

MSUB Lesson Plan Template

Standard Information:

Grade 11, U.S. History
Heidi Graves
SkyView High School

Descriptive Title:

9/11, Student-Centered

Lesson Description:

Students will review the information about 9/11 provided to them by their textbook and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the controversial Patriot Act. This lesson requires 2 days; first day will address the 9/11 information provided in the textbook, second day students break into groups to support or oppose the Patriot Act.

Objective(s) of the Lesson:

- Students will read information critically and put into context the date written.
- Students will be able to describe the events that occurred on Sept. 11, 2001 and list reasons for the “War on Terror” that resulted.
- Students will be able to identify the Patriot Act and list advantages and disadvantages.
- Students will be able to explain and define their position in a deliberation of a controversial issue.

State Standards and Grade Level Expectations: End of Grade Level 12

Content Standard 1 – Students access, synthesize, and evaluate information to communicate and apply social studies knowledge to real world situations.

- Benchmark 2 – apply criteria to evaluate information (e.g., origin, authority, accuracy, bias, and distortion of information and ideas).

Content Standard 2 – Students analyze how people create and change structures of power, authority, and governance to understand the operation of government and to demonstrate civic responsibility.

- Benchmark 5b – analyze the impact of the Constitution, laws and court decisions on the rights and responsibilities of citizens

Content Standard 4 – Students demonstrate an understanding of the effects of time, continuity, and change on historical and future perspectives and relationships.

- Benchmark 3 – apply ideas, theories, and methods of inquiry to analyze historical and contemporary developments, and to formulate and defend reasoned decisions on public policy issues
- Benchmark 6 – investigate, interpret, and analyze the impact of multiple historical and contemporary viewpoints concerning events within and across cultures, major world religions, and political systems (e.g., assimilation, values, beliefs, conflicts).

Concept(s) and/or Key Words and Definition(s):

Controversial – A heated topic; a prolonged public dispute or argument, containing matters of opinion, and no clear right or wrong answer.

Terrorism – The calculated use of, or threatened use of, violence against individuals or property for the purpose of intimidating or causing fear for political or social ends.

USA Patriot Act – (Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act) also known as simply the Patriot Act. An Act which was passed in response to 9/11 to combat terrorism.

Students' Background Knowledge:

Students should be able to read near grade level with little assistance in order to actively participate in deliberation. It would be helpful but not necessary for students to be familiar or at least have heard of The Patriot Act before 9/11 lesson began.

Materials and Teaching Aids:

Teaching 9/11 handout – included below

Patriot Act Continues to Spark Debate handout – included below

The USA Patriot Act explanation – included below

NYT *The Lessons* article – included below

High School Textbook with section covering 9/11

Internet access to play YouTube video.

Classroom Management Suggestions:

- Deliberation groups should consist of 4-5 students. Have plan on how students will be divided before class begins.
- Background reading assigned before class to build understanding and facilitate discussion.
- Have PowerPoint on and ready for day 2.

Teaching Model:

Day 1

- Read aloud in class *Teaching 9/11* article. Have students read around-the-world by paragraph. Encourage all students to read, if a student is very uncomfortable, allow students to read one-two sentences aloud before “passing.”
 - If relevant, have students note the date on this article. (For SD2, explain to students that their textbook was copyrighted in 2003, and that this article is referring to the era that their textbook was printed.)
- Using around-the-world again, read aloud in class portion of 9/11 section in textbook that describes the event on that day (pages US2-US5 in back of textbook, located behind the epilogue). Where appropriate, have students note the mood the paragraphs present. Note terms such as “heroic,” “engulfed in flames,” or “unimaginable horror,” or sentences like “no one will ever know how many lives the passengers saved as they gave up their own.” Explain to students the patriotism and emotion people were feeling because of this event.

- Pay a part of Alan Jackson’s “Where Were You” from YouTube. Have students listen to the lyrics and discuss.
- Assign remaining reading of 9-11/Terrorism section of textbook for next class period. If time remains, they can begin reading to themselves in class. Have students note the atmosphere change in the remaining section. If necessary, a take-home study worksheet can be sent home to ensure reading of the material.

