Loss and response after September 11

September 11, 2001 | Grade 8 · Analyze & connect

Teacher note: this topic includes loss, violence, discrimination, or criminal allegations. Preview and choose a suitable reading together. No reenactment of harm is needed.

Words to know

loss — no longer having someone or something

help — make a task or situation easier for someone

remember — keep or bring something back to mind

Look closely

Modern topic illustration created for Massachusetts History Explorers. It is not a historical artifact.

Read the story

Two planes used in the September 11 attacks left Boston's Logan Airport. Many people died in the attacks. Families and communities mourned. People worked to help others and remember those who were lost.

Teach the event without graphic imagery. Distinguish the attackers' actions from the identities of whole religious or ethnic communities. Local connections include victims, helpers, and long-term community responses.

A timeline helps put events in order, but order alone does not establish a cause. People acted with the knowledge and choices available to them at the time. Records can reveal some experiences while overlooking others. Compare a contemporary source with a later interpretation. Explain the source's purpose, the detail it contributes, and a question it cannot answer on its own.

Think, talk, and show evidence

1. Write an objective summary. Separate the event from the writer's interpretation of its importance.

2. Explain a cause, consequence, or continuity supported by the text. Identify a connection that would need more evidence.

3. Open the research source. Identify its creator or institution and purpose. Is it a contemporary source, a later account, or both?

4. Evaluate the image's date and purpose. Explain one useful detail and one limitation without treating an illustration as eyewitness evidence.

Follow-up reading: Big Dig tunnels open

2003

Major Big Dig roadways opened in Boston. Cars moved through new tunnels. Removing the elevated highway changed the city above. Construction and other project work continued afterward.

The project's major openings in 2003 were not its final completion, commonly dated 2007. Cost, safety, traffic, and public space all belong in the story. Compare plans with actual results.

Write a paragraph comparing these events. Use evidence from both passages, distinguish chronology from causation, and identify a perspective missing from the readings.

Teacher guide & source trail

Original classroom adaptation. Suggested reading levels are instructional choices, not standardized readability certifications. Use professional judgment and learner feedback.

ELA practice: RI.8.1: cite evidence; RI.8.2: objective summary; RI.8.6: analyze purpose and viewpoint; RH.6–8.1–2: evidence and summary in history; W.8.2: explanatory writing.

These tasks support selected skills in the Massachusetts 2017 ELA framework; they do not establish mastery of an entire standard.

Answer guidance

Factual anchor: Two planes used in the September 11 attacks left Boston's Logan Airport. Many people died in the attacks. Families and communities mourned. People worked to help others and remember those who were lost. Teach the event without graphic imagery. Distinguish the attackers' actions from the identities of whole religious or ethnic communities. Local connections include victims, helpers, and long-term community responses.

Accept accurate main ideas and explanations supported by the text. Vocabulary meanings are in the opening word bank. For picture questions, use the caption and credit below; distinguish what is visible from what is inferred. For comparison, accept a specific connection supported by both readings. Do not require personal accounts of trauma.

Continue the inquiry

Research source for this event ↗

Research source for follow-up ↗

Event page, accessible HTML reading, and vocabulary game ↗

Image: Original site illustration.

Image source and rights record ↗

The PDF contains selectable English text and embedded fonts. For adjustable text and browser reading tools, use the event's HTML page. External sources may need adult guidance.