

# September 11:

WHAT OUR CHILDREN  
NEED TO KNOW



THOMAS B.  
**FORDHAM**  
FOUNDATION  
OUTSIDE THE BOX

*September 11:*

WHAT OUR CHILDREN  
NEED TO KNOW



THOMAS B. FORDHAM FOUNDATION  
September 2002

## C O N T E N T S

INTRODUCTION <i>Chester E. Finn, Jr.</i> .....	4
LESSONS OF THE PREAMBLE <i>John Agresto</i> .....	12
SEIZING THIS TEACHABLE MOMENT <i>William J. Bennett</i> .....	15
PROTECTING OUR PRECIOUS LIBERTY <i>Lynne Cheney</i> .....	17
TEACHING STUDENTS TO COUNT THEIR BLESSINGS <i>William Damon</i> .....	19
THE CIVIC LESSONS OF SEPTEMBER 11 <i>Lucien Ellington</i> .....	21
HARD LESSONS <i>William Galston</i> .....	24
PRESERVING AMERICA, MAN'S GREATEST HOPE <i>Victor Davis Hanson</i> .....	26
CELEBRATING AMERICAN FREEDOM <i>Kay Hymowitz</i> .....	28
AMERICAN TOLERANCE <i>Craig Kennedy</i> .....	30
TEACHING YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE PATRIOTS <i>Katherine Kersten</i> .....	32
CIVICS, SCHOOLS AND SEPTEMBER 11 <i>Mary Beth Klee</i> .....	34
AN ATTACK UPON THE WORLD <i>Erich Martel</i> .....	36
FORGING HEROES <i>Walter Russell Mead</i> .....	38
DEFENDING DEMOCRACY <i>Jeffrey Mirel</i> .....	40
TERRORISM: THE "ISM" DU JOUR <i>Mitchell Pearlstein</i> .....	42
SEEING THE PATTERNS <i>Theodore Rabb</i> .....	44
AMERICA: ALWAYS VULNERABLE, NEVER INEVITABLE <i>Richard Rodriguez</i> .....	46
AN ATTACK ON WHO WE ARE <i>Andrew J. Rotherham</i> .....	48
DEFINING THE AMERICAN IDENTITY <i>Gloria Sesso and John Pyne</i> .....	50
ALLEVIATING OUR HISTORICAL IGNORANCE <i>Sheldon M. Stern</i> .....	52
HEROES AND VICTIMS <i>Sandra Stotsky</i> .....	54
FIGHTING COMPLACENCY <i>Kenneth R. Weinstein</i> .....	56
WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT WAR <i>James Q. Wilson</i> .....	58
RECOMMENDED RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS .....	60

## INTRODUCTION

*F*or many years to come, Americans will debate the causes and implications of the attacks on New York City and Washington on September 11, 2001, as well as the aborted attack that led to the Pennsylvania crash of United Airlines flight 93. These comprised far too traumatic an event to set aside immediately after it happened, like the latest automobile pile-up on the Interstate. We will chew on it, agonize about it, argue with each other, write, paint, compose—all the things that a nation and its people do to digest, understand and in some sense recover from a cataclysm.

As we do all those things, we are also fighting a global war against the perpetrators and their allies. Hurrah for President Bush and his stalwart team for instantly recognizing both the act of war that was visited upon us that bright September morning and the nature of our foe. But of course that war, in its many stages and manifestations, also gives us still more to reflect upon and to debate.

This cycle of action and reflection will continue for some time. We have no way of knowing how long, as events continue to unfold and the war on terrorism may continue for years to come. No one today can possibly anticipate what lies ahead for us, our allies or our adversaries.

*It's right to teach about  
September 11th because  
it was one of the defining  
events of our age, of our  
nation's history and of  
these children's lives.*

Meanwhile, however, we have children to raise and to teach and it is necessary and right that we teach them quite a lot about September 11th. It is necessary because it's on their minds, they see it on television and they hear grownups discussing it. They are curious about it, many are upset and some were directly and painfully affected. Adults who care for children have an obligation to offer all the explanation and comfort that they can.

It's also right to teach about September 11th because it was one of the defining events of our age, of our nation's history and of these children's lives. Educators have an obligation in any such circumstance to provide the information, the analysis, the conclusions and the lessons that they believe their pupils need. What happened? Why did it happen? How should we think about it? What are we doing about it? What *should* we do about it? How can we keep it from happening again? And so forth.

Ah, but what exactly to teach? What *are* the major lessons of September 11th that teachers should introduce to their young charges?

## Why this report?

In this report, with the help of 23 distinguished authors, we seek to provide answers to those questions and to suggest what U.S. schools and educators should teach their students so that they will better understand this event, its precursors and its aftermath and so that they will be better able to function as young citizens of a nation that has endured a wicked attack and is now engaged in a serious and protracted war.

Why is such advice needed? The short, unpleasant answer is because so much nonsense is circulating in the education world that we felt obliged to offer some sort of alternative, an objective rendering from the perspective of first-rate thinkers, scholars, analysts and educators who share our discomfort with what is fast becoming the conventional wisdom in education-land.

*Some educators need no advice whatsoever. They're knowledgeable, savvy, creative, caring and—may I say it?—patriotic.*

That discomfort began to build soon after September 11, 2001, as we observed the curricular and pedagogical advice that many of the profession's countless organizations were supplying to their members. Simply stated, that advice was long on multiculturalism, feelings, relativism and tolerance but short on history, civics and patriotism. This, regrettably, is also true of subsequent ruminations from some high-status educators and academics. And it's surging once again as the painful "anniversary" date, 9/11/02, approaches.

What should teachers teach on that day and the days surrounding it? It's an important question. Some educators need no advice whatsoever. They're knowledgeable, savvy, creative, caring and—may I say it?—patriotic, as many fine teachers have always been. By patriotic, I mean that they love our country and the ideals for which it stands.

Others, though, are uncertain. They depend on textbooks, supplementary materials and lesson plans prepared by others. That's a problem worth rectifying in its own right as part of fundamental education reform in America, but today it's a reality.

Moreover, even the best of instructors may have second thoughts about what to teach concerning September 11th when they encounter contrary advice from their peers, associations, professors, journals and favorite web sites. They may find their resolve shaken, their ideas challenged, their lesson plans disputed.

## Challenging conventional wisdom

We seek, in this report, to buttress the civic values and enlarge the knowledge base of teachers and other educators—and to redress the balance between those who would have the schools

forge citizens and those who would have them focus on students' own feelings and on doubts about America.

What, exactly, is the conventional wisdom that we seek to combat? View it in three stages.

First, the advice given to educators in the immediate aftermath of 9/11/01. The worst-lesson-of-all prize probably belongs to a Maryland teacher, one of whose pupils offered this account to *The Washington Post*: "Why do some people hate America? Why did they do it? They wanted to bomb our symbols. That's what my mom said. Because we're bossy. That's what my teacher said. She said it's because we have all the weapons and we think we can boss other countries around. They're jealous of us."

America, in this rendering, has itself to blame for the other guy's aggression inflicted upon us. It recalls the frostier days of the Cold War when the unilateral-disarmers produced "nuclear winter" curricula for U.S. classrooms that said, in effect, that America is responsible for the world's parlous state and if we would only renounce our militaristic ways everyone would be a lot safer. (History, of course, shows just the opposite to be the truth.)

But not all the dubious instructional advice that flooded the airwaves and Internet in autumn 2001 took the form of "blaming America." Much more widespread was simple disregard for patriotism and democratic institutions, non-judgmentalism toward those who would destroy them, and failure to teach about the heroism and courage of those who defend them. Plus reams of guidance about how to help children deal with their own feelings.

Article after article and web site after web site counseled teachers to promote tolerance, peace, understanding, empathy, diversity and multiculturalism. Here, for example, are excerpts from a broadside by the National Association of School Psychologists:

A natural reaction to horrific acts of violence like the recent terrorist attacks on the United States is the desire to lash out and punish the perpetrators.... While anger is a normal response felt by many, we must ensure that we do not compound an already great tragedy.... Most importantly, adults must model tolerance and compassion in their words and behavior. They should also encourage children to explore their feelings about prejudice and hate.... Violence and hate are never solutions to anger.... All peo-

*We seek to buttress the civic values and enlarge the knowledge base of teachers and other educators—and to redress the balance between those who would have the schools forge citizens and those who would have them focus on students' own feelings and on doubts about America.*

*Much more widespread was simple disregard for patriotism and democratic institutions.*

ple deserve to be treated with fairness, respect and dignity.... Vengeance and justice are not necessarily the same.... We need to work for peace in our communities and around the world. The best way that we can stand up for our country at this point is to unite behind the principals [sic] that make us strong.... Tolerance is a lifelong endeavor.... Avoid stereotyping people or countries that might be home to the terrorists.... Address the issue of blame factually.... Do not suggest any group is responsible. Do not repeat the speculations of others, including newscasters.... Discuss how it would feel to be blamed unfairly by association.... Emphasize positive, familiar images of diverse ethnic groups.... Read books with your children that address prejudice, tolerance, and hate.

Some of that is needed, but nowhere in this or many kindred efforts was it suggested that teachers should also read books with their pupils that address patriotism, freedom and democracy, that deal in a realistic way with the presence of evil, danger and anti-Americanism in the world, or that hail the heroism of those who have defended our land against foreign aggressors—including those who perished on 9/11/01.

In an article in *The Washington Post* on October 1, several educators stated that the attacks showed that we must become even more focused on multiculturalism than we have been in the recent past, suggesting that our indifference to other cultures somehow made us culpable for the terrorists' actions. We were at fault. The victim should be blamed for the act of victimization.

*Teachers should also read books with their pupils that hail the heroism of those who have defended our land against foreign aggressors—including those who perished on 9/11/01.*

The president of Teachers College, Arthur Levine, often a level-headed fellow, said in the same article that “Our notion of great books can’t be Western anymore or wholly Western anymore. Is ‘Middlemarch’ [a 19th-century English novel by George Eliot] more important than the Koran in terms of the curriculum?” Levine did not explain why the Koran should become a major component of the American curriculum, nor whether he would insist that teachers also introduce studies in the Old and New Testaments and, perhaps, the Bhagavad-Gita and the Book of Mormon.

