) Extremist network led by Osama bin Laden that planned and carried out the attacks
3. ___ Al-Qaeda	C) Name rescue workers gave to the sixteen-acre site where the towers collapsed
4. ___ Ground Zero	D) Twin 110-story towers in Lower Manhattan struck by the first two hijacked planes
5. ___ Flight 93	E) Headquarters of the U.S. military in Arlington, Virginia, hit by American Flight 77

Fill-in-the-Blank

1. The second plane struck the _____ Tower at 9:03 a.m.

2. In total, _____ people died in the September 11 attacks.

3. American forces invaded _____ in October 2001.

Short Answer

Answer each question in 2-4 complete sentences.

1. Explain why the reading says Flight 93's passengers saved hundreds of additional lives.

_____

_____

_____

2. Why did the attacks kill so many firefighters and police officers, and what does that reveal?

_____

_____

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3. Identify two long-term changes 9/11 caused and explain how each still affects Americans.

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