



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: August 21, 2024
To: Local Educational Agency Leads
Route To: Principals and Educators
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Division of Teaching and Learning Services

September 11th Instructional Resources

The 2020 New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Social Studies require instruction on the events of 9/11. We encourage educators to teach about the events and aftermath of September 11, 2001 in a manner that is sensitive to the individual and community experiences of their districts.

Educating students about the September 11, 2001 (9/11) attacks offers vital insights into contemporary global dynamics, shaping students' understanding of recent history and current events. By exploring the events of 9/11, students can develop critical thinking skills as they analyze complex issues surrounding terrorism, national security, and cultural understanding. Additionally, teaching about 9/11 offers an opportunity to discuss themes of resilience, unity, and the importance of cross-cultural dialogue in an increasingly interconnected world. Educators play a vital role in ensuring that students comprehend the significance of this historical moment while cultivating compassion and nurturing the skills for engaged, knowledgeable citizenship.

In high school, the performance expectations call for explicit instruction on the events and impact of 9/11:

- 6.1.12.HistoryCC.14.b: Determine how the 9/11 attacks contributed to the debate over national security and civil liberties.
- 6.1.12.HistoryCC.14.d: Evaluate the decisions to wage war in Iraq and Afghanistan after the 9/11 attacks.

In the middle grades, while there is no direct performance expectation referencing 9/11, educators may leverage the social studies disciplinary practice of Gathering and Evaluating Sources identified in the standards to examine first-hand accounts of the events and days after 9/11 to develop claims on how such events impacted communities and the country.

In upper elementary, teachers may use the following performance expectation to have students interview family and community members regarding their 9/11 experiences and examine different sources that demonstrate how 9/11 shaped the lives of those around them:

- 6.3.5.CivicsPD.2: Use a variety of sources and data to identify the various perspectives and actions taken by individuals involving a current or historical community, state, or national issue.

In lower elementary, teachers may use 9/11 as an opportunity to discuss local and national monuments to 9/11 victims, survivors, and responders that highlight the roles and sacrifices made by individuals affected:

- 6.1.2.CivicsDP.3 Explain how historical symbols, monuments, and holidays reflect the shared values, principles, and beliefs of the American identity.

In order to assist educators in addressing this subject, the NJ Commission on Holocaust Education curated [9/11 related lessons and activities](#) appropriate for all grade levels. Additionally, the [9/11 Memorial and Museum](#) features a variety of free resources, featured below:

- **[Anniversary Digital Learning Experience](#)**: Free commemorative program that includes a 30-minute film, available on demand, highlighting first-person accounts of the attacks and their aftermath, and a live chat with Museum staff throughout the day. The film will be available beginning Wednesday, September 11, 2024.
- **[Teacher Professional Development](#)**: Workshops and sessions address the challenges of teaching difficult content and explore interdisciplinary connections to your curriculum through Museum tours, hands-on activities, and group discussion.
- **[Primary Resources, Activities, & Lesson Plans](#)**: A diverse slate of free offerings helps learners and educators understand the events of 9/11, the antecedents of the attacks, and their ongoing repercussions. Included is the [9/11 Primer](#), comprised of primary sources, first-person video stories, content-rich video recordings, lesson plans, interactive timelines, and object highlights divided by grade level for use in the classroom.

Contact information

For additional information, please contact the Office of Standards at socialstudies@doe.nj.gov.

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