## **Dubious guidance**

The second chapter in this unhappy story was written by education experts who have opined in scholarly journals about the “educational meanings of September 11th.” The good news is that few firing-line educators read such journals. The bad news is that the people who write in them are also, characteristically, the men and women who prepare future teachers in our colleges of education.

Consider an essay in *Teachers College Record* by the Marxist education historian (at the University of Wisconsin), Michael Apple. What he sought with his college-level students, he wrote, was “to use this as a time to show the effects of U.S. global economic, political, and cultural policies.” But it wouldn’t do simply to “impose” his views on his students. Not only would that be its own form of imperialism and arrogance; it might also “push people into rightist positions.” And he wanted them to end up in leftist positions. So he had to be strategic. His strategy included helping his students examine the Madison school board’s squalid response to a state law mandating the Pledge of Allegiance or the singing of *The Star Spangled Banner*, which Apple terms “a strikingly militaristic song.” But you don’t really need to know more about his agonized pedagogical strategy. What you need to know about Apple is that he believes that “social criticism is the ultimate act of patriotism.” (Where but on a university campus...?) And that he is teaching tomorrow’s instructors of eight and ten and fourteen year olds.

Closer to the practitioner level, in May 2002 the National Council for the Social Studies recycled on its web site a short story, “My Name is Osama,” that had first been published in a middle-school teachers’ supplement called *Middle Level Learning*. Written by Sharifa Alkhateeb, president of the Muslim Education Council and director of the “Peaceful Families Project” (supported in part by the U.S. Justice Department), it is a brief and rather touching story of how an Iraqi immigrant boy with the unfortunate name of Osama is gratuitously teased, heckled, even bullied, in an American school because of his name and national origin.

Such a story can be a worthwhile part of a comprehensive effort to ensure that young Americans’ responses to September 11th do not include bias toward their Arab and Muslim classmates. What one wants to know, however, is whether the rest of the comprehensive effort is also there, the patriotism part, the civics part, the history part, the harsher lessons about how difficult it is to safeguard American values from those who despise them in an increasingly menacing world. Why had Osama and his family migrated to U.S. shores? What is it that they came for? Why was it important to them? Where is that part of the lesson?

The popular education lecturer, Alfie Kohn, best known for his animus toward standards and testing, joined the fray in a publication called *Rethinking Schools*. His main point: “The United States has no problem with terrorism as long as its victims don’t live here or look like most of us.” It’s the “so’s your old man” response to a playground scuffle, here magnified to the scale of an attack on the nation itself. Kohn devoted most of his essay to itemizing instances of what he views as American-sponsored terrorism in other lands. Not a word about patriotism there, either.

Which brings us to the latest phase of this somber saga: the advice being given to educators regarding the “anniversary” of September 11th. In a word, it’s rotten advice, relativistic, non-judgmental (except about the United States), pacifist and anything but patriotic. It takes perfectly sound American values, such as tolerance and multiculturalism, and carries them to extremes. Most important is what it leaves out: the crucial lessons from history and civics that our children



most need to learn and that this painful episode in our recent past creates a powerful opportunity to teach our daughters and sons about heroes and villains, about freedom and repression, about hatred and nobility, about democracy and theocracy, about civic virtue and vice.

### **The NEA's contribution**

The biggest, richest and politically strongest of our education organizations is the National Education Association (NEA), the larger of the two national teachers unions. The NEA has created a special web site called "Remember September 11." Though vast—more than a hundred lesson plans—it contains little academic content of the traditional sort. As one browses its recommended lessons and background guidance for teachers, the dominant impression is one of psychotherapy via the Internet. The NEA and its allies in this venture (most prominently the American Red Cross) have psychologized the entire topic into a preoccupation with children's feelings and anxieties. Its web site closely resembles that of the National Association of School Psychologists, which—in its extensive list of "do's and don'ts" for schools engaging in "memorial activities"—urges that schools "develop living memorials (e.g., tolerance programs) that address the problems that lead to the crisis event [sic]" and warns against "allow[ing] the memorial to be a forum for expressions of hatred or anger toward the perpetrators of crises." In other words, look to root causes only and never get angry with those who hijacked and crashed our airliners or those who directed their actions from afar.

Political agendas also wriggle through the pop psychology and self esteem. A perceptive journalist who spent some time on the NEA web site found, for example, the union urging teachers not to "suggest any group is responsible" for the attacks of 9/11/01. Though one lesson cautions against "blaming," another presses educators to "discuss historical instances of American intolerance" in order that the U.S. can avoid "repeating terrible mistakes." (The usual examples are cited: internment of Japanese-Americans after Pearl Harbor and anti-Arab sentiments during and after the Gulf War.) Not surprisingly, the NEA's advice in these matters has been applauded by the Council on American Islamic Relations. Says that organization's spokeswoman, Hodan Hassan, "The NEA's [material] provides teachers with a well-balanced, wide range of resources teachers can use to help teach students how to appreciate diversity."

But it's only "well-balanced" if "diversity" is the exclusive objective of education on 9/11/02. It's not balanced at all if history, civics and patriotism are also meant to be taught and learned. Neither is the special "teachable moments" web site maintained by the National Council for

*This painful episode  
creates a powerful  
opportunity to teach  
about heroes and villains,  
about freedom and  
repression, about hatred  
and nobility, about  
democracy and theocracy,  
about civic virtue and  
vice.*

the Social Studies. As that organization’s president, Adrian Davis, explains on its home page, its goal is to help “social studies educators... to reinforce the ideals of tolerance, equity, and social justice against a backlash of antidemocratic sentiments and hostile divisions.”

Nothing there about accurate history of the U.S., the Middle East, Islam or the world. Nothing there about democratic values and their protection. Certainly nothing about patriotism. Everything is either about tolerance or about mental health.

### Offering an alternative

We at the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation set out to fill part of a huge void. We knew we could not possibly fill it all—though the supplemental readings that we and our authors suggest can help. We simply asked several dozen educators, scholars and analysts to write brief essays that answered this straightforward question: “What civic lessons are the most imperative for U.S. K-12 teachers to teach their pupils, as the ‘anniversary’ of the September 11th attacks draws near, about the United States and what it means to be an American?” Though we gave them only a short time in which to do so, most responded affirmatively, eagerly, sometimes gratefully. Their 23 contributions follow, along with suggested additional readings.

The authors, as you will see, range from such prominent figures as Lynne Cheney and William Bennett, through an array of scholars, authors and critics, to education practitioners whose names are far from household words. Some are Democrats, some Republicans. Some have a national perspective, some a state purview, some a local focus. We sought a range of perspectives but we did not seek people who would repeat the conventional wisdom of the education profession—there’s already plenty of that for anyone who wants it. Nor did we seek people who would psychologize the topic or whose reverence for tolerance dwarfs their appreciation of other compelling civic values. Above all, we sought people who take history and civics seriously, people who take America seriously. You will judge their contributions for yourself.

*We sought people who  
take history and civics  
seriously, people who take  
America seriously.*

Fortunately for our children, many of today’s front-line educators also have sound instincts in these matters. They are serious about accurate history and essential civic lessons. They know their stuff. They don’t get distracted by the fads and enthusiasms that sweep through their profession. May their numbers multiply. May there be more like James McGrath Morris, who teaches social studies to high school seniors and who recently told a *Washington Times* reporter that his lesson plan for 9/11/02 “will try to explain why America was attacked by tracing the rivalry among the three Western religions with the most adherents—Islam, Judaism and Christianity—and noting that the terrorists were Muslim. ‘These are all aspects of the facts,’ Mr. Morris said. ‘My lesson plans will not skirt the issues.’ ”

This is one of the many times when I miss the late Albert Shanker, long-time head of the other big national teachers' union, the American Federation of Teachers, who epitomized and revered the teaching of essential information and civic values to young Americans. Al and I had plenty of policy differences but we disagreed not one whit about on what children need to learn. Diane Ravitch has recalled what Shanker said at an international meeting (on education for democracy) in Prague two years before his death: "He warned the participants in a civic education dialogue from across Western and Eastern Europe to avoid multiculturalism and diversity, which fan the flames of ethnocentrism, and instead to pursue democracy. I found Al very persuasive, as always, then and now." So do I. He never flinched from asserting that the job of the schools is to teach the common culture, the history of democracy and the centrality of freedom and its defense against aggressors. As we commemorate the heinous attacks of September 11th, as American educators decide which side of this pedagogical divide they and their schools will take, I choose Al Shanker's side—and that of the Arkansas superintendent who recently told his students that "It's OK to love your country and love your flag."

*The job of the schools is to teach the common culture, the history of democracy and the centrality of freedom and its defense against aggressors.*

My thanks to that superintendent and to the late Mr. Shanker for helping us stay focused on what's important. My thanks to the 23 essayists who responded with alacrity and good cheer to this sudden assignment and whose excellent suggestions adorn the following pages. Thanks, too, to Diane Ravitch for suggesting this report and helping it take shape; to Fordham research associate Kelly Scott, who did nearly all the heavy lifting; to staff assistant Katie Somerville for her quiet, thorough help; and to Emilia Ryan, who designed and laid out this "virtual publication." (It is not copyrighted, by the way, and we'd be pleased if readers share copies with others who may find it interesting or helpful.)

The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation is a private foundation that supports research, publications and action projects in elementary/secondary education reform at the national level and in the Dayton area. Further information can be obtained at our web site ([www.edexcellence.net](http://www.edexcellence.net)) or by writing us at 1627 K Street, NW, Suite 600, Washington, DC 20006. (We can also be e-mailed at [backtalk@edexcellence.net](mailto:backtalk@edexcellence.net).) This report is available in full on the foundation's web site. The foundation is neither connected with nor sponsored by Fordham University.

Chester E. Finn, Jr., President  
Washington, DC  
September 2002

## LESSONS OF THE PREAMBLE

by JOHN AGRESTO

What shall we teach our students about September 11th, what shall we teach them about America, and how shall we go about doing it?

