

## 9/11 Front Page Lesson Plan Michael T. Watson, Mulberry Middle School

### I. Lesson Plan Summary

**a. Lesson Summary**-This specific activity was created with the intent of familiarizing the students with many of the details of the terrorist attacks of 9-11, hopefully more so than the information provided in the *Call to Freedom* textbook. The students will be expected to create a newspaper front page illustrating 3-4 facets of the attacks faced by the United States on that September morning. Keeping in mind that the attacks occurred nearly 8.5 years from the publication of this lesson, it will be surprising how little knowledge/recollection some of the students will have of this event. This activity will incorporate a number of skills for the students including working in cooperative groups, conducting research, individual & group planning, planning of writing, followed by the writing process of different "articles" by the students in the groups. Some of these articles will be fact based *while others may be informed opinion* in the style of newspaper editorials. Finally, the groups will complete the activity by putting their 9/11 Front Page together. Several skills will be practiced during this lesson and hopefully some of the groups will create some fantastic work samples.

**b. Objectives**-The subject of research applies to the more contemporary history of our nation and it will require research, analysis, and a sense of immediacy with the subject...the unit that this activity supports within the Polk County, Florida curriculum map is the "**Conservative Movement and Contemporary History**" and it will support the specific concept of "**compassionate conservatism and contemporary issues**". Standards that apply are: **SS.D.1.4.1 SS.C.1.4.4 SS.A.5.4.8**

**c. Event/Time Period**-As previously mentioned, the event is the series of terrorist attacks of 9/11 in 2001.

**d. Grade level**-This activity is more geared towards the High School level as it may require higher levels of research, group interaction, and informative/creative writing. But it could certainly be modified for the Middle School levels by utilizing stricter guidelines according to the instructor's judgment and possibly the utilization of a simpler grading rubric/scale.

**e. Materials needed-**

1. Access to a Computer Lab for research purposes.
2. Proper Poster Materials/construction Paper...unless the instructor decides to place this responsibility on the students themselves.
3. Facsimiles of images from 9/11, possibly some front pages that might be located from libraries, personal collections, etc.
4. Video footage of the 9/11 attacks. I utilize the CNN Tribute: America Remembers DVD and I will show chapters 1 through 6 followed by class discussion to initiate this activity. United Streaming may be another source of film clips or a variety of other DVD sources that can be used within the classroom.

**f. Lesson Time**-This lesson can vary between two 45 minute periods or be extended for an entire week. If the instructor chooses to have the students complete their projects/research at home, then class time can be conserved.

### II. Lesson Procedures

**a. Day One:** First, the teacher will explain the ultimate goal of this activity so that the students can view the video with an understanding of their ultimate goal. The teacher will show the video/DVD or conduct a class reading spotlighting the events of September 11th, 2001. I do not assign the students any questions to answer during the video as they have always been very focused during the viewing of the documentary footage. I will frequently stop the DVD that I use and ask question, make observations, gauge student reactions, etc.

**b. Day Two:** Assigning of groups, 4 to 5 people to a group. A very clear statement about the expectations by the teacher of the students and the need for all members of the group to participate. To this end, I would assign a team leader and instruct each team to assign certain roles to the members. I would say that every member is responsible for creating at least one Headline article of 3-5 paragraphs. This way, every member will be required to conduct some research in the computer lab and actually create something of their own.

**c. Day Three:** Computer Research by the students on the events of 9/11. This is a day for the students to work individually to research material for their individual articles. However, if it is possible, depending on the set up of the computer lab, it may be best to seat the students with their groups so that they may collaborate with each other about the direction of their research.

**d. Day Four:** Writing process by the students. With the research that they have created, the groups can begin to create their different "articles" about the events of the day. I let them know that creativity added with the facts will help to make a better "read". Interviews with surviving firefighters, police officers, reports of the last phone calls from people inside the Twin Towers or Flight 93, speculation as to who the mastermind was and why they caused this day of terror, etc. Since this project is to develop a Front Page they should be aware that their "articles" only need to run maybe 3-5 paragraphs. Remembering that enough room needs to be left of the Front Page for images of the events and Headlines can sometimes be difficult for the students. (Author's note: If it is at all possible, I would try to include the Language Arts teacher in this process. For me, that would be an easy option since the school that I work at utilizes grade level teams.)

