



History

Enquiry 1: What made 9/11 so shocking?

This opening history enquiry builds knowledge of what actually happened on 9/11, how different people were affected and what issues have been raised by the attacks.

Enquiry overview

The first parts of the enquiry move from some work with sources into building a chronological grasp of the events of the day. The pupils decide what they would include if they were to make an interactive timeline of the day's events.

The next stage uses the **Interactive timeline** to reflect on the detailed experiences of people. Pupils pick out what was shocking and why as events unfolded. They plot these as "shockwaves" on a diagram.

In the final stage, pupils analyse the timeline and the "shocks" to identify questions that people would have asked during the day. This leads to the final task in which they advise a television company on who, from a given list, should be the four expert guests to take part in a special panel discussion to be broadcast in the UK in the late evening of 11 September 2001. The programme is to be called "The shock of 9/11".

The enquiry is divided into different stages rather than individual lessons. This ensures greater flexibility for teachers and takes account of the significant differences that exist in the length of lessons from school to school.

National Curriculum links

History

This enquiry links to the KS3 history programme of study by helping students to know and understand:

- significant aspects of the wider world (beyond Britain)
- the changing nature of conflict and cooperation
- diverse experiences and ideas, beliefs and attitudes and how these have shaped the world.

This enquiry develops the students' ability to:

- identify and investigate specific historical questions or issues, making and testing hypotheses
- identify, select and use a range of historical sources, including textual, visual and oral sources, artefacts and the historic environment
- communicate their knowledge and understanding of history in a variety of ways, using chronological conventions and historical vocabulary.

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History Enquiry 1: What made 9/11 so shocking? – Cont.

Key Stage 4

Although this enquiry is designed for use in KS3, it is possible to adjust both the content and activities for use at GCSE (for example, as part of OCR's GCSE History A (9-1) Explaining the Modern World - International Relations: Changing International Order 1918-2001). Many of the activities in the enquiry are open-ended and could be used to elicit a wider and more sophisticated range of responses from the students. You could provide the students with more scope to carry out their own research into the events of 9/11, give them access to more challenging resources, and ask them to assess the significance of 9/11 against a broader historical context.

Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales

These materials can be easily adapted to fit the different curriculum requirements for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Northern Ireland Curriculum

www.nicurriculum.org.uk

Education Scotland – Curriculum for Excellence

<https://education.gov.scot/curriculum-for-excellence/>

Welsh Government school curriculum for Wales

<https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/>

Cross-curricular links

There are opportunities through this topic to make links to some of the other subject topics, particularly the following:

- **English – Breaking news: How was 9/11 represented in the media and other accounts?**

Students are asked to consider why 9/11 received so much media attention. This links well to aspects of historical significance, and can help to prepare news reports summarising the actual events of 9/11. In addition, some of the proposed activities help to develop aspects of the following generic skills, previously defined as Personal Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTS): team workers, independent enquirers, and creative thinkers.

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History Enquiry 1: What made 9/11 so shocking? – Cont.

Lessons

Stage 1a: What happened when on 9/11?

Lesson objectives:

- To define 'terrorism' and identify what terrorism looks like
- To analyse who decides and determines what terrorism is
- To explore different extreme actions and differentiate between terrorism, criminality and activism

Recommended resources

On SINCE 9/11 website

[Artefacts](#) (PowerPoint)

Prepare the activity by downloading the **Artefacts** PowerPoint and putting it on the screen for all students to see.

Before mentioning that the class is about to study 9/11, show the students the cash receipt from the café at the World Trade Center (Slide 1). This is the hook to the enquiry, and the aim is to get the students to use a series of questions (Slide 2) to work out what they can about the story behind this apparently everyday object/document. Ask the students to work quietly in pairs, writing down what they have decided and not giving away their ideas. Then show them some other artefacts (Slides 3, 4 and 5) and ask them to consider how these are connected with the first document. Only at the end should you ask the students to share their findings with other pairs. By this time the students should have worked out that these are all relics from 9/11 at the World Trade Center.

Go on to show the class Slide 6, which explains the story behind the receipt. Use this to prompt a discussion on what the class already knows about 9/11. After the discussion, stress that 9/11 was a day full of extraordinary twists and turns and shocks. An ordinary day turned into one of the most shocking in US history. Ordinary objects became extraordinary evidence of the day.

Tell the students that their main enquiry question is What made 9/11 so shocking? but that their first task is to sort out the sequence of events to find out what actually happened when on 9/11. This opening activity is intended to capture the students' interest in 9/11 and to exemplify the shocking nature of the events of that day.

