



## 9/11: A Nation Remembers Classroom Activity

### Author:

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### About this Lesson

The events of September 11, 2001, changed our nation forever. Students in grades 7-12 are old enough to remember the events of this historic day. This guide is designed to help students consider the idea of memory in connection to the events of September 11. The activities included are presented in three parts: a warm-up activity, introducing students to the ideas presented in the exhibit; a main activity, designed to provide the students with the tools to be critical viewers of the exhibit; and an assessment activity, where students connect the information collected in the previous two sections, creating new understandings of important historical events and how art is used to memorialize them.

The activity begins with students considering the images they remember of the day, and then work collaboratively as a group to define the ideas of memorials and symbols. Then, students will practice a primary source analytical technique using images of art and memorials from the National Constitution Center's exhibit, **9/11: A Nation Remembers**. Afterwards, students will then explore American's social and cultural responses to the consequences of 9/11 through Jonathan Hyman's photograph collection of 9/11 art and memorials at Duke University's [\*Flesh & Metal, Bodies & Buildings: Works from Jonathan Hyman's Archive of 9/11 Vernacular Memorials\*](#). The assessment activity calls for students to create their own art that memorializes the places, ideas, and people impacted by 9/11.

## Grade(s) Level

7-12

## Classroom Time

### Warm-Up Activity

30 minutes

### Main Activity

30 minutes

### Assessment Visit

30 minutes

## Handouts

- Practice Exhibit Photo, "7th Avenue Tile Memorial Detail"
- Student Analysis Worksheet: Warm-up Activity
- Student Analysis Worksheet

## Exhibit Background

While art movements encompass general themes situated in a particular historical era, specific traumatic events can often spark social and cultural responses that provide an additional lens into understanding the psyche of a country. To commemorate the fifth anniversary of 9/11, the National Constitution Center presented an exhibition of original photographs by Jonathan Hyman, documenting how the American people responded to and remember the events of September 11th. Few events in American history have elicited the outpouring of public displays of emotion provoked by the September 11th attacks. Over the past five years, photographer Jonathan Hyman has traveled the country photographing the roadside displays, murals, and personal memorials created by Americans in response to September 11th. Hyman's photographs of this new American folk-art pay tribute to those who died and movingly depict a country coming to grips with a national tragedy. This exhibit has been made available on-line for free by Duke University.

### A NOTE TO TEACHERS

The Center's Education staff believes that the exhibition is appropriate for students from grades 7 and up. The exhibition focuses not on the attacks themselves (there are no photographs of Ground Zero) but on the public memorials created across the American landscape in the days, months, and years after the attacks.

## Objectives

Students will:

- Identify prior knowledge and images associated with September 11<sup>th</sup>.
- Define memorial and the use of symbols in the creation of memorials.
- Analyze photographs in the museum exhibit.
- Construct new knowledge, by creating a personal memorial using information collected.

## Warm-Up Activity

*15-30 minutes in classroom*

This Classroom Activity is based on the two-sided **Student Analysis Worksheet**. Each student should have his or her own copy of the sheet; it is recommended that the sheet be photocopied on two-sides, allowing students to have access to all the information.

- Using the first section of the Warm-up Activity side of the sheet, ask students to list the first three images that come to mind when they think of September 11<sup>th</sup>. After students have prepared their lists, encourage them to write a few sentences explaining why those images are meaningful to them.
- After students had enough time to brainstorm, lead a guided discussion, asking students to consider the following:
  - Describe a piece of art work or memorial you found.
    - What did it look like? (Color, images, materials)
    - Where was it?
  - What symbols are used?
  - Why do you think they were used?
  - What types of emotions do you think these symbols represent?
- The final section of the Warm-up Activity introduces students to the analysis of photographs from a former exhibit at the National Constitution Center, **9/11: A Nation Remembers**, using the photograph “7th Avenue Tile Memorial Detail” as an example. Display the photo in the front of the classroom, or photocopy for students to carefully examine. Working independently students should complete the missing sections. Upon completion, encourage students to share their observations with the class.

## Main Activity

*20-30 minutes in the classroom*

- Students will now investigate Jonathan Hyman's photograph collection of 9/11 art and memorials at Duke University's [Flesh & Metal, Bodies & Buildings: Works from Jonathan Hyman's Archive of 9/11 Vernacular Memorials](#). Have students explore this on-line exhibit and select four images to analyze, using the **Student Analysis Worksheet II**.

## Assessment Activity

*20-30 minutes in the classroom*

- Students should review both sides of their complete worksheet. Encourage students to share their findings with one another. Once students have had an opportunity to share their work, instruct them to use the information gained to create a new memorial. You can use the following options as a means of assessment and concluding activity:
  - Either in small groups or in a full class discussion, students should share the images they found and their analysis. To bring closure to this discussion, the instruction could ask the following questions:
    - What common symbols did you notice?
    - What common emotions were expressed in the art and memorials?
    - In what other ways are art and memorials that reflect traumatic events useful?
    - What other ways can people memorialize experiences that are important?
  - Ask students to design a memorial for September 11<sup>th</sup> using symbols they collected both before the exhibit and at the exhibit. Students can construct their memorial using the guidelines in the "Add to our Exhibit" box below. Once the memorials are designed, encourage students to use the photograph analysis model to examine one another's designs.
  - Ask students to write a reflection essay examining how the images they associate with September 11<sup>th</sup> have changed or been reinforced after this activity.
  - Working as a whole class, create a group memorial representing the views of all the students in the classroom. Once completed ask students to use the photograph analysis model to examine what they created.





# Student Analysis Worksheet

## Warm-Up Activity



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### First Impressions

1.

2.

3.



### Definitions

Memorial-

Symbol-

### Photograph Analysis

Name of Photograph: 7th Avenue Tile Memorial Detail

Date: 2004 Location: Manhattan, New York

Describe the Image: \_\_\_\_\_

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List Symbols in the Image:

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# Student Analysis Worksheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



## Photograph Analysis #1

Name of Photograph: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the Image: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

List Symbols in the Image:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Photograph Analysis #2

Name of Photograph: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the Image: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

List Symbols in the Image:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Photograph Analysis #3

Name of Photograph: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the Image: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

List Symbols in the Image:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Photograph Analysis #4

Name of Photograph: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the Image: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

List Symbols in the Image:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