**e. Day Five:** Final editing and processing of the Front Pages. In some instances, a team member's article may not be included in the final copy of the Front Page, left on the cutting floor, so to speak. I allow for this realizing that you can only have so many articles occupying the Front Page of a newspaper. Nonetheless, the student whose article is cut will still receive credit based on their work effort even if their article had to be placed on "Page 2", the unseen backside of the Project.

### III. Activities

**Day One:** Viewing the video/class reading & group discussion  
The purpose is to provide a basic understanding to the events of 9/11

Day Two: Group Assignments  
Assign or allow the students to form their groups and discuss the roles of each person along with planning for the direction of their research.

**Day Three:** Computer Research

Utilizing classroom/schoolwide technology, the students will have the opportunity to explore the events on an individual basis. I use this day's activity as somewhat of a participation grade. Either provide the students with a specific note taking handout or require the students to take notes on their own paper during this time at the computer stations. Towards the last ten minutes of class go to each student to check their notes to see if they have used their time at the computers to their fullest advantage. This grade would be equivalent to a daily classroom assignment.

**Day Four:** The Writing Process of the individual articles

Each student will be required to submit an "article" of 3-5 paragraphs. They should begin by creating a "planning" guide to provide direction to the creation of their article. This part of the project will serve as the major individual grade and since it is a writing assignment I would allow students to complete their "article" at home if it is necessary. The constant reminder for the students is that the project will be created by the last day; a newspaper "deadline" if you will.

**Day Five:** Editing and Processing of the final edition of the 9/11 Frontpage. The groups will actually plan and put together the Frontpage, with headlines, pictures, and articles.

## IV. Assessment

**Assignment Grade #1:** Individual Grade/Student participation during the Day Three:

Computer Research activity. Instruct the students to take notes on their specific focus of research (efforts of firefighters to save people, frantic calls by people trapped in the Twin Towers, etc.) to write the 3-5 paragraph article. They should take at least 15-20 notes of information in the computer lab. This assignment grade is based on completion of the assigned task.

**Assignment Grade #2:** Individual Grade/Student Article:

The article is graded by the following measures:

- a. Completed on time
- b. Completed with the required length, 3-5 paragraphs, of information.
- c. On Topic and Informative
- d. The use of quotes by witnesses/participants

**Author's note:** This grade will count with the same overall weight as the actual Group Project Grade (Grade #3 below) so that the individual student will earn a proper grade based on the merit of their individual efforts.

**Assignment Grade #3:** Group Project/9/11 Headline:

The headline is graded by these basic measures:

- a. Completed on time...although if it is obvious that a group is working hard but they still need a little extra time, allow a small extension (accommodation) if you will.
- b. Neatness and Overall Quality of the Newspaper FrontPage.
- c. Attractiveness...Is the FrontPage engaging? Does it attract the viewer at the newsstand? This includes the consideration of the use of appropriate images and catchy headlines.

The articles themselves are to be graded on an individual basis.

## V. Resources

**a. CNN Tribute: America Remembers DVD**...as mentioned earlier, this is a DVD that I find useful but the amount of resources are tremendous and every teacher may find other reading or video/DVD's more to their liking.

**b. Copies of 9/11 FrontPages from newspapers of the day**...This may be somewhat difficult to locate. Museums or libraries may be of some help.

**c. There are a number of Websites** that have collections of 9/11 FrontPages that the students can view for some guidance during the planning of their own FrontPages. Following are a few of these Websites:

[http://www.newseum.org/todaysfrontpages/default\\_archive.asp?fpArchive=091201](http://www.newseum.org/todaysfrontpages/default_archive.asp?fpArchive=091201)

<http://www.poynterextra.org/extra/Gallery2002/Newspaper57.htm>

<http://www.september11news.com/USANewspapers.htm>

Or you can simply search for 9/11 FrontPages to discover a plethora of other likely sites for research.