Day2

- Read aloud to class the portion of NYT *The Lessons* provided below.
(Accommodation: also put text on overhead for students to follow along – for students with hearing disabilities and ELLs.)
 - Repeat paragraph on textbooks avoiding controversy. This is a segue into today’s topic.
- Have a student re-read “Antiterrorism Law” on pUS15 of textbook. Hold brief reflection on this paragraph.
 - Ask class if they know what law they are referring to.
 - How familiar are they with that law?
 - For a law so famous, why do you suppose the name is not mentioned?
- Show PowerPoint
 - Review Deliberation Guide slide.
 - Ask students “What needs to happen for deliberations for go smoothly?”
 - Provide examples if necessary to prompt student participation
 - Read material carefully
 - Focus on deliberation question
 - Listen carefully to what others are saying
 - Check for understanding/Get clarification if you don’t understand something
 - Speak/Encourage others to speak
 - Support your ideas with the reading material
 - Use life experiences in a relevant way
 - Be respectful when controversy arises
 - Focus on ideas, not personalities
 - Write student’s ideas on the white board
- Hand out *The USA Patriot Act* explanation to students. Allow 2-3 minutes to read once everyone receives a copy.
- Hand out *Patriot Act Continues to Spark Debate*.
 - While article is handed out, have students note date of article. (date is same year as textbook copyright for SD2)
 - Allow approximately 7 minutes for students to read. Have students underline/highlight facts and ideas thought to be important.
- Show PowerPoint slide with deliberation question.
 - *Does the Patriot Act go too far on what liberties Americans should have to sacrifice in exchange for their safety?*
 - Remind students of the suggestions they mentioned to make a deliberation go smoothly (currently listed on whiteboard).
- Divide students into two teams of 4-5 students each.

- Team A – Support question
- Team B – Oppose question
- Students do not get to choose which position to represent. Students are to use their best reasons to support their position regardless of personal opinion.
- Have the Team “A”s and Team “B”s group together to identify reasons to support their position. Have students write down their reasons on Worksheet as they will be turning this paper in at the end of the lesson.
 - Teacher should walk around to each of the groups to observe teams listing their reasons and assist if needed.
 - Team A and Team B does not communicate between each other for this section.
- Have each team, starting with Team A, present their best reasons for supporting their side of the deliberation. Teams are to be convincing, regardless of whether or not they personally believe in the position they are representing.
 - Each team is to listen carefully to the other team’s reasons. Questions for clarification may be asked, but no deliberation or argue takes place in this section.
 - Have student’s write down the opposing teams reasons on their Worksheet.
- Reverse Position: Each side is to explain back what the other team’s reasons were for supporting or opposing the position.
- Deliberation of Question
 - Disband teams and have all students in group deliberate question.
 - Suggest to students to use what they have learned about the issue along with personal experiences to choose a position and state it to other members of the group.
- Reflection/Conclusion: Disband groups and rejoin class. Ask students:
 - What were the best reasons for supporting/opposing Deliberation Question?
 - Did you find it hard to represent a position they personally did not believe in?
 - Why do you suppose it’s important to deliberate this question in a democracy?
 - Why do you suppose its not mentioned in the textbook?
 - Should it be mentioned in the textbook?
 - Explain assignment: Have students compose letter to textbook publisher proposing an update to the 9/11 section in the book. Students should suggest both reasons supporting and opposing the Patriot Act and explain to the publisher why a revision is important. (If students do not believe it should be mentioned in the textbook, have students draft a letter supporting the publisher’s decision to omit,

- and include both supporting/opposing reasons and why Act is too controversial.)
- If time permits before bell, do a quick poll on how many students personally support/oppose/undecided position. Have students raise hands.

Indian Education for All:

None

Assessment:

Using their textbook, in-class readings, and deliberation experience, have students compose letter to textbook publisher proposing an update to the 9/11 section in the book.

- Explain to the publisher why a revision is important.
- Include both reasons supporting and opposing the Patriot Act
- If students do not believe it should be mentioned in the textbook, have students draft a letter supporting the publisher's decision to omit, and include both supporting/opposing reasons and why Act is too controversial.

