

102 MINUTES THAT CHANGED AMERICA

Curriculum Links:

102 Minutes That Changed America would be useful for History, American Studies, Journalism, Media, and Politics courses. It would also be appropriate for September 11th commemorations and activities. Due to sensitive content, it is recommended for mature high school and college students; teachers should view the program before airing it to students. It fulfills several guidelines outlined by the National Council for History Education including: (1) Values, Beliefs, Political Ideas and Institutions; (2) Conflict and Cooperation; and (3) Patterns of Social and Political Interaction.

Pre-Viewing Suggestions:

It is important to prepare students for the intense nature of this documentary. Teachers should mention that this program consists of footage taken on September 11th, 2001 and that there are many scenes of a sensitive nature that may be hard to watch. Before you start watching this program, ask students to have a discussion about what they remember about that morning. Encourage students to write short journal entries about their emotions and thoughts about that day.

As the events of September 11, 2001 unfolded in New York City, some witnesses were frozen with shock, some stopped to help those in need, and others ran for safety as the world tried to make sense of the growing disaster. Some onlookers grabbed their video cameras to record history as it happened; despite the chaos and danger, many of them kept their cameras rolling throughout the catastrophe. With no voiceovers or commercial interruption, *102 Minutes That Changed America* is a seamless historical record that retraces the events of that tragic morning through real-life camera footage from more than 100 individual sources.

With carefully compiled amateur and professional footage presented in chronological order, *102 Minutes That Changed America* serves as a permanent historical archive for future generations to see. Educators and students can use this program to discuss the role of the professional media and amateur journalists in recording the events at the World Trade Center as they happened, and to consider the ongoing ramifications of that tragic day.



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Discussion Questions:

1. Many individual people, businesses, and communities were deeply and personally affected by the attacks against the World Trade Center. What was the neighborhood like near the World Trade Center before the attacks? How was it transformed by the events of 9/11/2001?
2. The footage in this documentary was shot by several different people, some professional and some amateur. What does the word amateur mean with regard to the video in this program? What do you think this footage reveals that you might not see in official news reports?
3. As the World Trade Center attacks unfolded, people nearby struggled to determine what was going on. What were some of the responses of people near the Twin Towers to these events? Which of these responses do you relate to most and why?
4. What role did emergency response teams play in the September 11th tragedy?
5. What roles did the New York City Fire Department play in these events? What were the sacrifices made by the firefighters at the site? Looking back, what do you think they would have done differently if they had known what was happening?
6. What other buildings made up the World Trade Center other than the Twin Towers? How were these buildings affected by this disaster?
7. Why do you think so many people decided to videotape the events of 9/11? Do you think many of them turned off their cameras as they realized what was going on? Do you think those who did not turn off their cameras did something positive by recording these events? Discuss.
8. How do you think the events of 9/11 affected people who witnessed these events firsthand and survived? What role do you think the New York City agencies played in helping them cope with these events?
9. How does *102 Minutes That Changed America* differ from other documentaries about September 11th, 2001?
10. What were some of the emotions you felt while watching this documentary? What memories, if any, did it bring back about the September 11th tragedy?

Extended Activities:

1. **102 Minutes.** Ask students to write a 2-3 page reaction paper in which they discuss their feelings about footage they saw in this documentary. Students may also be asked to write poems or short reviews of this program. Students should share their responses with the larger class or group.

2. The World Trade Center: Before and After.

Throughout this documentary, viewers see footage of the entire World Trade Center complex and surrounding area. In small groups, ask students to create drawings of the buildings in the area before and after the 9/11 tragedy. These drawings can be on posterboard or in any other format. Students should then discuss the plan to rebuild this area and review the work that has been done since the events took place.

3. Remembering 9/11. Almost everyone who was old enough to watch TV remembers what happened on September 11th, 2001. Ask students to interview a family member or community member and record their reactions to that day, how they made sense of those events as they were happening, and how they think about them today. In small or large groups, students can discuss the range of reactions to these events, both locally and nationwide, to the events of September 11th.

4. In Tribute. The National September 11th Memorial and Museum is the private, non-profit organization given the task of organizing the memory of the 9/11 tragedy at the site. Ask students to visit their website online and review the progress at the site. In small groups or working individually, ask students to write a paragraph describing how they think 9/11 should be memorialized both at the site and nationally. In small groups, students might also want to design their own 9/11 memorials in PowerPoint format, on posterboard, 3-D models, or any other format of their choice. Students should write a short paragraph describing their designs and what they represent.

Websites:

History.com site on *102 Minutes That Changed America*:
history.com/102minutes

The National September 11th Memorial and Museum website:
www.national911memorial.org

The Tribute World Trade Center Visitor website: www.tributewtc.org

The New York Times Portraits of Grief, Remembering Those Lost on 9/11:
www.nytimes.com/pages/national/portraits

Books:

Grolnick, Maureen (editor). *Forever After: New York City Teachers on 9/11* (Teachers College Press, 2006).

Mueller, Lavonne. *Voices from September 11th* (Applause Books, 2002).

Smith, Dennis. *Report from Ground Zero* (Plume Books, 2003).

Thomas, Annie. *With Their Eyes: September 11th, The View from a High School at Ground Zero* (HarperTeen, 2002).