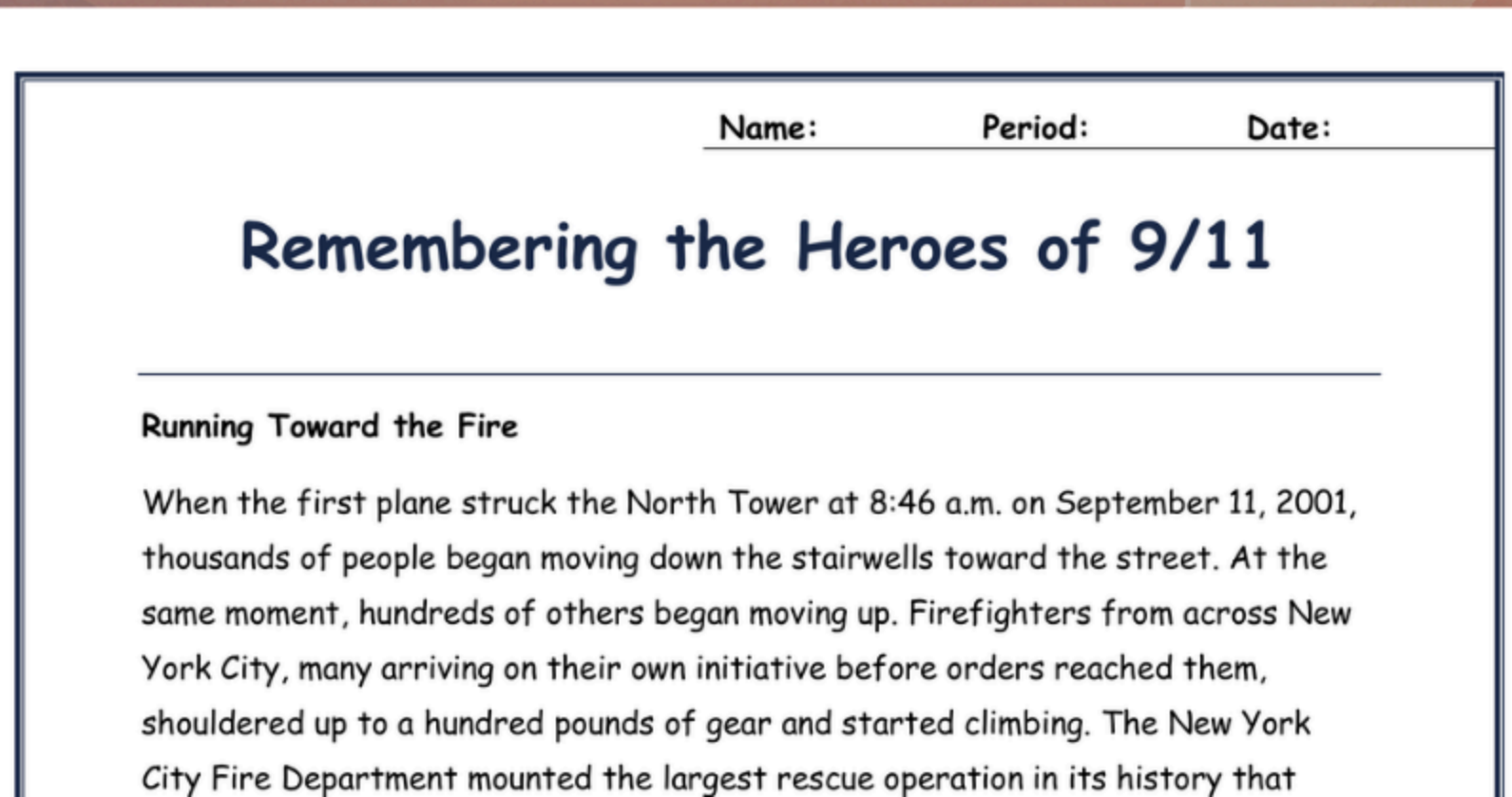
NO PREP

Remembering the Heroes of 9/11

Running Toward the Fire

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



Name: Period: Date:

Remembering the Heroes of 9/11

Running Toward the Fire

When the first plane struck the North Tower at 8:46 a.m. on September 11, 2001, thousands of people began moving down the stairwells toward the street. At the same moment, hundreds of others began moving up. Firefighters from across New York City, many arriving on their own initiative before orders reached them, shouldered up to a hundred pounds of gear and started climbing. The New York City Fire Department mounted the largest rescue operation in its history that