Links outside this lesson:

- Deliberation and communication skills are not only useful in controversial historical issues, but also in other school subjects and in a democracy. These skills help promote a higher level of learning.
- Critical thinking is not only useful for textbooks, but for any information the students read. It is important for students to look at the bigger picture on where (and why) the information is coming from. Critical thinking helps promote a higher level of learning.
- This lesson also crosses over into the civics classroom and debate classroom, provided background experience for both.

Accommodation for Diversity:

- Allow ELL students and students with reading disabilities to pre-read in-class handouts. Have students pre-prepare a reason both supporting and opposing the Patriot Act to contribute in group.
- Put on overhead teacher-read *The Lessons* so that ELL students and students with hearing disabilities can follow along.

Citations

Group deliberation steps and deliberation project idea borrowed from

<http://www.deliberating.org/>

Full-length articles located:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/08/us/sept-11-reckoning/teach.html?pagewanted=all>

<http://www.thenation.com/article/teaching-911?page=0,0>

http://www.ppbs.org/newshour/indepth_coverage/terrorism/homeland/patriotact.html

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/july-dec03/patriotact_9-17.html

Name: _____
Team: _____

Deliberation Worksheet

Reasons to Support the Deliberation Question (Team A)

Reasons to Oppose the Deliberation Question (Team B)

9/11 Lesson

Student Name: _____

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Salutation and Closing	Salutation and closing have no errors in capitalization and punctuation. Letter includes date written.	Salutation and closing have 1-2 errors in capitalization and punctuation. Letter includes date written.	Salutation and closing have 3 or more errors in capitalization and punctuation. Letter includes date written.	Salutation and/or closing are missing. Date letter written missing.
Grammar & spelling (conventions)	Writer makes no errors in grammar or spelling.	Writer makes 1-2 errors in grammar and/or spelling.	Writer makes 3-4 errors in grammar and/or spelling	Writer makes more than 4 errors in grammar and/or spelling.
Ideas	Ideas were expressed in a clear and organized fashion. It was easy to figure out what the letter was about. Letter included reasons (at least 2 each) both supporting and opposing Patriot Act and explained why textbook should/should not be revised.	Ideas were expressed in a pretty clear manner, but the organization could have been better. Letter included reasons (at least 1 each) supporting and opposing Patriot Act and explained why textbook should/should not be revised.	Ideas were somewhat organized, but were not very clear. It took more than one reading to figure out what the letter was about. Reasons supporting and opposing Patriot Act missing or explanation of why textbook should/should not be revised missing.	The letter seemed to be a collection of unrelated sentences. It was very difficult to figure out what the letter was about. Letter did not include reasons supporting and opposing Patriot act or explanation of why textbook should/should not be revised.
Deliberation Participation	Student contributed or participated in all of the in-class deliberation.	Student contributed or participated in most of the in-class deliberation.	Student contributed or participated in only part of the in-class deliberation.	Student did not contribute or participate in the in-class deliberation.
Worksheet	Student listed both supporting and opposing positions on worksheet and turned it in on time.	Student listed both supporting and opposing positions on worksheet but did not turn it in on time.	Student listed only one position on worksheet.	Student did not list either position on worksheet.

THE Nation.

Teaching 9/11

[Jon Wiener](#)

September 8, 2005 | [This article appeared in the September 26, 2005 edition of *The Nation*.](#)

9/11 is history--but how is it being taught to students in history courses? George Bush and other conservatives maintain that the attacks were acts of evil; liberals, while they condemn the attacks, see them as having a social and political context that we need to understand. These differences are reflected in the debate over the textbooks written in the past three years.

Conservatives complain that the teaching of 9/11 has been "simplified and sanitized" in an effort "not to...upset special interest groups," in the words of Chester Finn, assistant secretary of education in the Reagan Administration, who wrote the foreword to *A Consumer's Guide to High School History Textbooks*, by Diane Ravitch, assistant secretary of education in the Bush Sr. Administration. Finn and Ravitch, who based their conclusions on a reading of six of the most widely assigned textbooks in high school history courses, complained that students reading the textbooks "would scarcely learn that anybody in particular had organized these savage attacks...much less why."