*Teach real diversity.* The anniversary of September 11th gives us the opportunity not to preach the usual pap about diversity—that different cultures see the world in different but equally valid ways. Rather, we now have the opportunity to show that there are people and cultures with ideas *radically* and *fundamentally* different from our own. Different even on the most basic givens we take for granted as the basis of civilized life—that, for example, the ends do not justify the means, that innocents are to be treated with respect, that people should not be exploited as means to ideological or religious ends, that the subjugation of women is an affront to human dignity, indeed that there is such a thing as human dignity. Consider with your students how, despite the fact that human nature may be everywhere the same, political, religious or economic ideologies might so affect people’s outlook that even the deepest principles of civilized society are, to some, easily rejected.

*Teach true understanding.* Not what you wish were so, but what you truly understand to be true. Do not say that “Islam” means “Peace” because that’s your hope. Do not try to make another way of life fit the mold of Western liberal tolerance when you have no evidence that it does. Have enough respect for diversity not to make believe that, deep down, everyone really is peace-loving, good-willed and egalitarian, just like you. Teach only what you know to be true, not what you hope might be true.

In doing so, be prepared to acknowledge that understanding doesn’t equal acceptance. The more that decent people understood Hitler, the more they rightly hated him. While we might wish to understand the mind of a racist, a child abuser, a serial killer, a stalker, there’s no reason to believe that understanding their views, divergent from ours, will lead to acceptance or acquiescence in those views. Diversity leads naturally to comparisons; and comparisons lead to judgments. If your students wish to draw conclusions about the stark diversity of outlooks given us by September 11th—that there is something to the distinction between civilization and barbarism, for example, or between decency and evil—do not stand in their way.

*Teach America.* It’s not very helpful to understand other cultures and outlooks and not understand our own country and what it has tried to achieve. What is it that has brought tens of millions of immigrants to America, not to bomb it, but to better its future and their own? What is it about the promise of liberty and equal treatment, of labor that benefits both you and your neighbor, of an open field for your enterprise, ambition, determination and pluck? Try not to look at America through the lens of your own ideology or political preferences but see it as it

truly is. Try, perhaps, to see the America most Americans see. That can be a fine antidote to smugness and academic self-righteousness.

*Teach patriotism.* Here's where red flags go up. Surely that would be too "political" for schools and teachers. Yet many educators have no difficulty in teaching cynicism about America or pointing out what they see as its tremendous shortcomings and failings. At the same time, few educators have trouble teaching students to respect each other, to love their neighbors, to treat their fellow students with justice—no taunting, no bullying, no fighting. Yet, what is patriotism other than love of our fellow citizens? What is it more than a simple, yet deep and heartfelt devotion to the lives and well being of people we consider neighbors, friends and fellow countrymen, even if we know them not? At its highest level, it's a willingness to sacrifice our treasure, toil and even our lives so that others will survive and prosper. Seeing it in this light, as the willingness to look upon all one's fellow citizens as friends and neighbors, makes patriotism not some twisted fealty to the "state" but a selfless act of the highest order. Ask your students how it can be that so many who consider themselves educated and elite can so cynically disparage patriotism.

*Your highest function as a teacher might be to expose your students to what human excellence truly is.*

*Teach virtue and character.* What we learned on September 11th was not only the horrors of ideological fanaticism and savagery, but also something about human nature at its apogee. We saw people carrying others to safety, covering them with their bodies as flames and cement fell, running up fifty-eight stories in full fire-gear—as everyone else was running down—in hopes of rescuing the terrified or carrying down the disabled. We saw ordinary men and women perform extraordinary acts of selflessness and courage. We saw what it means to be an excellent human being. Do not keep your students from celebrating these acts. Your highest function as a teacher might be to expose your students to what human excellence truly is.

One text you might refer to is the Preamble to the Constitution. It usually gets short shrift as we move on to the structure of government or the Bill of Rights, which we erroneously think of as the heart of the document. Yet the Preamble explains why we came together as one nation.

Why does it list six goals that its authors sought to make real by that coming together, not just one—not just "to protect our rights" or "to set up a government"? Why is the first thing it mentions that we wish to form a "more perfect union"? Why do we want to be one people? What does it mean to be one people? Why did our Founders look forward to becoming neighbors and fellow citizens with people from so many different places, backgrounds, status and devotions? What exactly is it that makes us one people?

*Establish justice.* What is it about America that causes us to pledge to one another that we will see justice done to each of us? What might our pledge of justice demand we do in light of the events of September 11th?

*Ensure domestic tranquility.* Is it really true, as we hear from every fortune-cookie philosopher these days, that security and liberty are opposites, that if we aim at order and domestic tranquility—at peace and security—that we will surely destroy rights and undermine liberty? Think through with your students the extent to which rights, liberty, justice and even friendship between citizens can endure without “domestic tranquility.”

*Provide for the common defense.* We pledged not that we’d defend our rights or our interests or our selves but each other. What does it mean to be an enemy of America? What can rightly be expected of us as we work to make good on our pledge to defend our friends, our neighbors, our fellow citizens and our country?

*Promote the general welfare.* How quaint for the Preamble to say this and not say “to promote every person’s own particular interests as he or she sees them.” What could it possibly mean to say that there’s a “general welfare” of an entire country, a common good that is distinct from the sum of all our interests and desires? Might this be something that patriots understand better than others?

*Secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.* The Preamble’s final words enshrine the idea that human liberty is a blessing for all people and that America’s great reason for being is to break the chains that have kept people from being all that they might. We know the slanders leveled against a free people—that they live for themselves, their own gains, their paltry and petty pleasures. Acknowledge that a life of freedom opens us up to all the defects and failings of our common human nature. But also try to find out why liberty is so manifest a blessing that men will fight and even die to keep it alive, to pass on to their posterity. What is it about being human that makes slavery and subjugation so manifestly wrong? Then, try to figure out the great paradox of America: How could it be that all those free, self-interested and materialistic individuals could be so virtuous, so patriotic, so “American” that they would run up the burning building while everyone else ran down, just to save people they called “fellow citizens”?



John Agresto is Senior Research Fellow in the Liberal Arts at Wabash College and the president of an educational consulting company helping schools and colleges. He was for many years the president of St. John’s College in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and was, prior to that, the deputy and acting chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities. He has taught at the University of Toronto, Kenyon College, Duke University and the New School for Social Research.

## SEIZING THIS TEACHABLE MOMENT

by WILLIAM J. BENNETT

September 11, 2001 was a tragic day in our history. But as Americans are wont to do, many tried to bring some good out of it. And for many teachers, that meant using the day to teach children lessons that needed to be learned, including some that many adults had forgotten. And so, as we approach the one-year anniversary of the terrorist attacks, we again are at a rare, teachable moment. What should be taught?

First, children ought to learn about America. They ought to learn about the ideals upon which she was founded and toward which she has striven to grow and improve. They ought to learn about the figures, past and present, who have led America in times of war and peace. They ought to learn about the good that America has

*Teachers must be willing to say that there are moral absolutes.*

done around the world and the unparalleled freedoms, opportunities and blessings for those who live here today. Some say that America had these attacks coming; some even go so far as to say that America is the world's leading terrorist state. They are wrong: A careful, complete, reading of our nation's history shows that, while we have surely had our failings, on the whole America's record is one of promoting peace and justice at home and abroad.

Second, children ought to learn about right and wrong. For too long, so-called sophisticates have said that right and wrong are matters of opinion, of personal preference, of one's own taste. On September 11th, however, we saw the face and felt the hand of evil. Hijacking planes full of innocent citizens and crashing those planes into buildings filled with more innocent civilians is, plainly and simply, evil. To call it anything else is to trivialize what happened. And in the face of what happened, those who argue that there is no such thing as evil are revealed as what they were all along—fools. Their intellectual dishonesty has done our nation grave harm—but not irreparable harm. Teachers must be willing to say that there are moral absolutes. (I discuss both this and the previous topic in my book *Why We Fight: Moral Clarity and the War on Terrorism*.)

There are many other lessons to be taught on this and subsequent anniversaries of September 11th. Heroism and bravery are perfectly illustrated by the firefighters who ascended the Twin Towers while others tried to escape and by the passengers on Flight 93 who rose up and prevented the hijacked plane from crashing in Washington. The importance of family and community was also highlighted in the wake of the attacks. The ability of America to stand together in the face of adversity is an important lesson for citizens of all ages to learn.

The one-year anniversary of that dark day in our history will, of course, be a day of remembrance. That is to the good, for we must never forget what happened that day. Teachers have a unique and important role to play in making sure that children learn the right lessons from it.

★ ★ ★

*W*illiam J. Bennett, former U.S. Secretary of Education, is founder of K12, an online education provider, and co-director of Empower America.



## PROTECTING OUR PRECIOUS LIBERTY

by LYNNE CHENEY

*T*oday, as before September 11th, the most important civics lessons for American children are found in American history. What better way, for example, to understand the religious freedom that underlies our democracy—and distinguishes us from those who attacked us on 9/11/01—than to consider Thomas Jefferson’s long struggle to establish the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom? Assisted by James Madison, he worked for years to pass this law, which was a precursor to the First Amendment. We need to teach our children what an achievement it was to enact a statute declaring that individuals could be trusted to arrive at their own conclusions in matters of faith. The Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, Madison said, “extinguished forever the ambitious hope of making laws for the human mind.”

The issue was not only religious freedom, but also intellectual freedom. “Truth is great and will prevail if left to herself,” the Virginia statute reads. “She is the proper and sufficient antagonist to error, and has nothing to fear from the conflict, unless by human interposition [she is] disarmed of her natural weapons, free argument and debate.” Anyone who tries to account for the remarkable creativity of this country needs to consider the forces set in motion when the United States of America decreed that the government could not tell its people what to believe or what to think. The freeing up of individual energy and ideas that followed has been unparalleled in human history. Try to imagine the Wright brothers, or Steven Spielberg, or Bill Gates in an oppressive society. It is inconceivable that they would flourish. The fact that invention, entertainment and commerce have prospered so remarkably on these shores is proof of the power of our ideas, and our children should know this.

