

Unit IV: 9/11, A Case Study in Contemporary Terrorism

Grade Levels: 9 - 12

Time: 2-4 classes

Lesson HIV-11: Interviews and Personal Stories

Objective:

Students will interview a survivor, emergency care worker, first responder, etc. or search the internet for personal stories from 9/11. They will gather information and share their chosen story with the class. Students will select a person and his/her story to put a face on the events of 9/11 and to identify on a personal level with those who experienced that day in New York City.

Materials:

Interview form

Interview release form

Interview sample questions

Interview questions written by students

Internet stories from 9/11. <http://www.nabe.com/am2001/fishmankiss.htm>

<http://www.nabe.com/am2001/bergman.htm>

There are many stories and videos of survivor stories to be found on the internet. The history channel site (<http://www.history.com/content/9-11>) has a whole section devoted to 9/11 that is very well done providing photos, interviews, etc. regarding NYC, the Pentagon, and Shanksville, PA. Also, there is the video production, 102 Minutes That Changed America. This is only one suggestion of the many valuable sites available. (The video is on the site.)

Internet videos of survivors' stories from 9/11

Activities/Procedures:

1. Introduce the idea of collecting stories through interviews or research of sources on the internet.
2. Students will research and select an area they wish to concentrate on (survivor, firemen, police, EMTs, first responders, survivors, rescue dog handlers, etc.).
3. Students will research information about the category they selected. They will develop questions for this category.
4. Students will refine these questions for their interview in groups and get group feedback on their list of questions.
5. Students will partner with a fellow student and practice interviewing using their questions with their partner to further refine these questions and to add any new questions.
6. Students will interview their person using the guidelines for an interview and the questions they have developed, refined and practiced. They have based these questions on their research and their knowledge of their person and his/her experiences in the events of the day.
7. Students are to remember the release form for the person to read and sign.
8. Students will prepare an oral presentation from their interview to share the information and the experiences with their classmates.
9. They will write their person's story in one of the following formats: story, journalistic report, interview format (interviewer's question, then narrator's answer).

Evidence of Understanding

Formative:

Students will give an overview of the person they researched/interviewed and the method they used to gather information about this person.

Teacher will assess group work throughout the lesson.

Summative:

Students will be evaluated on the oral report, which they have prepared from the person they interviewed, telling his role and story as well as his insights. This may also include pictures, news reports, quotes their person shared in telling his story, and background information.

Extension Activities: Taking Action and Giving Service:

Students may want to use the articles, interviews and stories they have written and put them into a booklet of their collected writings for the class as a record of the personal stories, the people and the events of 9/11 to which they had a connection through their project.

A service project in honor of someone who died on 9/11 can be a living memorial. Visit 9/11: Day of Service (<http://911dayofservice.org>) to volunteer service as a living memorial to a person or all those who perished on 9/11. OR Plan a service project in memory of someone special to the student as a living memorial to their life.

Interview Suggestions:

1. Learn all you can about the subject and the particular area you are researching, i.e. emergency worker, first responder, survivor, etc.
2. Conduct a pre-interview to gather biographical information about the person to be interviewed, establish rapport with that person and identify interview topics.
3. Based on the pre-interview and your research, develop questions and a sequence for asking these questions.
4. Select a comfortable location for the person being interviewed.
5. The interviewer should arrive on time and introduce himself/herself and state why the interview is being conducted.
6. The interviewer should set up a tape recorder (with the permission of the interviewee) so that both parties can be recorded.
7. Ask the interviewee if he/she is ready to begin and, if yes, start the interview.
8. State the name of the person being interviewed, the name of the person conducting the interview, the topic, the place, date and time of the interview first.
9. Begin the interview with a few simple, open-ended questions that the person being interviewed can answer easily and that will put her/him at ease.
10. Ask many open-ended questions so that the person will find it easier to tell her/his story rather than give brief yes or no answers.
11. Speak clearly so that the narrator can hear and understand you easily.
12. Do not rush the narrator. Silence can be productive. Time to think will give the narrator a chance to recall incidents and details. Try to pause at least 10 seconds before asking the next question after an answer.
13. Be well-prepared but do not limit the interview to the prepared questions. Engage in active listening.
 - Always listen to the narrator's response and ask a follow-up question if it will provide more information.
 - If a thought shared is a sad or painful memory, respond by pausing for a moment. Follow this suggestion out of sensitivity, giving recognition to the story just shared before moving on to the next question.
 - To bring out more detail and description, always ask follow-up questions when the information given mentions a significant event.
14. Feel free to ask challenging but respectful questions.
15. Never challenge or correct a narrator. They are recounting their memories as best as they can.

16. Props such as pictures, scrapbooks, newspaper clippings, maps, etc can be used during the interview to jog the narrator's memory and bring out more stories and details.
17. Have a good closing question to summarize or end the interview.
18. Always thank the person you interviewed for her/his time and for sharing her/his memories and experiences.
19. Have the narrator sign and date a prepared interview release form that gives the person who conducted the interview permission to use the information for educational purposes. (See attached form.)
20. Write a personal thank-you note to the narrator. Mail it within a week of the interview.

NOTE:

Be sure to have an introduction for the interview stating who the person is and what role he/she played in the events of 9/11 or what the narrator witnessed and/or experienced.

Interview Suggestions:

1. What was your job?
2. Why were you there?
3. What did you see?
4. What happened to you, specifically?
5. What was it like for others you saw?
6. Any specific incident that you remember that you would like to elaborate with details?
7. What was your immediate response to the events around you?
8. When and how did you learn exactly what was happening that day?
9. What happened to you in the first days after 9/11?
10. Any reaction to the events of the day that you can share with us today?