Finn and Ravitch are right about some of the texts. *America: Pathways to the Present*, by Andrew Cayton et al., says in its 2005 edition that the "prime suspect" in the attacks was Osama bin Laden, but he is described only as "a wealthy Saudi dissident." "Saudi dissident" is hardly the right term--a student might get the impression he was fighting for Saudi women's rights. The book goes on to say that bin Laden had been granted sanctuary by the Taliban in Afghanistan, but the Taliban are described only as a "group" that "sought to set up their version of a pure Islamic state, banning such things as television and music." From the perspective of an American tenth grader, this is typical of tyrants everywhere--starting with their own parents, punishing them for bad grades. As an explanation of the "who" and "why" of 9/11, the discussion in *Pathways* might best be termed "incoherent."

Several other leading texts do much better. *The American Republic*, by Joyce Appleby et al., has a section on 9/11 in its 2005 edition, written by Alan Brinkley of the Columbia University history department, that provides a wonderfully clear and thorough explanation of the "who" and "why" of 9/11, starting with bin Laden's role in the

resistance to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. "Bin Laden's experience in Afghanistan convinced him that superpowers could be beaten. He also believed that Western ideas had contaminated Muslim society. He was outraged when Saudi Arabia allowed American troops on Saudi soil after Iraq invaded Kuwait." He therefore began a series of attacks seeking to drive Americans out of the Middle East. 9/11 was the most spectacular in this series of attacks.

A different approach can be found in *The American Promise*, by James Roark et al., an introductory college text that is the most widely adopted textbook in the market. It is assigned in dozens of high schools, public and private, including public schools in Atlanta, Newark and Chicago. A section written by Susan Hartmann, who teaches history at Ohio State, identifies bin Laden's goals and then explains the "why" of his finding supporters: "High levels of poverty ignored by undemocratic and corrupt governments provided bin Laden a pool of disaffected young Muslims who saw the United States as the evil source of their misery and the supporter of Israel's oppression of Palestinian Muslims." A companion volume of historical documents, edited by Michael Johnson, includes the famous President's Daily Brief from August 6, 2001: "bin Laden Determined to Strike in the US"; the text of Bush's address on September 20, 2001: "they hate us...[because] they hate our freedoms"; and an Al Qaeda training manual posted on the Justice Department website.

Probably the best textbook on 9/11 is Eric Foner's *Give Me Liberty*, a new introductory college text that has been adopted at more than 300 institutions in its first year. It is also assigned in some high school AP classes, ranging from suburban New Trier Township High School in Illinois to Transit Tech High School in Brooklyn. Foner (a member of *The Nation's* editorial board), in addition to explaining bin Laden's opposition to specific US policies, also examines the Bush Administration's response--declaring suspect citizens "enemy combatants" and creating secret military tribunals--and places these decisions in historical context. He finds parallels between this response and previous efforts to limit civil liberties in the name of security: suspension of habeas corpus during the Civil War, persecution of German-Americans during World War I and Japanese-Americans during World War II, McCarthyism during the cold war. Foner thus connects the response to 9/11 with larger themes in American history, asking, "What is the proper balance between liberty and security? Who deserves the full enjoyment of American freedom?"

Of course, critics on the right object to this kind of teaching. Lynne Cheney, wife of the Vice President and former head of the National Endowment for the Humanities, said in a 2001 speech that those who argue that 9/11 shows we need to learn more about the rest of the world were blaming America's "failure to understand Islam" for the attacks. Dinesh D'Souza made a similar argument in his 2002 book *What's So Great About America*, and William Bennett, in his 2002 book *Why We Fight*, spoke out against historians who "weaken the country's resolve." Foner rejects these arguments. He insists, in an article about the problems and opportunities in teaching 9/11, that "Explanation is not a justification for murder, criticism is not equivalent to treason, and offering a historical analysis of evil is not the same thing as consorting with evil." If Finn and Ravitch really

support teaching about 9/11 that isn't "simplified and sanitized," conceding the validity of those points would be a good place to start.