*Anyone who tries to account for the remarkable creativity of this country needs to consider the forces set in motion when the United States of America decreed that the government could not tell its people what to believe or what to think.*

We should teach them how hard the establishment of this country was. We should help them learn how perilous was the voyage that the Pilgrims undertook, how risky was the declaration that we would be a free and independent nation, how unlikely to endure—if one judged by prior history—was the republic established in Philadelphia in 1787. It is important that our children and grandchildren understand that things might have turned out otherwise. This realization makes our freedom all the more precious. It helps us to understand that, were we to lose it, liberty might not come our way again.

Students need to know the ideals on which our country was founded, in particular the idea that all are created equal. They need to know as well how brave men and women like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Martin Luther King, Jr. called upon us to live up to our founding ideals and thus helped make us a better country.

The September 11th attack on our country underscored the importance of instructing the rising generation in American history. In a time of war, our children deserve to know exactly what is at stake.

★ ★ ★

Lynne Cheney is a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington, DC.

## TEACHING STUDENTS TO COUNT THEIR BLESSINGS

by WILLIAM DAMON

*I*t is clear in the aftermath of 9/11 that we need to teach our students to defend freedom and democracy. Of course, this was important before 9/11, too; but now it is clearer to all, even to many educators who have long resisted this particular charge.

To understand that freedom and democracy must be defended, young people need to know three things: 1) What life is like in places that honor these ideals and in places that don't; 2) How these ideals have come to prevail in some places and not in others; and 3) Why some people hate these ideals and what we must do about that.

Here is how schools can help young people learn these essential things:

1) Social studies courses, which now emphasize tolerance for non-Western cultures and criticism of our own, should teach students about parts of the world that have not been blessed by freedom and democracy. Give students a living sense of how women feel in cultures that keep them illiterate and disenfranchised, force them to wear smothering clothes or undergo involuntary genital surgery, punish them when they are raped, and threaten them with harm when their families cannot afford huge dowries. Draw the contrast with societies where everyone gets to vote, protest, join unions, start businesses, marry and divorce at will, choose partners out of affection, not coercion, worship or not worship as they wish.

2) History courses must convey a sense of how freedom has been won in some places and lost in others. How American rights were forged through suffering in Valley Forge and Selma; how utopian Russian dreams slipped away into tyranny; how German democracy was brought down by terrorism and divisiveness in the Weimar years; how Japan succumbed to its leaders' militarism and expansionism. History should be taught as a narrative of what has gone right and what has gone wrong along the road to liberty and equality.

Many textbooks can help. Some help better than others. For example, my daughter's high school U.S. history course relies on *A People's History of the United States* as its primary text. That's a mistake. It's an acceptable part of the reading list, but it's too lopsided to be the main source of historical knowledge. I would place the terrible errors it highlights (e.g., the Tulsa race riots, the Indian massacres) in context of the self-corrections that they spawned, and I would point out that it is a rare and precious freedom to allow teachers to talk with students about shortcomings of their own culture (compare, for example, with the education that students get in an Islamic madrasa). Students also need to learn—including the gory details—about historical horrors such as the Nazi pogroms, the Soviet purges, the Cambodian killing fields.

3) When psychology is taught in the primary and secondary schools—it's not unusual in high schools—teachers should use as a text Adorno's classic study, *The Authoritarian Personality*. They should point out that sick people such as those the book describes can be found in every society; but that a democratic political system, unlike an autocracy or theocracy, weeds them out before they assume enough power to do serious harm.

Teach students that, in order to protect ourselves and others from people who despise and would damage freedom and democracy, we must discredit the warped ideologies that feed their hatred. Then teach economics and political theory, with an explanation of how a combination of capitalism and constitutional rights secures our freedoms. Most importantly, convey a vision of what *they* can do, as budding citizens, to sustain and enhance our great democracy.

*Teach students that, in order to protect ourselves and others from people who despise and would damage freedom and democracy, we must discredit the warped ideologies that feed their hatred.*

As I write this, I know that some will find it incredible that these things are not being taught in our elementary and high schools today. But they are not, at least not with any certainty, and it is high time that we take steps to ensure that they are taught to all our children tomorrow.

★ ★ ★

*W*illiam Damon is Professor of Education at Stanford University. He directs Stanford's Center on Adolescence and is a Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace. His books include *Greater Expectations: Overcoming the Culture of Indulgence in Our Homes and Schools* and *Bringing in a New Era in Character Education*.

## THE CIVIC LESSONS OF SEPTEMBER 11

by LUCIEN ELLINGTON

I am simultaneously encouraged and afraid that so many young people seem, at some level, to understand that the events of last September are a grave threat to our country. My encouragement comes from personal conversations with children and teenagers and through watching television and reading newspaper accounts of what countless young people said about the attacks. Most young people had an intuitively patriotic reaction to the terrorist action.

My fear is rooted in the fact that most of those patriotic reactions seemed only intuitive. I am in daily contact with far too many young people who are confused or ignorant about the history of this country, other cultures, and what it really means to be an American citizen. This situation is almost certainly due in part to the mixed and sometimes negative classroom messages that many young people receive about our political system, national history and international relations.

During my entire career as an educator, the dominant message of a disproportionate number of those university historians and social studies educators who opine to future and practicing school teachers on what young people should be taught about the U.S. and its international relations may be summarized as follows:

- European-American males control the United States. They oppress people of color and women, both domestically and abroad. That oppression takes the twin forms of racial discrimination and propagation of values such as individualism and democratic capitalism that largely serve to benefit European-American males.
- Teaching “mere facts” about American or World History is to be avoided in favor of stimulating young people to critically analyze our own and other societies.
- The notion of accentuating positive versions of American or Western cultural exceptionalism is evil and politically reactionary. This applies to civic education, where the new buzzword among the social studies cognoscenti is “global” not American citizenship.
- The U.S. has neither common culture nor common set of cultural values.

School teachers who looked to organizations such as the National Council for the Social Studies for instructional guidance after 9/11 found exhortations to teach more tolerance and to make sure students understood that the event was a clear message for us from oppressed peoples that the existing world economic distribution of resources must change. Thank goodness that many teachers are either ignorant of history and of such “education expert” advice or that they possess enough common sense to ignore it.

But not teaching foolishness is only a fraction of the teacher's task. The larger portion consists of teaching the truth, of forging good citizens through proper understanding of America, its history, its values and its place in the world. Especially in light of the continuing threat to our very national existence, it is critical that U.S. teachers strive to accomplish these goals in civic and history education:

- Systematically articulate to students, beginning in the early grades, the common civic values and attendant knowledge that both constituted the vision of the founders of the American republic and continue to be important for informed citizenship today. These values include beliefs in freedom, hard work and playing by the rules, limited government and respect for pluralism. It is also absolutely critical that all American young people understand, through multicultural biographical examples, that understanding and applying these core American values dramatically increase an individual's chances for a productive civic and economic life regardless of race, creed or gender.

*There is no contradiction between teaching accurate historical and political content and building a solid understanding of American patriotism and what it means to be a U.S. citizen.*

- It is impossible for students to understand what it means to be an American citizen without some basic understanding of history. The foundation for historical literacy is factual knowledge of U.S. and World History. Teachers should never be ashamed of holding students responsible for demonstrating they understand chronology, the causes of significant historical events, and the thoughts and deeds of history's most influential people.

- Without resorting to the simplistic "American Pageant" approach that was fashionable in the 1940s and 1950s, teachers should view their citizenship education task as, in part, communicating a positive historical master narrative of the U.S. That narrative must feature an understanding of the system the founders created and how, incrementally, the benefits of that system were extended to all citizens, particularly those who are willing, through learning and hard work, to attempt to live the American dream. The historical master narrative should contain accurate information about our societal shortcomings yet can still be uplifting and inspirational for young Americans. There is no contradiction between teaching accurate historical and political content and building a solid understanding of American patriotism and what it means to be a U.S. citizen.

- Finally, if we are to triumph over the relentless adversaries that we face, the next generation must be taught that they are not simply members of a particular cultural or ethnic group who happen to live here, but are Americans who share a common civic heritage and political culture. The ideas behind our political system have in large part made the United States THE

country where so many immigrants seeking a better life aspire to live. We are not fighting a war on terrorism simply to retain our affluence but to preserve a system of government that has enabled millions to accrue the material, social and spiritual benefits that come with being an American.

★ ★ ★

Lucien Ellington is UC Foundation Professor of Education and co-director of the Asia Program at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

## HARD LESSONS

by WILLIAM GALSTON

**Q**uestion: What should teachers teach their students about September 11th?

Answer: Some of the most important truths about American civic life. Here are a few:

1. There is such a thing as civic virtue, and whether or not we possess it can be a matter of life and death. The memory of police, firefighters and random civilians doing their duty (and more) in the face of overwhelming danger is as indelible as the images of the collapsing World Trade Center and the maimed Pentagon. Because civic virtue is not innate but must be learned, we must pay careful attention to the processes—institutional and informal—through which it is cultivated.

*There is such a thing as civic virtue, and whether or not we possess it can be a matter of life and death.*

2. For all the (justified) talk of our diversity, Americans possess a civic identity that both includes and surmounts our differences. The September 11th attack was an assault on all Americans without regard to their race, creed or national origin. We responded to it as one nation. We watched together, mourned together, gained strength and resolve from one another.

3. Even in a democracy that mistrusts politics and abjures concentrated power, leadership matters. The President's exemplary conduct in the first dreadful weeks after September 11th helped rally us to a sense of mission and significance. And the core of democratic leadership, we learned once again, is public discourse that makes clear the principles for which we act and the facts that guide our judgment about what we must do together.

4. In the face of danger, it is hard to keep one's civic balance and safeguard essential liberties. The President's leadership helped put a lid on what might otherwise have been escalating attacks on Arab- and Muslim-Americans, although laws requested by the administration and enacted by the Congress may have granted the government excessive emergency powers. It remains to be seen whether history will judge the post-September 11th arrests and incarcerations as severely as it does the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II, but the parallel is cautionary.