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The Man in the Red Bandana

Some of the day's heroes wore no uniform at all. Welles Crowther was a twenty-four-year-old equities trader who worked on the 104th floor of the South Tower and had served as a volunteer firefighter in his hometown. Since childhood he had carried a red bandana, a gift from his father. After the second plane hit, survivors on the 78th floor sky lobby, wounded and disoriented in the smoke, heard a calm

voice announcing that he had found the stairs. A young man with a red bandana over his nose and mouth directed them down, carried one woman on his back, and then climbed back up into the smoke to find more people. Witnesses saw him make the trip repeatedly. Welles did not survive the collapse. His body was recovered six months later alongside firefighters near a command post in the South Tower lobby, suggesting he had joined their rescue effort in his final minutes. The survivors he led out did not know his name until 2002, when his mother read their descriptions of a rescuer in a red bandana and recognized her son. At least a dozen people are believed to owe him their lives. Today, students across the country learn his story, and the red bandana has become a symbol of ordinary courage.

The Security Chief Who Predicted the Attack

Rick Rescorla, director of security for the investment firm Morgan Stanley, had spent years preparing for a day he was almost alone in predicting. A decorated Vietnam veteran, Rescorla believed the World Trade Center would be attacked by air after the 1993 truck bombing failed to bring it down. Against complaints that he was wasting time, he drilled Morgan Stanley's employees, nearly 2,700 people spread across more than twenty floors of the South Tower, in rapid stairwell evacuations, timing them with a stopwatch until they could clear the building quickly and calmly. On September 11, when the North Tower was hit, an announcement over the public address system told South Tower workers to remain at their desks. Rescorla ignored it. Grabbing his bullhorn, he ordered an immediate evacuation and sang songs from his native Cornwall to keep people calm as they descended, just as he had sung to frightened soldiers in Vietnam. Nearly all of Morgan Stanley's employees escaped before the South Tower collapsed. Rescorla was last seen climbing back up the stairs to search for stragglers. His body was never recovered. Rescorla's warnings had a long history. As early as 1990 he and a fellow veteran had told the Port Authority that the towers' underground parking garage was dangerously easy to reach with a vehicle, and three years later a truck bomb exploded in that exact garage. When his warning about an air attack drew no

action either, he concluded that the only protection his company could count on was its own preparation, and he ran the drills himself until they were routine.

Heroes of Flight 93 and the Days After

Forty passengers and crew aboard United Airlines Flight 93 learned by phone that hijacked planes had been flown into buildings in New York and Washington. Understanding their own plane was meant for a similar purpose, they took a vote and decided to storm the cockpit. Flight attendants prepared boiling water; passengers armed themselves with whatever they could find. The plane crashed into a Pennsylvania field at 10:03 a.m., short of its likely target in Washington, D.C. Their decision, made by strangers who had known each other for barely an hour, is credited with saving the U.S. Capitol or the White House. Heroism did not end when the attacks did. For months afterward, thousands of ironworkers, medics, engineers, volunteers, and search dogs worked on the smoking pile at Ground Zero, first searching for survivors and then recovering remains so families could bury their loved ones. Many rescue and recovery workers later developed serious illnesses, including cancers linked to the toxic dust they breathed. Congress eventually passed the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act in 2010 to provide medical care for them, and more first responders have died of 9/11-related illness since the attacks than died on the day itself. The field where Flight 93 came down is now the Flight 93 National Memorial, dedicated on the tenth anniversary of the attacks. A white marble wall carries the forty names, aligned with the flight path, and a walkway leads toward the impact site, which is left undisturbed and open only to family members. In 2018 the memorial added the Tower of Voices, a ninety-three-foot structure holding forty wind chimes, one for each passenger and crew member, so the site produces a different sound every day.

The Great Boatlift

One of the largest rescues of September 11 is also one of the least known. When the towers fell, Lower Manhattan became an island of dust-choked, terrified people with no way out: the bridges and tunnels were closed, and the subway had stopped running. Thousands pressed against the seawall at the southern tip of the island. Within minutes, the Coast Guard radioed a call for all available boats, and the harbor answered. Ferries, tugboats, fishing charters, dinner-cruise ships, and private sailboats turned toward the smoke while everyone else fled it, their crews improvising docking spots along the seawall and hauling office workers aboard. In roughly nine hours, this improvised fleet carried close to 500,000 people across the water to safety in New Jersey, Brooklyn, and Staten Island. Historians rank it as the largest maritime evacuation in history, larger than the famous rescue of Allied soldiers from Dunkirk in 1940, which moved fewer people and took nine days. No one ordered the captains to go; they simply went. In the days that followed, search dogs worked the smoking pile alongside ironworkers, and volunteers formed bucket brigades, passing debris hand over hand in the search for survivors. One tugboat crewman later summed up the day in a sentence that has become part of 9/11 memory: average people stepped up when they were needed, and that was all it took. The heroes of September 11 came from every background: career firefighters and rookie cops, a young trader with a bandana, a sixty-two-year-old security chief, flight attendants, office workers, and passengers on a doomed plane. Almost none of them would have called themselves heroes the day before. Their stories teach that courage is less about fearlessness than about decision, the choice to act for others when acting is costly. Memorials from the reflecting pools in Manhattan to the Flight 93 National Memorial in Shanksville preserve their names, but the more durable memorial may be the standard they set for what ordinary people can do on the worst day imaginable.