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History Enquiry 1: What made 9/11 so shocking? – Cont.

Stage 1b: What happened when on 9/11?

(Creating a timeline of the events of the day of 9/11)

Recommended resources

On SINCE 9/11 website

[Timeline creator](#) (Excel)

Links to other websites

Information about the attacks:

- Wikipedia – September 11 attacks http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/September_11_attacks
- Wikipedia – United Airlines Flight 11 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Airlines_Flight_11
- Wikipedia – United Airlines Flight 175 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Airlines_Flight_175
- Wikipedia – United Airlines Flight 77 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Airlines_Flight_77
- Wikipedia – United Airlines Flight 93 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Airlines_Flight_93

Information about the attacks:

- 9/11 Memorial <https://timeline.911memorial.org/timeline/10681>
- CNN <http://edition.cnn.com/2001/US/09/11/chronology.attack/index.html>
- CNN YouTube video - Look back at how September 11 unfolded https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D60Qnpl_xH4

Organise the students into small groups; tell them that their next task will be to produce a timeline that will help teach others about 9/11. Your students should imagine that the timeline will be used in a newspaper or website; it must therefore be accurate, objective and easy to understand.

Give an overview of the events of the day of 9/11 using the CNN video on YouTube (checking in advance it is appropriate for your students) and then ask the student groups to start thinking about their own timelines.

Use Timeline creator (Excel) as the basis for the task, which contains a list of events that can be ordered by students. The Timeline creator can be used on a computer or as a hard copy, with events ordered in sequence or by theme. If necessary, you can cut some details to suit the class.

Devise criteria with the class for what would make a good interactive timeline for a history website about 9/11:

- Roughly how many events?
- What timescale?
- How many images?
- How big can the images be?
- Should it include video/audio clips?

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History Enquiry 1: What made 9/11 so shocking? – Cont.

Remind the students that their timelines must make clear what happened on the day itself and only include the most important moments in the day. The choice of clips and images will work well enough if you limit pupils to selecting from the Wikipedia sites listed in the recommended resources, but you may wish to provide others.

You can vary the challenge by asking some students to make a very detailed timeline while others produce a much simpler one. Or the groups can work on different parts of the timeline. Students should work in pairs or small groups to create their timelines. A number of formats are appropriate, and you/they can decide which format to use. E.g. sugar paper (with times of the day, events and links sources indicated); on the computer; annotating a printout of the spreadsheet, which is stuck to a larger sheet to allow room for notes.

Whatever approach is used, they have to decide...

What events should they keep/reject?

What should be kept but shortened? How?

What images and audio/video links could be included alongside the timeline?

They must be able to justify their choices by the criteria you agreed with them. As they work, check that they are building knowledge of the events of the day. Before (as a model) or after (to reinforce learning) making their timelines, let them see some examples of existing ones, e.g. those listed in the recommended resources section in this document. Make sure there is also time for the groups to compare each other's timelines.

Stage 2: How did the shockwaves spread?

The aim of this session is to build up the students' detailed knowledge and understanding of the events of the day and to provide the opportunity for them to carry out their own research. By making them identify the key events for themselves and justify their choices, they focus on what was significant, and the shocking nature of the events of that day is reinforced.

Recommended resources

On SINCE 9/11 website

[Shockwave](#) (PowerPoint)

[9/11 Timeline](#)

Links to other websites

- Wikipedia – Casualties of the September 11 attacks

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casualties_of_the_September_11_attacks

- CNN YouTube video - Look back at how September 11 unfolded

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D60Qnpl_xH4

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History Enquiry 1: What made 9/11 so shocking? – Cont.

Link back to the timelines pupils made and establish that the day was full of one shock after another. These shocks hit different people in different ways at different times.

Organise the students into small groups and give each group a large copy of Slide 1 from the **Shockwave** PowerPoint – make sure you also have one displayed at the front of the class. Show the class a short video summary of the 9/11 day's events (see **Recommended resources** for a link to a CNN News summary), which you could reveal bit by bit. At each interval, the students consider as many relevant examples as they can of **WHO** was shocked and **WHY**, and they write these out on sticky notes and place these within the relevant time periods on their shockwave diagrams. To start the students off, use an example for "Wave 1" – "Passengers on Flight 11 see hijackers take over", and show how it goes in the innermost circle. Also help the students to identify different types of people who may have been affected, either directly or by TV coverage, phone calls, etc. as they look at each time period. For the time period "Soon after 9/11", show the students Slide 2 of the **Shockwave** PowerPoint; this provides additional information that emerged after 9/11.