5. The relation between politics and religion in America, though hardly uncontested, is a hard-won accomplishment of great worth. We have managed to avoid the Scylla of state secularism and the Charybdis of theocracy while preserving both an astounding variety and vitality of religious faith and practice. But there are groups in the world with very different ideas



about the proper relation between politics and religion, and many of them despise what we prize.

6. Whether we like it or not, the United States is enmeshed in the world beyond our shores and, as the most powerful nation, our actions inevitably affect everyone else. We are disliked in some quarters because of the principles we espouse, the policies we pursue and the friends we support. While conducting ourselves with candor and honor on the world stage, we must accept the burden of protecting ourselves against the enemies we cannot help making.

7. The great illusion of the 1990s (as in the period prior to the outbreak of World War I) was that markets could replace politics. As long as groups pursue goals that cannot be reduced to economics, as long as divisions of friend and foe reflect differences of ethnicity, political principle and religious faith, not just collisions of material interests, there will be a need for statecraft as well as for international technology and trade treaties. A doctrinaire contempt for politics, whether of the right or the left, is incompatible with our nation's security and global leadership.

That is but seven lessons—one for each day of a single week—of the many, many truths about American civic life that we look to our teachers and our schools (although not them alone) to help teach our daughters and sons.

★ ★ ★

*W*illiam Galston is a professor of public affairs and director of the Institute for Philosophy and Public Policy at the University of Maryland. He is also the founding director of the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE), which focuses on the civic life of American young people. Galston served as Deputy Assistant to President Clinton for Domestic Policy from 1993 to 1995.

## PRESERVING AMERICA, MAN'S GREATEST HOPE

*by* VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

September 11, 2001 brought back to us ancient wisdom that has often been forgotten or caricatured in this age of multiculturalism, situational ethics and moral relativism. Freedom, democracy, an independent judiciary and the dignity of the individual are not innate to the human species. They are fragile ideas that must be taught to our youth in each generation—and then protected by us all from enemies who will always fear and hate us for what we are, and who will therefore strive to destroy all that we hold dear.

Not all cultures are equal in their moral sensibilities; few dictators, theocrats, tribal leaders or communists welcome the introspection and self-criticism that are necessary for moral improvement. So before we seek guidance from others abroad or adjust our policies to an apparent international consensus, Americans must first ask of other nations in the world: do their people vote, do they respect women, do they enjoy freedom, and can they express themselves without audit or censorship?

Americans should also remember that we are a multiracial society—the world's most successful—bound together by a shared commitment to Western values and the U.S. Constitution. Although we are of every color, religion and ethnic background, we are not a multicultural state. True, we are enriched by music, food and literature from abroad, but not by the world's bleak alternatives to freedom, open markets, constitutional government and the rule of law. The terrorists killed us for our shared core values, for our *unum*, not our *pluribus*.

The idea of cultural relativism was blown apart by the terrorists as surely as our architectural icons in New York and Washington. The failure to exercise moral judgment—denying that Islamic fundamentalism is a great plague upon the world that would destroy the rights of women, the very notion of religious tolerance, and all the gifts of the Enlightenment—is not proof of forbearance, but of abject ethical decrepitude. All the great evils of the 19th and 20th centuries—chattel slavery, German Nazism, Japanese militarism and Soviet communism—led to the ruin of countless millions of innocents because millions of other Westerners were either too timorous, too confused, too ignorant of, or reticent about, their innately evil natures and the great peril they posed to free peoples.

By the same token, we must take up the challenge of civic education—through the reading of seminal texts and uncensored, candid class discussion—to end the dangerous idea of moral equivalence. In the present conflict, we must reject the notion that the loss of innocent civilians deliberately murdered in a time of peace is somehow the same as accidental civilian deaths that occur from efforts to punish evildoers during a time of war. The moral choice that confronts man is never the stark antithesis between wholly good and purely evil, but rather the

obligation to distinguish the mostly good from the mostly bad. The demand for perfection as a prerequisite for action is not only utopian and unworkable, but in our present crisis fatal for millions who depend on the United States to back its moral vision with real power to thwart killers and protect the weak and innocent.

Finally, we must accept the limits that are imposed upon our brief lives by nature and by God. History teaches that those omnipotent angels who would solve all man's problems if just granted enough power over others—to create a new master race or a new proletariat man—end up as abject devils. Racism, sexism, homophobia and economic exploitation, such are the sins not of America, but of man himself. We feel these oppressions more acutely than others in the world precisely because we alone have the institutions, the power and the will to battle them. But in our heightened expectations, we should never allow our occasional disappointments as mere humans to change or subvert America—the nature of its laws, the spirit of its constitution, the telling of its past or the culture of its people—which history proves has offered man his last and greatest hope.

*The moral choice that confronts man is never the stark antithesis between wholly good and purely evil, but rather the obligation to distinguish the mostly good from the mostly bad.*

★ ★ ★

Victor Davis Hanson is an historian and author most recently of *Carnage and Culture* and *An Autumn of War*.

## CELEBRATING AMERICAN FREEDOM

by KAY HYMOWITZ

What lessons do children need to learn about September 11th? Some educationists say that students must be taught about America's legacy of racism and intolerance, a legacy they believe now threatens Muslims.

But our education experts are ignoring the fact that, following the attacks, Americans have been strikingly free of prejudice and hatred. The real story that our children need to hear is how this remarkable achievement was possible.

Teachers should explain that, unlike almost any other nation on earth, American identity is rooted not in blood, religion or birthplace, but in a pair of ideas: religious tolerance and personal freedom. Protestant, Jew, Catholic, Muslim or Buddhist; white, black, yellow or brown; born in Connecticut, Cologne, Conakry or Calcutta: anyone can become an American by embracing American ideals.

*It may be this that most upsets our enemies: people yearn to become Americans.*

Children need to learn how this vision has, for well over two centuries, inspired what Paul Johnson terms "the rush to America." Poor Irishmen, Jews and Chinese came for land and jobs, of course. But they also came because America promised them freedom—freedom from religious and ethnic persecution, from political and class oppression. And while in the past America often treated its immigrants poorly—teachers should not shy away from an honest recounting of nativist hostility towards Catholics and Japanese, not to mention the evils of slavery and Jim Crow racism—the nation's struggle to live up to its ideals has been sincere enough to make it the home most sought by the world's huddled masses.

It may be this that most upsets our enemies: people yearn to become Americans. People from all over the world. People of every color and creed. They seem to forgive our faults or, at least, to realize that our virtues trump our vices.

Our children can easily appreciate this story. Millions of them were either born on foreign shores themselves or are the daughters and sons of parents who were. They should take pride in the fact that our Secretary of State is the son of Jamaican immigrants. And they will readily understand why, according to the recent Arab Human Development Report, 45 percent of the world's young Arabs would immigrate to the United States if they could, even after the supposed emergence of anti-Muslim feeling generated by September 11th.

Teachers need to emphasize just how exceptional America is in this regard. In other industrialized countries, immigrants are sometimes welcomed and governments often strive to discourage hostility from the native-born. But immigrants remain outsiders; Germans and Swedes, for instance, refer to the grandsons and daughters of their Turkish citizens as “third-generation immigrants.”

Teachers in the U.S. must ensure that their pupils come to understand we were attacked by people who despise our tolerance and freedom. Radical Islamists—teachers need to clarify the distinction between moderate and fundamentalist Muslims—cannot tolerate Jews and Christians. They would keep women secluded and covered. They would accept those born in London or California only if they embraced Islamic law and the faith of Mohammed.

In short, the best way to inoculate children against the intolerance that education experts so fear is not by dwelling on America’s errors, but by celebrating the very freedoms so scorned by our enemy.

★ ★ ★

*K*ay Hymowitz is a contributing editor at the Manhattan Institute’s *City Journal* and author of *Ready or Not: Why Treating Kids as Small Adults Endangers Their Future—and Ours*.

## AMERICAN TOLERANCE

by CRAIG KENNEDY

The events of September 11, 2001 highlight the fact that there are still forces at large in the world whose primary aim is to undermine democratic societies, especially that of the United States. In the 20th century, the great foe of democracy was the Soviet Union and its allies in various corners of the world. In the 21st century, the threats to democratic states will come from states and organizations that view democratic and open societies as the enemy.

Some commentators have tried to argue that the United States was targeted on that day because of the irresponsible use of American economic and military power in the rest of the world. In this wrong-headed view, Al Qaeda was simply attacking an “imperialist power.” However, the real core of Osama bin Laden’s hatred of America is his opposition to open, secular and democratic societies where individuals have rights that are not linked to their religion, gender, sexual orientation or ethnicity. For fanatics of all stripes, the basic freedoms that Americans enjoy—and defend so vigorously—are a threat to their goal of creating societies based on narrow and unforgiving ideologies that have little room for the civil and political liberties that we take for granted.

*For fanatics of all stripes, the basic freedoms that Americans enjoy—and defend so vigorously—are a threat to their goal of creating societies based on narrow and unforgiving ideologies that have little room for the civil and political liberties that we take for granted.*

We should be proud of American tolerance. In the days after September 11th, some feared we would see a great outpouring of anti-Islamic and anti-Arab sentiment in the United States. Despite a few well-publicized attacks, however, most Americans had the opposite reaction. They reached out to their Islamic and Arab neighbors; stood guard outside mosques and Arab cultural centers; and bought books by the thousands on Islam and the Arab world. While others want to view us as a racist and intolerant country, the United States may be more tolerant than any other democracy in the world.

In Germany, France and Great Britain, respectable politicians can still make speeches characterizing certain ethnic groups in ways that are absolutely unacceptable in the United States. In those same countries, attacks upon immigrants and on mosques, synagogues and other structures associated with religious and ethnic minorities are a common occurrence. While similar attacks on buildings or individuals in the United States would be widely reported, little attention is given to these relatively frequent acts of intolerance in Europe.

The point is not that Europe is bad, but rather that Americans can feel very good about the tolerant society that we have created. It is not perfect by any means. Racial, religious and ethnic prejudices still exist. However, when compared to other open societies in the world, the United States has succeeded in creating an atmosphere in which immigrants, religious minorities and others outside of the mainstream are not just tolerated, but also actively integrated into our society. This our students need to appreciate. This our teachers need to teach them.