Whatever the merits of Foner's argument, problems with the teaching of 9/11 aren't likely to be resolved soon. Many high school students won't see any of the new texts because their schools are still using old books. Then there's the impact of Bush's No Child Left Behind Act: It requires standards and testing, and since teachers teach to the test, it's unclear how much 9/11 teaching there will be. In California, for example, the standards haven't been revised since 9/11, so "there's no specific standards that reflect it even happened," says Adam Wemmer, who teaches at Pacifica High School in Garden Grove. And finally, there's the simple matter of too much history, too little time. "The trouble," says Beth Anderson, who teaches at El Toro High School in Lake Forest, California, "is that no one manages to get to the Clinton years, much less 2001."

About the Author



[Jon Wiener](#)

Jon Wiener teaches US history at UC Irvine. His most recent book is *Historians in Trouble*. He sued the FBI under...

<http://www.thenation.com/article/teaching-911?page=0,0>



FEATURE STORY

Patriot Act Continues to Spark Debate

Posted: 09.17.03

Almost two years after the introduction of the USA Patriot Act, President Bush is asking lawmakers to expand the powers provided under the anti-terrorism legislation.

Printer-friendly versions: [HTML](#) / [PDF](#)

The president's request is the latest spark in the controversy over the USA Patriot Act - the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act - which Congress signed into law one month after the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001.



President Bush wants to use the Patriot Act in the war on terror.

In a speech delivered the day before the two-year anniversary of Sept. 11, President Bush called on Congress to "untie the hands of our law enforcement officials so they can fight and win the war against terror."

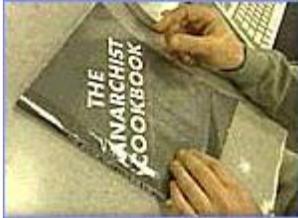
The expanded powers would allow officials to

bypass a judge or grand jury in order to obtain subpoenas in time-sensitive terrorism investigations. It would also deny bail to terrorism suspects and open up the federal death penalty for terror-related crimes that result in death.

Currently, the act allows officials to track an individual's communications on the Internet, install telephone and computer wiretaps, obtain search warrants for voice-mail and e-mail messages, access personal information, such as medical, financial and educational histories, and access library records without proof of a crime.

[Reading and Discussion Questions](#)

Growing Criticism



The Patriot Act allows officials to find out what books people are using at libraries.

Supporters and critics of the law are constantly at odds over what liberties Americans should have to sacrifice in exchange for their safety.

The Patriot Act's most outspoken critic, the American Civil Liberties Union, or ACLU, an 80-year-old civil rights watchdog organization, called the act a "surveillance monster" and argued that there were "virtually no rules" governing the new powers.

The act slowly eliminates judicial oversight and upsets checks and balances, ACLU Executive Director Anthony Romero told Newsweek magazine.



Anthony Romero of the ACLU opposes the Patriot Act.

"Of course we want to be safe, but the government of the United States under the leadership of George Bush and John Ashcroft has perpetrated a cruel hoax on the American people," New York Civil Liberties Union Executive Director Donna Lieberman said. "It has taken advantage of this unspeakable tragedy to launch a broadside against our fundamental rights."

Another complaint from civil liberties groups is that the law is increasingly being used against criminals, who are not terrorists.



Critics of the Patriot Act think it removes many Americans' protective liberties.

A man in North Carolina accused of running a methamphetamine lab was charged with breaking a new state law that bars the manufacturing of chemical weapons. If he is convicted he could get 12 years to life, a crime that had previously only resulted in a six-month sentence, the Associated Press reported.

Defending the Patriot Act

In an effort to rally support for the Patriot Act, Attorney General John Ashcroft recently finished a 16-city tour, traveling across the United States to speak to law enforcement officials in defense of the act.

Ashcroft pointed to the triumphs the government has made under the act since Sept. 11, 2001. Among them, federal prosecutors have brought more than 250 criminal charges under the law, resulting in more than 130 convictions or guilty pleas.

