



***Come From Away* Oratory Lesson Plan**

When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, “Look for the *helpers*. You will always find people who are helping.” To this day, especially in times of “disaster,” I remember my mother’s words and I am always comforted by realizing that there are still so many helpers—so many caring people in this world.” –Fred Rogers (Mr. Rogers)

Suggested Grade Levels: 8-12

Suggested Time Commitment: (2) 45-55 minute class periods

The Lesson: This lesson seeks to help students connect with the messages from the musical, *Come From Away*, and create a performance that mirrors those they see onstage at Ford’s Theatre. The creators of *Come From Away*, a husband and wife duo, went to Gander, Newfoundland, on the 10th anniversary of 9/11, where there was a reunion of the “plane people” who were stranded there when American airspace closed. They used those interviews to create characters, dialogue, and ultimately a musical. Art can come from interviews!

Middle and High School Students may not be aware of the impact 9/11 had on adults in their community, or the ways those adults acted compassionately in the days and months after that historic tragedy. This lesson hopes to create a bridge for them to speak to adults about what happened.

This lesson plan can be used before or after you bring students to *Come From Away*. There are several components to the plan, and you can do all or some of the steps per your curriculum and classroom abilities. Additionally, there are “add-ons” inspiring you to create class-wide, or school-wide, actions.

We hope you will share some or all of what your students create with this lesson plan, as well as their general experience doing the lesson!

Enduring Questions

How can students use adults in their communities as primary resources?

How can art be used to learn and communicate history?

Learning Objectives:

- Learn interviewing skills, including listening and writing
- Employ empathy towards their interviewee
- Create a monologue, poem, song or other lyrical art form to show that history can be learned and communicated through art
- Perform or exhibit those artistic creations
- Understand that after tragic events people rise to the call of kindness and charity
- Describe the historic and personal ways 9/11 affected their community and world

Preparation Instructions:

1. We recommend employing this lesson plan *after* you have appropriately introduced 9/11 in historical terms. Some resources for teaching 9/11 include:
 - <https://www.911memorial.org/lesson-Plans>
 - <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/2014/09/911-anniversary-in-the-classroom/>
 - http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/09/02/resources-teaching-and-learning-about-911-with-the-new-york-times/?_r=0
 - DC-based teachers especially may want to share what happened at the Pentagon with their students: <http://pentagonmemorial.org/learn/911-pentagon>.
2. Discuss with your students the ways people reacted benevolently to each other in their own communities after a tragedy. Then discuss what people did to help after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Be sure to give personal accounts or stories of how people helped others (volunteering, standing up for Muslim Americans, praying) and to include statistics like these:
 - Immediately after the attacks, The Red Cross blood donation line received more than a million calls. (The most received previously in one day was 3,000.)
 - Nearly 36,000 units of blood were donated to the New York Blood Center after the September 11 attacks. Lines to donate blood at Red Cross offices and other blood banks were incredibly long across the entire country—an entire day’s wait even as far away as Madison, Wisconsin.
 - Many cities and towns sent firefighters and EMTs to Ground Zero.
 - Amount raised by the celebrity telethon: \$150 million
 - Other countries held vigils, left flowers at American embassies, and expressed sympathy in newspapers, such as in the French newspaper LeMonde, “Nous Sommes Tous Américains” (We are all American).
 - Students from Leckie Elementary School in Washington, D.C. continue today to honor the student, teacher, and two parents who were killed in the attacks at the Pentagon, by volunteering at the Capital Area Food Bank.
3. Prepare yourself to speak to students about the sensitivity surrounding 9/11. Here are some resources to use in preparation:
 - <http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/10-tips-talking-students-about-tragedy>
 - <http://www.edutopia.org/blog/tragedy-grief-resources-education>

4. Download and print enough copies of Ford's Theatre's
 - Interview Game
 - The Interviewer's Notebook
 - From Interview to Masterpiece

Lesson Activities

Day 1, Activity 1. Interview Game, 20 minutes

1. With the whole class briefly discuss what an interview can accomplish for a researcher or reporter. What makes a good interview question?
2. Put students in groups of 2. Each student should have a copy of Ford's Theatre's Interview Game.
3. The students should fill out the tops of their Interview Game sheets, then take turns interviewing each other.
4. Reflection: Discuss with the class what they learned from interviewing someone else. The following questions might be helpful to guide discussion.
 - a. How did you establish trust with your subject?
 - b. What kinds of questions opened up conversation for your subject the most?
 - c. What happened when you asked yes/no questions?
 - d. What kinds of follow-up questions might have been useful during your interview?
 - e. How did it feel to interview someone about a difficult experience?
 - f. Did your subject feel comfortable speaking with you? What could you do differently next time to make your subject *more* comfortable?
 - g. How did you show compassion to your subject?
 - h. How did it feel to write down their responses?
 - i. How can interviews be useful as a research tool?

Day 1, Activity 2. The Interviewer's Notebook, 25 minutes

1. Each student should be given an Interviewer's Notebook packet.
2. Read through the instructions together.
3. Identify with your students good candidates for interviewing.
4. Role play a possible interviewing scenario with student volunteer in front of the class.
 - a. You, the teacher are the interviewee. A student is the interviewer.
 - b. Have the student interviewer ask the questions in The Interviewer's Notebook at the bottom.
 - c. You can "improv" your answers, or volunteer your own experiences.
 - d. Consider giving short responses, forcing the student to coax information out of you for a more productive interview. Consider veering off-topic, requiring your student interviewer to bring you back to the question.
 - e. Discuss with the class how the interview went and what the student interviewer did well or can improve on.
 - f. If time permits, try it again, having 2 student volunteers.