★ ★ ★

Craig Kennedy is president of the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

## TEACHING YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE PATRIOTS

by KATHERINE KERSTEN

If today's children are to become tomorrow's patriots, they must understand—and embrace—the principles of liberty, equality and justice on which this nation is founded. In addition, they must develop the qualities of character that mark true citizens: courage, responsibility, gratitude to their forebears and a self-sacrificing devotion to the common good. Our task as educators is to help young people see that America is worthy of their love, and to help them become worthy of their heritage as U.S. citizens.

These are daunting tasks in contemporary America, which is in the grip of a debilitating moral and cultural relativism. As a result, if we wish to foster patriotism, we must fundamentally change the way our schools teach history, government and literature.

Most schools use standard-issue textbooks in history and government classes. These texts are generally dry, lacking in detail, monotonous in style and politically tendentious. Students can never grow to love America by reading such books. But patriotic sentiment is likely to develop if we tell America's dramatic story in a way that engages young people's imagination, excites their gratitude and reveals what is at stake in the American experiment.

America's story consists of two major components: principles and people. Our challenge is to bring both to life for students. In teaching principles, we should make liberal use of original documents, as well as the stirring rhetoric of the Revolutionary and Civil War eras. The Declaration, the Constitution, the Federalist Papers, the great speeches of Washington, Patrick Henry and Lincoln—all eloquently capture the essence of the American Creed.

But teaching young people to be patriots requires something more. It requires what the ancient Greeks called a paragon, or character ideal. Many of today's students have difficulty distinguishing between a celebrity and a hero. We must acquaint them with America's great statesmen, lawgivers, military heroes and social crusaders, and lead them to say, "I want to be like that."

Our students need to hear the stories of George Washington at Valley Forge and of Nathan Hale's last words. But they should also hear the voices of ordinary Americans, like Union soldier Sullivan Ballou, who wrote movingly of his love of country to his wife before the battle of Bull Run. Novels and stories are another powerful source of patriotic sentiments. My own children have been captivated by *Johnny Tremain*, and I still remember how moved I was at reading Edward Everett Hale's *The Man Without a Country* in ninth grade.



Today's affluent students generally take America's economic freedom for granted. For this reason, they need to hear the stories of immigrants—like Elie Wiesel, Frank Capra and Jaime Escalante—who endured great hardships for a chance to live the American Dream. Students should also study the inspiring stories of African Americans, like Frederick Douglass and George Washington Carver, who—despite a heritage of slavery—overcame extraordinary obstacles to achieve success.

For over two centuries, America has been “a shining city upon a hill,” a beacon of freedom to other nations. If we want this great country to endure, we must teach our young people to love and serve it.



*K*atherine Kersten is a Distinguished Senior Fellow for Cultural Studies at the Center of the American Experiment and columnist for the *Star Tribune* in Minneapolis.

## CIVICS, SCHOOLS AND SEPTEMBER 11

by MARY BETH KLEE

*T*he United States has many civic educators—towns, churches, media, the work place, courts, all manner of voluntary organizations and, finally, the schools. On the anniversary of September 11th, American schools need not and should not shoulder the weighty burden of commemoration. Others, better suited to the task, are stepping up to the plate. Moreover, the schools may well bungle the job. A review of ready-made lesson plans on the web promises only controversy and possible fury from parents.

The civics lessons leaping from September 11th lesson plans prepared for U.S. educators are not, in the main, harmful. But they miss the point and trivialize the horrendous events. These lesson plans do not recall the facts or actions of that day. Instead, they are about avoiding judgment, resisting intolerance, envisioning a world at peace, and urging compassion “for your neighbors and colleagues who might feel at risk right now because of their ethnicity.” Teachers are told to avoid the blame game. One director of programs advises: “Do not suggest any group is responsible. Do not repeat the speculation of others, especially newscasters.” This is a strange civics lesson for children in a democratic nation. *Do not let information seep in.*

*On the anniversary of  
September 11th,  
American schools need  
not and should not  
shoulder the weighty  
burden of  
commemoration.*

While we can all agree on the importance of respect for others, this non-judgmental approach to a very judgmental event will not sit well with parents, particularly with families of victims, who are largely ignored in these lessons. They have a right to expect better.

Fortunately, they will get it from the nation’s real civic educators. New York City is planning what promises to be a profoundly moving ceremony lasting 102 minutes, the time between the strike of the first plane against the north tower and the fall of the second. The governors of New York and New Jersey will read from the Declaration of Independence and the Gettysburg Address. Former mayor Rudolph Giuliani, along with victims’ family members, will read the names of all who died.

The city of New York will not be alone. Across the land, towns, parks and churches are organizing. There will be commemorative concerts, candlelight gatherings and prayer vigils for the fallen and for those who remain. There will be community service projects to honor the victims. Some towns are naming parks and groves in honor of those who perished on that day. Others are planting “Freedom Gardens.” The Smithsonian will open a commemorative exhibit. The media are planning all-day coverage of the nation’s commemorative events. Parents and children will have many options from which to choose and from which to learn.

What should the schools do? Get on with their primary civic responsibility and teach. After the Pledge of Allegiance, a moment of silence to honor those who died, and perhaps a story of heroic firefighters and policemen on that day, teachers ought to begin helping students climb the mighty mountains of reading, math, science, geography and history.

History is of particular importance. Most U.S. schools do not teach World and American history consistently or well. September 11th shows why we must. The understanding required to make sense of that horrific day with its lessons about freedom and tolerance is not found in a single “September Eleventh Lesson Plan.” It is found in the annals of the past and in an organized program of study.

In an organized American history program, for example, students would learn of the nation’s roots as a haven for those of many faiths and beliefs, instances of colonial intolerance, and the triumph of tolerance with the disestablishment of religion. They would learn about America’s maverick path in 1776, declaring independence and establishing a republican government, our struggle for a workable constitutional democracy, and our subsequent internal fights to live up to our own ideals in, for example, the Civil War and the civil rights movements. They would learn how Americans have reacted in times past to attacks from without—about the nation’s bold mobilization after Pearl Harbor and its key role in defeating fascism. They would also learn about the nation’s failings, such as the internment of Japanese-Americans. They would learn that American history has not all been sweetness and light, but that we judge our own history by the ideal that “all men are created equal” and the hope that we stand for “liberty and justice for all.”

In an organized World history program, students would learn about the origins of Islam, its spread, its cultural dominance in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, its tradition of tolerance, its historic championship of the arts and learning. They would also learn about its potential for jihad and violence—a potential that has been as significant a part of its history as tolerance and learning. They would learn about the demise of the last great Muslim empire at the end of the first World War, and the ongoing struggle in the Middle East and Asia Minor to make the transition from a faith that governs and dictates (like Christianity at the end of the Middle Ages) to one that leads by example and inspires by its fruits. September 11th represents the collision of these two worlds.

America’s schools have much to teach. On September 11th, let them be about that honorable task. That’s civic lesson enough.

★ ★ ★

*M*ary Beth Klee, an author and education consultant, is the founder of Crossroads Academy, a Core Knowledge elementary and middle school.

## AN ATTACK UPON THE WORLD

by ERICH MARTEL

When it became clear where the September 11th attacks had come from and who the mastermind was, my first thoughts centered on the potential abuse of people who are or appear “mid-eastern.” Students in my school hail from more than 100 countries, and some are Muslim and/or Arab/Central Asian, so I knew it was important to address the issue of stereotyping. It was quite gratifying to hear President Bush insist that Muslims and Islam are not our enemies and that such abuse is unacceptable.

It was soon evident that the victims of the 9/11 attacks included nationals and U.S. immigrants from over 50 countries, from all religions, cultures, ethnicities, hues, gender-orientations, etc. Yet this infinity of labels, so important to us, was, in fanatical eyes, but a single American face. Ironically, over 100 Muslims shared the fate of fellow non-Muslims, a fact that, in fact, isn't ironic at all, but speaks to the nature of American identity. Any crusade or jihad against an imagined American Satan will inevitably target those it claims to represent. On that day, one didn't even have to be American to be an American! In that baptism of fire and dust, race and place had but one human face: the “Attack on America” was, in a uniquely American sense, an “Attack upon the World.” The need to acknowledge that reality took form in the following lines:

*In that baptism of fire  
and dust, race and place  
had but one human face:  
the “Attack on America”  
was, in a uniquely  
American sense, an  
“Attack upon the World.”*

“In self-annointed, fanatical view,  
Indifferent to gene, accent or hue:  
(Protestant, Catholic, Buddhist and Jew,  
Hindu, agnostic—and Muslim, too),  
The face in his sights—was me and you!”

[from “Osama bin Laden” by Erich Martel]

Those last inspiring moments on Flight 93 bore witness to the strength of that reality. Although we probably will never know many more details of America's First Response, the message it sends transcends so much public pettiness: A fundamentalist Christian (Todd Beamer) and an openly gay athlete (Mark Bingham), whose choices of faith and companions are often the axis of public recrimination, responded to a challenge that rendered irrelevant all but their humanity. In selfless action, they (and Jeremy Glick, a Jew, and Thomas Burnett, a Roman Catholic) became one.

Their courage is in haunting symmetry to the sacrifice of the “four chaplains” in World War II, whose troop ship, the USAT *Dorchester*, was torpedoed in the North Atlantic in February 1943. (See [www.fourchaplains.org/story.html](http://www.fourchaplains.org/story.html).) When the supply of life vests ran out, the four (a Methodist minister, a rabbi, a Catholic priest and Dutch Reformed minister) removed their own vests and passed the chance for life to the frightened young soldiers. They were last seen, arms linked, praying together as their ship went down. My mother always emphasized, in telling that story, “when giving away their vests, they didn’t first ask, ‘what religion are you?’”

The selfless acts of the “four chaplains” and the heroes of Flight 93 represent the highest American ideal, which defines humanity by action and deed, not color or creed. That ideal was assaulted on September 11th, but emerged resilient and strengthened. Understanding the reality of that ideal is part of the American story no student should miss.