"We have used tools provided in the Patriot Act to fulfill our first responsibility -- that of protecting the American people," Ashcroft said. "We've used these tools to provide the security that ensures liberty."



Attorney General John Ashcroft traveled the country to defend the Patriot Act.

Former Assistant Attorney General Viet Dinh said the act's success is obvious because nothing has happened in the last two years, an achievement for law enforcement officials, the Department of Justice and Ashcroft.

Lawmakers, hoping to avoid the heated debates that surrounded the passage of the original Patriot Act, are expected to quietly attach additions to the Patriot Act to spending bills, which are usually easier to pass in Congress.

-- Sheryl Silverman, **Online NewsHour EXTRA**

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/july-dec03/patriotact_9-17.html

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Domestic Security: The Homefront and the War on Terrorism



The USA Patriot Act

The USA Patriot Act, passed in response to the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, is aimed at providing the tools law enforcement officials need to prevent further terrorist attacks.

But almost since its passage...some lawmakers and civil libertarians have contended the act infringes on the rights of U.S. citizens.

When President Bush signed the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism, or USA Patriot Act, into law on Oct. 26, 2001, he said the legislation would "help law enforcement to identify, to dismantle, to disrupt, and to punish terrorists before they strike."

"We're dealing with terrorists who operate by highly sophisticated methods and technologies, some of which were not even available when our existing laws were written," Mr. Bush said. "The bill before me takes account of the new realities and dangers posed by modern terrorists."

The act gave the government broad new legal and investigative authority and increased power to sanction organizations and individuals who do not cooperate with investigations. It also provided some legal protections for those who assist law enforcement in its investigative work.

However, in May 2002, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court ruled against the Justice Department's proposed plan for greater information sharing between intelligence officials and domestic law enforcement.

The court argued the proposal would eliminate congressionally mandated barriers between the intelligence community and criminal prosecutors that could allow prosecutors to "advise FBI intelligence officials concerning 'the initiation, operation, continuation, or expansion of [Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act] searches or surveillance'" -- a change from previous procedure.

A federal appeals court, however, overturned the ruling in November 2002, stating that the U.S. government has an expanded authority to use wiretaps and other surveillance techniques in its efforts to track suspected terrorists.

The appeals court ruling said that expanded powers to wiretap those suspected in foreign terrorist operations -- including U.S. citizens --



outlined in the Patriot Act do not violate the Constitution.....

The original Patriot Act

The original USA Patriot Act was a massive revision of U.S. law regarding intelligence gathering, the structure of federal agencies, and the way the government prosecutes suspected terrorists and other criminals.

It also contained many tools that law enforcement professionals had lobbied for some time.

When the bill was signed into law, then Attorney General John Ashcroft said in a statement, "Law enforcement is now empowered with new tools and resources necessary to disrupt, weaken, and eliminate the infrastructure of terrorist organizations, to prevent or thwart terrorist attacks, and to punish the perpetrators of terrorist acts. ... The American people can be assured law enforcement will use these new tools to protect our nation while upholding the sacred liberties expressed in the Constitution."

But groups opposed to the bill, such as the American Civil Liberties Union, said the Patriot Act went too far in its unfettering of the federal government, and endangered the civil rights of American citizens as well as immigrants.

In an October 2001 letter to the House, the ACLU urged lawmakers to vote down the final version of the bill.

"While it contains provisions that we support, the American Civil Liberties Union believes that the USA Patriot Act gives the attorney general and federal law enforcement unnecessary and permanent new powers to violate civil liberties that go far beyond the stated goal of fighting international terrorism," the group said.

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/indepth_coverage/terrorism/homeland/patriotact.html

LESSON 2 Timelines of September 11

September 11, 2001
All times are Eastern Daylight Time

8:45 am: Another airline from Boston with 64 passengers crashes into the South Tower of the World Trade Center.

9:03 am: An airliner from Washington, D.C., crashes into the Pentagon.

9:40 am: The Federal Aviation Administration halts all aircraft takeoffs in the United States.

9:49 am: The South Tower of the World Trade Center collapses.