Using the **Interactive timeline** on the website along with their own timelines from the previous lesson, the students could add to their shockwave diagram extra examples of who was shocked; this will help them to gain a detailed picture of those affected.

This exercise enables the students to get to the heart of the enquiry question and begin to understand the depth and breadth of shock caused by the events of 9/11 and its immediate aftermath. By looking at the events through the experiences of different people, the students are able to relate much more closely to the impact of 9/11.

Stage 3: What was so different about the 9/11 terror attacks?

Recommended resources

Links to other websites

- Wikipedia – List of terrorist incidents https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_terrorist_incidents
- Infoplease – Terrorist Attacks in the U.S. or Against Americans www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0001454.html (This has a list of terror attacks against the USA, showing how attacks on US territory were extremely rare).
- List of worst terrorist attacks worldwide: 100 or more fatalities <http://www.johnstonsarchive.net/terrorism/wrjp394.html> (This shows the range and scale of terror attacks that have killed 100+ lives).
- Video of time lapse map showing terrorist attacks worldwide since 2000 <http://brilliantmaps.com/terrorism-world-map/>

It is very important that students understand how much more prevalent acts of terrorism have become in recent years. They should not emerge from this study believing that 9/11 was the only significant act of terrorism. However, students also need to appreciate why the 9/11 attacks were so shocking at the time and remain so, despite what has happened since 2001.

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At some point you may wish to use **Wikipedia – List of terror incidents** to make this clear (see **Recommended resources**). There is no need for detailed work to be done on this, but simply scrolling down the very long list for one year then one or two others should establish the point.

Students need to understand that the 9/11 attacks were particularly shocking because:

- They were extremely rare in US history. The USA had hardly ever experienced terror attacks at home from external groups. Compared with many parts of the world, it had not suffered much in the way of direct attacks even during World War II and the long Cold War against the Soviet Union. The **Infoplease** website (see **Recommended resources**) has a list of terror attacks against the USA, showing how attacks on US territory were extremely rare.
- They were on such a large scale, i.e. they were measured crudely in terms of the number of deaths on that one day. Estimates of those who died on the actual day reached 20,000 or more. The final figure was 2,976. Use the **list of worst terrorist attacks** (see **Recommended resources**) to show how this compares to other attacks around the world.
- They were watched by billions on television.

Stage 4: End product: What questions were raised by 9/11 - and who should try to answer them?

Recommended resources

On SINCE 9/11 website

[Experts invitation list](#) (Word)

Link back to the Shockwave task (Stage 2). Suggest that the day must have raised thousands of questions as people lived through the horror. Give the class (working in groups) more sticky notes but of a different colour from those used to record shocks on the chart. This time they must use the shockwave chart and their own ideas to write down all sorts of questions that must have passed through people's minds on 9/11. They must place these next to the shock that they think would have prompted the question. These can reflect anything from "How can I get out of this building?" to "How can anyone believe in God when events like this can happen?". Encourage free – but respectful – thinking.

This task cannot be tied down to generating purely historical questions although you can give some specific time for this at the end if you think it will help. You could ask groups to sort their questions into groups with a common theme, e.g. religion; why did 9/11 happen?; why me?; national/global security; safety of high-rise buildings, etc. This links to the next task.

Tell the students that they are now in role as advisers for a UK television company that is trying to set up a major discussion programme to take place late in the evening of 9 September 2001. It will be called "The shock of 9/11". The producer has called them in to decide which four experts, from a list she has drawn up, should be invited onto a panel to answer questions from an audience.

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The Experts invitation list (Word) shows a possible list of experts that can be adapted. It is set out as a table for the students to record their reasons for/against each one. You can ask all the students to consider all or some of the experts, or even put some in role as the experts who must say how they can try to answer questions that people are asking.

Compare the decisions of different groups. Is the class as a whole able to agree on a suitable panel of experts after discussion?

Round off this activity by saying that although different experts are needed to deal with the immediate shocks of events like 9/11, we must turn to history if we want to get to the roots of the issues. This sets the scene for the next history enquiry, which examines the causes of 9/11.

Finally, return to the original enquiry question – What made 9/11 so shocking? – and ask the class to draw on what they have learnt to come up with a definitive list of factors.

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