*E*rich Martel teaches world history and AP U.S. History at Woodrow Wilson High School in Washington, D.C. He worked on the National History Standards and has reviewed state standards as a consultant.

## FORGING HEROES

by WALTER RUSSELL MEAD

We did not discover on September 11, 2001 that we have enemies, or even that we live in a dangerous world. What we discovered last September was that organized groups of terrorists have both the will and the ability to create terrible devastation within the United States. Americans today face a new kind of danger; the world we live in is not a peaceful place nor one in which our security can be taken for granted.

That was the bad news, and there is no point in pretending that it isn't serious and disturbing. From the President on down, Americans are rightly concerned and worried about the dangers we face.

But September 11th also gave rise to some good news. First and foremost, there was the courage and heroism that so many Americans showed on that fateful day. There were the heroes of the New York City police and fire departments who ran into burning buildings to help victims escape. There were the hundreds of workers in the World Trade Center who helped one another get out. There were the heroes on Flight 93 who, when it was clear that the terrorists who had hijacked their plane were intent on using it as a weapon, organized a counter-attack that foiled the hijackers and saved untold lives in Washington, DC. At a moment's notice, as soon as danger struck, hundreds and thousands of ordinary Americans who were going about their ordinary business—ordinary Americans who were Muslims, Christians and Jews; men and women; all races, all ethnic groups, all age groups; people from all parts of the country and all walks of life—all of a sudden turned into heroes.

*Americans showed on  
September 11th that we  
are still a nation of  
heroes.*

Americans showed on September 11th that we are still a nation of heroes. All students should be encouraged to think about what makes heroes and how, like Gotham's policemen and firemen who continued doing the right thing even when it became difficult and dangerous, we can all be heroes in our daily lives.

Younger students should also be reassured that policemen, firemen, teachers and other adults stand ready to protect them if danger strikes. Moreover, Congress and the President are working to strengthen our defenses against new attacks. Protecting the American people from new terrorist attacks is now our government's number one priority. That is good news and students should understand it.

Finally, students should reflect on our values and the values that shape American society. We don't want to live in the kind of world the terrorists want to make—a world ruled by fear, one

in which there is only one way to think and believe. Students should think about what freedom means in their own lives and why it is worth defending.

★ ★ ★

*W*alter Russell Mead is a Senior Fellow on U.S. Foreign Policy at the Council on Foreign Relations.

## DEFENDING DEMOCRACY

by JEFFREY MIREL

Immediately following the terror attacks of September 11th, Pearl Harbor was one of the most common analogies that commentators reached for to describe the shock and horror of the day. Unlike September 11, 2001, however, by December 1941 many American educators had already realized that our democratic way of life was in peril and that they had to play a major role in its defense. In May 1941, for example, the National Education Association's Educational Policies Commission published a short book by George S. Counts, a professor at Teachers College at Columbia University, explaining how educators could prepare for that role. Entitled *The Education of Free Men in American Democracy*, the Counts book powerfully and eloquently explained what American democracy is, why it is so precious, and how it must be defended. It's a book that should be required reading for all American educators today.

*The threats to democracy  
are as much intellectual  
as they are military and  
economic.*

Early in the book, Counts described the situation then facing the United States. Although written more than six decades ago, his words are remarkably fitting for the present:

Today the threat to democracy comes from a barbaric banditry, marked by cynical duplicity and outrageous violation of the ordinary rules of human decency.... This new threat to freedom comes from ruthless men of force who care nothing for civil liberties and who mock at all appeals to humanity (p. 27).

Counts argued that the threats to democracy are as much intellectual as they are military and economic. Thus, he put educators on the front lines in the battle for the hearts and minds of the young. To win this struggle, he stated that educators must understand and clearly articulate democratic ideals to their students.

In the remainder of the book, Counts spelled out a thoughtful and comprehensive vision of democratic education. He argued that all students need a firm grounding in the philosophical underpinnings of democratic thought and a detailed understanding of the essential differences between democracy and totalitarianism. Essential to such education is substantial knowledge of such disciplines as economics, sociology and international relations. Put simply, Counts argued that, "A democracy should guarantee to the members of each new generation the knowledge, the insights, and the understandings that will give them power to make them masters of the state and their rulers" (p. 67). Above all, Counts believed, students need an in-depth understanding of history, particularly "*the long struggle to liberate the human mind and to civilize the human heart*" (emphasis in the original) (p. 69).



Counts balanced his passionate defense of American democracy with the recognition that neither equality nor justice for all Americans had yet been realized. But his passion for democracy rested on the belief that our form of government provided the only way that equal rights and justice might truly be achieved. Counts urged educators to teach young people that democracy had to be defended abroad, by force if necessary, and expanded at home by strengthening the quality and effectiveness of our educational and political institutions. In the face of a rising totalitarian threat, modern American educators must teach these lessons once again to a new generation of students.



*J*effrey Mirel is Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the School of Education at the University of Michigan. As a Professor of Educational Studies and History, he specializes in the history of American education.

## TERRORISM: THE “ISM” DU JOUR

by MITCHELL PEARLSTEIN

**F**or educators who are squeamish about suggesting that the United States has both might *and* light on its side in the war on terror, a quick recounting of the more oppressive “isms” of the last century clarifies what our country is and what it isn’t.

The two most murderous totalitarianisms of our times have been communism and Nazism. While some Americans during the Cold War equated the presumed sins of Washington with the palpable evils of Moscow, it’s fair to say that, ever since the Soviet Union crumbled, facile assumptions about how democracy and communism are morally equivalent have turned into even finer dust. Who, other than straightaway enemies of freedom, is disposed to argue that the world would be a better place if the Soviet Union, rather than the United States, had prevailed?

*No nation has ever made more purposeful progress than the United States in assuring fairness for all its citizens.*

As for Nazism, who, other than the most bloodthirsty, believes the world would be better off if the Third Reich had won? Who, other than the incurably naïve, believes that going to war was avoidable once Hitler’s tanks began to roll and his ovens fired up?

Continuing a voyage through the damnable, what about racism? Has not the United States been guilty of its share? To be sure. And similar, if less severe, slings are deserved when it comes to sexism.

But what can be said about matters of race and sex in our country today when compared to other corners of the world? The first thing to conclude is that no nation has ever made more purposeful progress than the United States in assuring fairness for all its citizens. The second is that only the morally empty would even begin to equate human rights in America with killing as theological sport, as celebrated elsewhere.

Which brings us to terrorism: The “ism” du jour, and probably for a long stretch to come.

Open-mindedness is a good idea and chauvinism a bad one. In educational settings especially, scholarly distance is also a good idea and flackery a bad one. But if an uncommon century of brutality has taught anything, it’s that the United States—if not always on the side of the angels—has consistently been on history’s decent side. We’ve gotten the biggest questions and the biggest battles right.

Educators, by all means, ought to resist the incitements of jingoists and the seductions of the

oversimplifiers. But they must resist an excess of complexity, too, especially when young minds seek clear answers from them. Teachers having a hard time deciphering the difference between good guys and bad guys in the war on terror ought to bone up on their country's track record of lifting life and safeguarding liberty. This, so that they may grow in confidence that the odds are zero that the United States is on the wrong side of this war. And so that their students will understand why this is a war that America must win.

★ ★ ★

*M*itchell Pearlstein is president of the Center of the American Experiment in Minneapolis.

## SEEING THE PATTERNS

by THEODORE RABB

There are many ways to find meaning in the events of September 11, 2001, but one of the most important is to set them into the perspective of history—to recognize that what happened on that appalling day is part of a pattern stretching back over many centuries. Viewed in that context, the assault on Americans going about their daily lives may remind us of man's repeated inhumanity to man and the persistence of intolerance and hatred. But the long view is helpful above all because we know the end of those earlier stories, and the 20-20 vision of hindsight can help us to see how deluded is the claim that large-scale murder and violence, directed at ordinary people, can solve intractable problems.

Dozens of analogies could be drawn, but just one example from the past can suggest the futility and self-destructiveness of the slaughter of innocents. On August 24, 1572, the feast of St. Bartholomew, hundreds of French Protestants had gathered in Paris for the wedding of one of their leaders. Paris was overwhelmingly a Catholic city in an age when the two branches of Western Christianity were locked in a fierce struggle to persuade people that only their own version of truth, worship and the path to salvation could be correct.

The possibility of destroying the leadership of France's Protestants as they conveniently assembled in Paris proved too tempting for the Catholics. St. Bartholomew had become a Christian martyr when he was flayed alive—his skin literally torn from his body—and that became the dominant image as the saint's day dawned and a fearsome massacre began. It soon spread throughout France, and within a few days thousands of Protestants had been killed, often in the most brutal fashion.

The result, however, was exactly the opposite of what the perpetrators had hoped. Rather than losing heart, France's Protestants renewed their struggle with increased vigor. And just seventeen years after the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre, one of their leaders who had been a major target but had escaped, Henry of Navarre, became king of France as Henry IV. To be accepted as king, he became a nominal Catholic, but his watchword was to be tolerance and, under his rule, Protestants and Catholics gradually learned to live side by side.

Similar stories can be found dozens of times across many centuries and all cultures. At other times and places, Protestants, too, butchered their enemies, and there is hardly a group of zeal-

*The 20-20 vision of hindsight can help us to see how deluded is the claim that large-scale murder and violence, directed at ordinary people, can solve intractable problems.*

ous believers who have not, at some point, come to believe that bloodshed is the best means of advancing their views. But ideas and beliefs do not travel well by force. Rome could not crush Christianity; persecution could not suffocate the puritans who helped found America.

Beyond the horror and anguish of September 11th, therefore, one needs to understand its ultimate ineffectiveness. If anything, such events merely reinforce the very outlook and commitments that they hope to demolish. They remind us of the insight of Jonathan Swift, an eighteenth-century clergyman who wrote *Gulliver's Travels*: "We have enough religion to hate one another, but not enough to love one another."



*T*heodore Rabb, the author of *Renaissance Lives*, is Professor of History at Princeton University, where he has taught European history since 1967.