9:50 am: United Flight 93, carrying 45 people, crashes in a field near Pittsburgh after passengers attack hijackers who had taken over the plane.

10:03 am: The North Tower of the World Trade Center collapses.

10:29 am: President Bush addresses the nation, saying that Americans will remain strong against "evil despicable acts of terror."

8:31 pm: (Captioned as 8:31 pm in the image)

September 11th in Context

1988-1999: Osama bin Laden founds al Qaeda, a terrorist group committed to an extremist brand of Islam.

1993: Al Qaeda bombers make first, unsuccessful attempt to bring down the World Trade Center.

1995: American terrorists bomb Federal building in Oklahoma City - one of many examples of terrorism not related to the Middle East.

2001: September: Al Qaeda attacks the United States. October: U.S. leads invasion of Afghanistan to pursue al Qaeda leaders.

2003: U.S. and allied troops invade Iraq and depose dictator Saddam Hussein.

2005: Suicide bombers in London, England, kill more than 50 people.

2011: April: U.S. Navy SEALs locate and kill Osama bin Laden in Pakistan. September: Americans observe the tenth anniversary of the September 11th terrorist attacks.

In the United States, most textbooks of the early 2000s portrayed the attacks as an occasion for patriotism and heroism. More recently, they have started using more graphic images. However, an analysis of nine high school textbooks used by almost half of American students found that most did not say how many people were killed or who was responsible for the attacks.

The Lessons

Around the world, the descriptions and messages of textbooks and curriculums vary widely. In the United States, details are fading away.

By TAMAR LEWIN Published: September 8, 2011

What do schoolchildren around the world learn about 9/11 and its aftermath?....

....In the United States, most textbooks of the early 2000s portrayed the attacks as an occasion for patriotism and heroism — figuratively and literally — many using the two Jima-like photograph of three firefighters raising a flag in the rubble of ground zero. That flag-raising, said Mary Ann Gundersen, an editorial director at Pearson,

showed just what she wanted to capture: “resilience and defiance and hope and respect.”

But a decade later, American textbooks are starting to use more graphic images of a plane slamming into the twin towers and erupting into a fireball, or panic in the streets as New Yorkers fled the roiling dust cloud that followed the towers’ collapse.

Diana E. Hess, an education professor at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, analyzed nine American high school textbooks that together are used by almost half of American students. She found that while they used dramatic labels (“horrendous plot” or “crime against humanity”) to describe the attacks, they provided little information about what actually happened. Most of the textbooks did not even say how many people were killed or who was responsible for the attacks.....

...“When you read the textbooks, it’s hard to make sense of why this happened,” Dr. Hess said. “There’s a pretty big void in the narrative.”

And the amount of specific information seems to be shrinking as the years go by — at least in the few textbooks that have had more than one post-9/11 edition. So while the 2005 edition of “The Americans” enumerated the deaths of the passengers in the four planes, the 300 firefighters and 40 police officers who rushed into the twin towers to rescue people, and so on, the 2010 edition was condensed to: “About 3,000 people were killed in the attacks — the most destructive acts of terrorism in modern history.”

Similarly, the 2005 “Magruder’s American Government,” describing the decision to invade Iraq, said: “In 2002, Congress agreed that President Bush should take whatever measures were ‘necessary and appropriate’ to eliminate the threat posed by Saddam Hussein and his Iraqi dictatorship. It was widely believed that that regime had amassed huge stores of chemical and biological weapons and was seeking to become a nuclear power — all in direct violation of the Gulf War’s cease-fire agreement.”

But the 2010 edition eliminated all mention of weapons of mass destruction.

While controversial public policy issues, like civil liberties and going to war, should be included in textbooks, Dr. Hess said, their absence is not surprising. “Textbook developers try to steer clear of controversy as much as possible,” she said. “They

know what happens when some committee somewhere picks up on some sentence that bugs someone.”

Dr. Hess also criticized the textbooks for creating a false impression that most terrorist acts involved the United States, when, in fact, Western Europe and -- especially -- Latin America have suffered far more terrorist attacks.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/08/us/sept-11-reckoning/teach.html?pagewanted=all>