

Always Remember

Americans Remember the Victims and Heroes of Sept. 11, 2001

Ask most adults, and they'll tell you where they were on Sept. 11, 2001. The morning started like any other in New York City, as people crowded the sidewalks on their way to work. Suddenly, terrifying events began to unfold in the sky above.



Wenn/Newscom

At 8:46 a.m., a passenger jet slammed into one of the twin towers, the two 110-story buildings that were part of the World Trade Center. About 50,000 people worked at the business center. Members of the Islamic terrorist group Al Qaeda had hijacked the plane and deliberately flown it into the building. Minutes after the first crash, an airplane struck the second tower. The fiery explosions toppled the towers in a storm of concrete.



AFP/Getty
Images/Newscom

Panic soon gripped the country as word of a third attack spread. At 9:37 a.m., another hijacked airliner hit the Pentagon, near Washington, D.C. The attackers also tried to take over a fourth plane, but passengers and crew fought back. That aircraft crashed in a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, killing all on board.



Afp/Getty Images

Nearly 3,000 people died on that day. Every year on the anniversary of September 11, remembrance ceremonies are held at the crash sites. On the 10th anniversary, two new memorials to honor those who were lost were opened.

Honoring The Brave

Eighteen-year-old Jason Vadhan was only 8 when his grandmother, Kristin Gould White, boarded United Airlines Flight 93. By the time terrorists took over her plane, the passengers and crew knew of the other attacks. They banded together, determined to protect their country from further harm.



Win McNamee/Reuters
Americans gather to grieve after the attacks.

As the passengers and crew fought the terrorists over a Pennsylvania field, Flight 93 plunged from the sky. Many believe the terrorists intended to crash the plane into the Capitol or the White House, which most likely would have killed hundreds more. Sadly, Vadhan never saw his grandmother again. "I could not be more proud of her," he recently told reporters.

Vadhan's grandmother and the other heroes of Flight 93 are honored for their bravery. On the weekend of the 10th anniversary, officials unveiled the Flight 93 National Memorial at the crash site in Pennsylvania. The memorial includes a marble wall inscribed with the names of the people who died on the flight. It is the centerpiece of a new 2,220-acre national park.



AP Photo/Thomas E. Franklin/The Record
(Bergen Co. NJ)

Officials in New York City also opened a memorial to honor those who died in the attacks on the World Trade Center. The National September 11 Memorial features two reflecting pools where the twin towers stood. The names of those who died are carved around the pools' edges.



Reuters

"The memorial is a powerful symbol of our grief," New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg told *Current Events*. "It is also [to honor] the heroism we witnessed that day."

A Nation United

The 10th anniversary also marked a time to honor the Americans who leaped to help after the attacks. Hundreds of firefighters, police officers, and other rescue workers, many of them volunteers, rushed to the crash sites to aid the victims. Many other people across the country donated blood.



Mike Segar/Landov
This reflecting pool marks
where one of the twin
towers stood.

The U.S. government also took action. U.S. forces invaded the nation of Afghanistan, searching for Osama bin Laden. He was the leader of Al Qaeda, the terrorist network that coordinated the September 11 attacks.

To help make sure such attacks never happen again, lawmakers created the Department of Homeland Security to protect the United States and prevent national emergencies. One of the measures it took was to establish stricter security at airports.



AP Images

The attacks still live in Americans' memories, but many believe that the events of September 11 have made the country stronger.

"Prior to 9/11, I feel that many were not aware of the potential damage that could be inflicted on our country," says Ashley Gilligan, now 27, who was a senior in high school when her father, Ronald, died in the World Trade Center. "I feel that there is a greater sense of unity across our nation. We, the people of the United States, exemplify 'united we stand, together we fall.' "



Reuters

Gilligan says she has managed to let go of the anger she felt immediately after the September 11 attacks. "It took time, but it was well worth it," she says. "I realized that in order to love and be loved, one cannot be paralyzed with anger."

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What happened on September 11, 2001?

- A The National September 11 Memorial and Flight 93 National Memorial opened.
- B Lawmakers created the Department of Homeland Security.
- C U.S. forces invaded the nation of Afghanistan, searching for Osama bin Laden.
- D Terrorists hijacked airplanes and attacked the United States.

2. What does this passage describe?

- A This passage describes the reasons that Ashley Gilligan's father was at the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001.
- B This passage describes what being inside the World Trade Center was like before September 11, 2001.
- C This passage describes the events of September 11, 2001 and some of their effects.
- D This passage describes the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan and the effects of that invasion.

3. The passengers and crew on United Airlines Flight 93 were brave.

What evidence from the passage supports this statement?

- A About 50,000 people worked at the World Trade Center.
- B The passengers and crew on Flight 93 banded together to fight the terrorists.
- C Members of the terrorist group Al Qaeda hijacked a plane and flew it into the Pentagon.
- D Michael Bloomberg called the September 11 Memorial "a powerful symbol of our grief."

4. The author writes that there is now stricter security at airports. What is the most likely reason for the stricter security?

- A Americans are scared in public now.
- B The terrorists used airports to gain access to planes.
- C More international flights are taken today than on September 11.
- D A memorial was built to honor the passengers and crew of United Airlines Flight 93.

5. What is this passage mostly about?

- A the events that led up to the September 11 attacks
- B the increasing violence in the news and the effect that news has on people
- C the heroism of the passengers and crew of United Airlines Flight 93
- D terrorist attacks on September 11 and the effects of those attacks

6. Read the sentence: "Panic soon **gripped** the country as word of a third attack **spread**."

What words would best replace **gripped** and **spread** as used in this sentence?

- A held on to; swelled
- B took over; was shared
- C confused; increased
- D worried; took over

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

U.S. forces invaded the nation of Afghanistan, searching for Osama bin Laden _____ he was the leader of the network that organized the attacks.

- A because
- B in contrast
- C although
- D therefore

8. Why was the Department of Homeland Security created?

9. How does Ashley Gilligan believe that the United States has changed since September 11?

10. Have the events of September 11 made the United States stronger? Use evidence from the passage to explain why or why not.

Teacher Guide & Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 1010

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8. Why was the Department of Homeland Security created?

Suggested answer: The Department of Homeland Security was created to protect the United States and prevent national emergencies. (Students may also respond that the Department of Homeland Security was created to make sure that attacks like those on September 11, 2001 never happen again.)

9. How does Ashley Gilligan believe that the United States has changed since September 11?

Suggested answer: Students may identify either or both of the two points Gilligan makes about post-9/11 change in the United States. She explicitly states that there seems to be a greater sense of unity in the country after the attacks. She also says that before 9/11, many people were not aware of the damage that could be inflicted on the United States. From this statement, students may infer that people are now, in her opinion, more sensitive to the vulnerability of the United States.

10. Have the events of September 11 made the United States stronger? Use evidence from the passage to explain why or why not.

Suggested answer: Answers may vary, as long as they are supported by evidence from the passage. Students arguing that the events of September 11 have made the United States stronger may point to such evidence as the creation of the Department of Homeland Security and the greater sense of national unity that Ashley Gilligan observes. Students arguing that the events of September 11 have not made the United States stronger may point to such evidence as the newfound sense of American vulnerability noted by Gilligan.