



The 9/11 Commission Report

Grades 9-12

9/11 Lesson Plans

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The 9/11 Commission Report

Unit V: Challenges and Consequences

Grade Level Range: 9-12

Time: 45-60 minutes

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As you prepare to teach this lesson, be sensitive to the topic and how it may affect students, at any age. Even if a student was very young or not born yet, they may know about the events of the day from their families.

1. Ask if any students or their family members know people who were directly or indirectly affected by the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.
2. Give students the option of observing or not participating at all, if they wish.
3. Allow students to talk about their personal connection to 9/11 if they want to.
4. Indicate to the entire class that talking about 9/11 and thinking about the events of that day may cause people to experience different kinds of emotions. This is not unusual.
5. Encourage students to tell their families about the lesson.
6. Remember to be aware of your own reactions or thoughts.

Objective

At the conclusion of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand the key findings of the 9/11 Commission Report.
2. Compare the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission with the legislation that implemented many of them.

Materials

Executive Summary of the 9/11 Commission Report, http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/911/report/911Report_Exec.pdf

Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 codified into law many of the 9/11 Commission recommendations, <http://hsc-democrats.house.gov/SiteDocuments/20070727182653-51415.pdf>

Background for Teachers

The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, also known as the 9/11 Commission, was set up on November 27, 2002 "to prepare a full and complete account of the circumstances surrounding the September 11, 2001 attacks," including preparedness for and the immediate response to the attacks.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/President_of_the_United_States

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_W._Bush

The commission was also mandated to provide recommendations designed to guard against future attacks. Chaired by former New Jersey Governor Thomas Kean, the commission consisted of five Democrats and five Republicans. The commission was created by Congressional legislation, with the bill signed into law by George W. Bush. The 9/11 Commission Report is 576 pages. It outlines the intelligence that was gathered on Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda, as well as U.S. responses to this intelligence. The conclusions in the report urge real changes on how American intelligence services, such as the F.B.I. and C.I.A. function and coordinate their missions.

The full report may be viewed at <http://www.9-11commission.gov/report/index.html>.

Activities/Procedures

- A. Introduce the origins of the 9/11 Commission and its subsequent conclusions about the events leading to 9/11.
- B. Students will review the Executive Summary of the 9/11 Commission Report and the legislation that implemented some of the recommendations and answer these critical thinking questions:
 - In your opinion, what were three key weaknesses cited in the 9/11 Commission Report that contributed to the success of the 9/11 terrorist attacks? Explain.
 - Give five examples on how we are safer and five examples of how we are not safer.
 - Of the recommendations that were implemented, which do you think has contributed the most to a safer homeland? Explain.
 - What remains to be done to improve the security of the U.S.?
- C. Students should discuss their responses to the questions and share comments on the 9/11 Commission Report. Discussion questions should focus on the following:
 - What weaknesses did the US have that were exploited by the terrorists on 9/11?
 - Is there anyway to know if 9/11 could have been prevented?
- D. Concluding activity: Students should write an essay or participate in a discussion with their peers on the following question:
 - Is the U.S. safer since enacting many of the 9/11 Commission Report recommendations?

Evidence for Understanding

Essay response:

Is the U.S. safer since enacting many of the 9/11 Commission Report recommendations?

Extension Activities: Taking Action and Giving Service

1. Students may explore Trail of a Terrorist, from PBS Frontline, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/trail/>, for information on the foiled Millennium Plot, one of the events cited in the 9/11 Commission Report.
2. Students will select a recommendation in Chapter 12: What to Do? and write about it for younger students.
 - These can be presented to students in lower grades as part of a September 11 Commemoration
 - Choose a recommendation that has not been codified and write a letter to a legislator on why it needs further action.
 - Identify other government commissions or documents that have been produced in the aftermath of an event. What positive changes have emerged as a result?

Acknowledgments

This lesson plan was provided by The 4 Action Initiative, a joint project of Families of September 11, the New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education and Liberty Science Center. The 4 Action Initiative curriculum includes seven units of lessons in multiple subject areas for grades K-12. In September 2010, the lesson plans will be released to New Jersey educators through the New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education. The 4 Action Initiative will make the entire curriculum nationwide. For tips on how to approach the teaching of sensitive subjects, please visit us at <https://sites.google.com/site/the4actioninitiative/>.