5. Give the students 1-2 days to schedule their interviews with community members. Assign the interview as homework.
6. Share the Smithsonian's guide to interviewing with students if they need more help crafting questions: <http://www.folklife.si.edu/the-smithsonian-folklife-and-oral-history-interviewing-guide/some-possible-questions/smithsonian>

Day 2, Activity 3. Reflection, 10-15 minutes

1. Reflect with your students on how their interviews went.
 - a. What was successful?
 - b. What was surprising?
 - c. What did you learn?
 - d. Overall, what was it like to interview someone about a difficult, historic topic?

Day 2, Activity 4. From Interview to Masterpiece, 25 minutes

2. Give each student a copy of the From Interview to Masterpiece handout.
3. Review the definition of a monologue as stated on the handout.
4. Explain this is their opportunity to interpret what they learned about 9/11 into their own words.
5. Students can follow the worksheet to create a monologue, or can write an original poem or song based on the quotes from the interview.
6. Leave 5-10 minutes at the end of class for students to perform their monologues for the class.
7. (Optional) Videotape students performing their own (or each other's) monologues, and send them to JEng@Fords.org.
8. (Optional) Reflect with students on common themes or experiences in the performed monologues.

Optional Add-ons:

- As a class, decide on a group activity for the national 9/11 Day of Service. Create a community garden! Organize a book drive! Resources and toolkits for the day can be found at <http://www.serve.gov/site-page/september-11th-national-day-service-and-remembrance>
- For theater or performance teachers, consider combining these monologues into a uniform play or show. Have the students consider how movement and music could be used to help convey themes.

Interview Game Instructions:

1. Pick a celebrity you think has a very interesting life.
2. Name of celebrity: _____
3. Write 5 things you know about that person (for example: age, marital status, major accomplishments/awards):

1	2	3	4	5

4. Think about something unpleasant that may have happened to your celebrity. Write that incident down and how you think your celebrity felt about it.

5. Turn to your partner. Decide who will be the interviewer first. If you are the interviewer, use the questions below and ask questions, trying to find out as much as you can about that celebrity's experiences, both happy and sad. If you have your own questions, feel free to ask those, as well. Most importantly, be respectful, and pretend your partner really is that celebrity. Remember they are real people with real life experiences. Stay in character.

- a. What is your name?
- b. Where are you from?
- c. What do you do for a living?
- d. What is the best thing that has ever happened to you?
- e. (Before asking this question, consider volunteering a bit of your own life experience to make your subject trust you): Would you feel comfortable speaking to me about a difficult time in your life? Can you describe that experience?
- f. During that difficult time, what helped you get through?
- g. How did you help others?

The Interviewer's Notebook

Preparing for Your Interview

1. Identify a person in your community over the age of 33.
 2. This person should be someone you have a connection with already. It can be a family member, a neighbor or a prominent figure, like a teacher or religious leader.
 3. Ask that person if you may interview him/her about his/her experiences after 9/11.
 4. Explain your assignment to the person (your "subject").
 5. Earn your subject's trust by reminding him/her that you will not use his/her name or experiences directly in your project without his/her permission.
 6. Decide how you will record information during your interview.
 7. If you are writing the answers, be sure to bring enough paper and back-up pens.
 8. If you are recording the interview, be sure your phone or other device is fully charged.
 9. Remember that speaking about 9/11 may be difficult for some people.
 10. If your subject reacts emotionally to your questions, be respectful and compassionate.
 11. Write your questions down ahead of time, but be prepared to ask clarifying questions during the interview.
 12. If you don't understand something, ask your subject to go into more detail.
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Interview Questions (Add your own!)

- We are interviewing adults who experienced 9/11. Can you describe for me your experience?
 - Consider asking follow-up questions, such as:
 - Where were you on 9/11?
 - Who were you with?
 - How did you feel?
 - What did you do?
 - Can you describe how people in your community helped each other or the victims after 9/11?
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The Interviewer's Notebook

- How did you try to help?
- What would you want me to do after a tragedy like 9/11? How could I help?

From Interview to *Masterpiece*

Congratulations, you've successfully conducted an interview! Now it's time to transform your subject's words into your own art. Follow the steps to get started.

What is a monologue?

A monologue is when one character in a play speaks **in first person** and the other characters do not interrupt him/her. Often, a monologue is used to share important information, including a secret with another character, or with the audience.

Writing An Original Monologue Based on Your Interview

1. Read through your interview notes, or listen to the audio recording. Get a sense of how your "character" speaks and what kind of language he/she uses.
2. Underline quotes or sections that make you feel something.
3. In the space below write down the most important, most urgent quote of your interview.

Section A: The most urgent quote in my interview was:

4. Make that quote the *first* sentence of your monologue.
5. Now decide *why* your character needs to share this information. What is at stake? Explore that here: Using "I..." begin to have your character describe his/her experiences.

Section B: My character needs to share his/her urgent quote because.... (*What has happened? What does your character want more than anything?*)

6. In the last line, consider what your character is going to do next.

Section C: "And now I'm going to..."

7. Put Sections A, B, and C in order. You have your monologue! Then, play around with reordering them. What works? What is the effect?
8. Read your monologue out loud to yourself or a partner. How does it sound?