Key Information: Heroes of September 11

Fact	Details
FDNY losses	343 firefighters killed, the deadliest day for firefighters in U.S. history
Police losses	23 NYPD officers and 37 Port Authority officers killed
Lives saved	Roughly 25,000 people evacuated from the towers before they fell
Welles Crowther	24-year-old trader in a red bandana who led survivors from the 78th floor sky lobby
Rick Rescorla	Morgan Stanley security chief whose evacuation drills saved nearly 2,700 employees
Father Mychal Judge	FDNY chaplain, the first officially recorded victim of the attacks
Flight 93	40 passengers and crew who stormed the cockpit, saving a target in Washington
Zadroga Act (2010)	Law providing medical care for ill rescue and recovery workers

Case Study: The Stopwatch Drills

Marcus Bell hated the drills. As a new financial analyst on the 60th floor of the South Tower, he groaned every time the security director's voice crackled over the intercom announcing another full-building evacuation practice. Down sixty flights, two by two, no talking, while a stern man with a bullhorn and a stopwatch called out split times like a track coach. "We work in the safest building in New York," Marcus complained to his desk mate. "This guy thinks we're soldiers." His desk mate shrugged: "He ran us through it twice last quarter. Just walk." On the morning of September 11, when smoke began pouring from the neighboring tower and the loudspeaker told everyone to stay at their desks, Marcus's floor did not debate. They lined up two by two and walked, the way they had practiced, while the man with the bullhorn sang somewhere below. Marcus was on the street when his building was hit, and blocks away when it fell.

1. Marcus initially resented the evacuation drills. Using both the narrative and the reading, explain why the drills succeeded even though many employees did not take them seriously.

_____

_____

2. The official announcement told South Tower workers to stay at their desks, yet Marcus's floor evacuated anyway. What does this conflict reveal about preparation, authority, and judgment in an emergency?

_____

_____

Multiple Choice

1. How did survivors from the 78th floor sky lobby eventually learn the identity of the man in the red bandana?
    a) He introduced himself to them as he led them down the stairs
    b) His mother recognized him from survivors' descriptions in 2002
    c) His company identified him from security footage
    d) He survived and told his story to reporters

2. Why had Rick Rescorla insisted on repeated evacuation drills for Morgan Stanley employees?

a) Fire codes required quarterly drills for all tenants

b) He wanted to impress the company's executives

c) He expected another attack after the 1993 bombing

d) Employees had performed poorly during an actual fire

3. What does the reading identify as the ongoing cost of the rescue and recovery effort at Ground Zero?

a) The demolition of surrounding buildings

b) The permanent closure of the financial district

c) The permanent closure of the entire Manhattan financial district

d) Serious illnesses among workers exposed to toxic dust

Matching

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

Term	Definition
1. ___ Welles Crowther	A) FDNY chaplain killed by debris, recorded as the first official victim
2. ___ Rick Rescorla	B) Site of the collapsed towers where recovery crews worked for months
3. ___ Father Mychal Judge	C) Volunteer-firefighter-turned-trader who guided the wounded down from the sky lobby
4. ___ Ground Zero	D) 2010 law funding medical care for sickened rescue and recovery workers
5. ___ Zadroga Act	E) Vietnam veteran who sang through a bullhorn while evacuating nearly 2,700 workers

Fill-in-the-Blank

1. The FDNY lost _____ firefighters on September 11, its deadliest day ever.

2. Welles Crowther worked on the 104th floor of the _____ Tower.

3. Rescue efforts helped about _____ people escape the towers.

Short Answer

Answer each question in 2-4 complete sentences.

1. More responders have since died of 9/11 illness than died that day. What does that show?

_____

_____

_____

2. How were Welles Crowther's and Rick Rescorla's actions similar, and how did preparation differ?

_____

_____

_____

3. Use two examples to support or challenge the claim that courage is a decision, not fearlessness.

_____

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_____