## AMERICA: ALWAYS VULNERABLE, NEVER INEVITABLE

by RICHARD RODRIGUEZ

America's children need to see clearly a terrible truth through the dust of September 11th: There is nothing inevitable about our civilization—nothing inevitable about American individualism, or freedom of movement and social mobility, or our secular tolerance. All can be undone.

For my parents, immigrants to this country, America seemed surprising and new. On the other hand, because I was born here I assumed America. I assumed that my parents' hard work would gain us passage to the middle class; I assumed that women and men of every race could vote; I assumed freedom of opinion, just as I assumed that people of various religions could live as neighbors.

Perhaps such rosy assumptions are inevitable in the young. The old know change; the young know only the given. Similarly, because America is a young nation, we easily assume our civilization as a given. Older nations, by contrast, have seen their great cities toppled, the beliefs and assumptions of generations overturned overnight.

When I was in school, U.S. history classes seemed happily fated. There were past calamities, to be sure—slavery, the massacre of Indians, the mistreatments suffered by the poor—but these were mere obstacles to the present, obstacles overcome by battles or treaties or acts of Congress or by the lucky coincidence of heroic lives and national need. As a boy, I loved American history, precisely for its lack of tragedy. I loved Ben Franklin and the stories of the Underground Railroad and the New Deal, because everything led happily to me, living at 935 39th Street in Sacramento, California.

The man awoke, years later, to see jet airliners (the symbol of our mobility) turned against us by terrorists; to see the collapse of the World Trade Center (the symbol of our global capitalism); to see a wall of the Pentagon (the assurance of our self-defense) in flame. What I realized that Tuesday morning last September is that America is vulnerable to foreign attack.

But I wonder now if we understand that our civilization has always been vulnerable. Our American values and laws emerged over time, after false starts and despite many near-reversals. For example, our tradition of religious tolerance and secularism that today makes America home to every religion in the world was not born easily or quickly. Mormons, Jews,

*There is nothing inevitable about our civilization—nothing inevitable about American individualism, or freedom of movement and social mobility, or our secular tolerance.*

Catholics—a variety of persons have in the past suffered religious persecution at the hands of their American neighbors. Today, to their and our shame, there are some in America who attack Muslims. Without a sense of the tragic in U.S. history books, we have never understood that America finally was formed against and despite the mistakes and reversals we committed against our own civilization. Now, our children glance up to wonder at the low-flying plane. They need, also, to look back in time, to see America ever-invented, forged through difficult decades into a civilization. That civilization was always at risk. Always vulnerable. Never inevitable. Not just because of threats from without. But from our own ignorance of all we possessed.

★ ★ ★

*R*ichard Rodriguez is the author of a trilogy on American public life and his personal life: *Hunger of Memory*; *Days of Obligation*; and *Brown*.

## AN ATTACK ON WHO WE ARE

by ANDREW J. ROTHERHAM

As the anniversary of last September's horrific terrorist attacks draws near, American classrooms will understandably focus on these events. For teachers, this presents a challenge because there is little high-quality curricular material about the attacks or the contextual issues surrounding them. Among the chattering classes, this vacuum is creating a not unwarranted anxiety that teachers will fail to impart to students the most vital lessons about 9/11 or, conversely, that crudely emphasizing American values will morph into jingoism.

While it is important for schools to teach about tolerance for different people within this country and around the world, we do students and ourselves a disservice by equating tolerance with a relativist examination of September 11th. Teachers should emphasize three things about 9/11. First, we were attacked not because of something we did but because of who we are and what kind of society we have built. Second, many of our most cherished institutions and ideas—including popularly elected governments, a free press and religious pluralism—do not exist in the nations that bred these attacks. Third, the most sacred principles and traditions that animate our society came into being not by accident but through sacrifice and battle—and we must fight to preserve them.

*The 9/11 tragedy was not about what we do but about who we are.*

Teachers must help students understand the complicated reasons behind the attacks. They were not a reaction against some particular event or policy but rather an assault on U.S. values and American engagements in an interconnected world. In short, the 9/11 tragedy was not about what we do but about who we are. It is essential that teachers help students understand the conditions in many of the countries that are fostering terrorism. It's understandable that many people in the Middle East resent and misunderstand the United States. But this stems from their own nations' archaic economic policies, inflammatory state-controlled media and theocratic regimes, not from U.S. policies.

The anniversary of September 11th provides an ideal time to review the texts that helped launch our nation. They can be studied with different degrees of depth depending on the age of students, but primary documents such as the Constitution, Bill of Rights and Declaration of Independence can help children of almost every age to understand the foundations of our nation, its democratic tradition, and the guiding principles of its founders. Too often, we teach only what these documents say and not why they are so important.

To borrow from Winston Churchill, our way of life is the worst one, except for all the oth-



ers. When history and social studies are taught fairly and rigorously, most students will realize the great fortune that is our American citizenship, will celebrate our strengths, embrace our diversity, and harbor a healthy antipathy for those who seek to harm us.



*A*ndrew J. Rotherham is director of education policy at the Progressive Policy Institute.

## DEFINING THE AMERICAN IDENTITY

by GLORIA SESSO and JOHN PYNE

Students need to be in touch with and affirm those values that define us as a nation; those are the values that the September 11th terrorists and their controllers attacked and scorned. The grandeur and significance of our political, economic and social values need to be celebrated as a unifying experience.

Agents of tyranny and repression attacked our way of life and assaulted the foundations of our free society. What are those foundations? Certain documents shed light on who Americans are and what we value. Documents such as Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*, the Declaration of Independence, *Letters from an American Farmer*, the Gettysburg Address, FDR's "Four Freedoms" speech and Ronald Reagan's statement to the country after the Challenger explosion stem from the American Revolution; they help to define ourselves as a nation and to unite us as a people.

*The grandeur and significance of our political, economic and social values need to be celebrated as a unifying experience.*

When Thomas Paine wrote that "Freedom has been hunted round the globe.... O' receive the fugitive, and prepare an asylum for mankind," he was giving voice, at the beginning, to our purpose as a nation. The new nation would be the place where opportunity to develop economically and individually would be glorified and promoted. The new country would oppose all tyrants, religious, political, social or economic. The words of the Declaration of Independence resonate and elaborate the theme. Its premises have evolved into what has become America's clarifying and unifying ideology—the consent of the governed, participation for all citizens, the equality of citizenship and the importance of due process, voting and the active pursuit of life, liberty and happiness. Teachers should help students to analyze the document in terms of its original meaning and what it has evolved into as a formative source for what it means to be an American. The Declaration also reminds us of our commitment to be vigilant in the protection of liberty.

Students need to be asked what Lincoln meant in the Gettysburg Address when he said, "these dead shall not have died in vain?" What was the "new birth of freedom" of which he spoke? Lincoln viewed the Declaration of Independence as the founding moment of American identity. His "four score and seven years" pointed to 1776, and he revolutionized the Declaration's ideals further when he spoke of dedication "to the proposition that all men are created equal."

Crevecoeur’s *Letters from an American Farmer* is not widely used in K-12 classrooms. But now is an appropriate time to analyze its passages about “The American... a new man.” The American is a product of different cultures united by freedom of opportunity, and the “rewards of his industry follow with equal steps the progress of his labour.”

In FDR’s “Four Freedoms” speech and Ronald Reagan’s statement to the country after the Challenger disaster, the ideals of the founding documents are repeated. Students should relate these speeches both to the immediate context and to the unifying tradition to which they referred. The cowardly attack by tyrannical terrorists who oppose our way of life is an opportunity for students to reflect more deeply upon the shared values and strengths gained in the study of individual self-sacrifice and the celebration of common—but lofty—goals and principles.



*G*loria Sesso is Director of Social Studies in New York’s Patchogue-Medford School District and senior vice-president of the Long Island Council for the Social Studies.

*J*ohn Pyne is Supervisor of Social Studies in New Jersey’s West Milford School District and executive secretary of the New Jersey Council for History Education.

## ALLEVIATING OUR HISTORICAL IGNORANCE

by SHELDON M. STERN

Last November, James Loewen, keynote speaker at the annual conference of the National Council for the Social Studies, attacked “lies” in American history and ridiculed the notion of “God Bless America.” “The Swedes, the Kenyans,” he proclaimed, “don’t think God blesses America over all other countries.”

Is it possible that no one in the audience saw through this nonsense? “God Bless America” is not an assertion of entitlement; rather it is an invocation, a prayer *asking* for the blessing of God. Swedes and Kenyans are equally entitled to seek that blessing. Loewen’s reception by the NCSS is hardly surprising. As Diane Ravitch wrote in 1997, 81.5 percent of American social studies teachers did not major or minor in history and most do not have degrees in any academic field. It shows.

In the rush to “understand” the September 11th attacks, social studies gurus have bungled a stunning opportunity to teach the history of American constitutionalism. “It was not self-evident in 1776,” historian Lance Banning wrote in 1987, “that all men are created equal, that governments derive their just authority from popular consent, or that good governments exist in order to protect God-given rights. These concepts are not undeniable in any age. [Including today!] From the point of view of eighteenth-century Europeans, they contradicted common sense. The notions that a sound society could operate without natural subordination, where men were either commoners or nobles, or that a stable government could be based on elections, seemed both frightening and ridiculously at odds with the obvious lessons of the past.”

*In the rush to  
“understand” the  
September 11th attacks,  
social studies gurus have  
bungled a stunning  
opportunity to teach the  
history of American  
constitutionalism.*

How did James Madison grasp, in 1788, a reality that Marxists and social studies “experts” fail to understand two centuries later? “If men were angels,” he wrote, “no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: You must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself.” Why did Americans develop such beliefs at a time when no other country lived by them? The question itself is dead on arrival in the world of multicultural education because it suggests American exceptionalism.

As we approach the first anniversary of September 11th, this multiculturalist perspective has, in effect, become a rationalization for the most reactionary movement in the world today. As historian Bernard Lewis recently observed: Muslim societies reject the separation of church and state, reject equality for women, reject equality (and even tolerance) for homosexuals (routinely buried alive during the Taliban regime), reject freedom of speech, thought and religion, reject foreign cultural influences, etc. Americans can study Muslim culture and history in hundreds of universities, but American-studies programs are exceedingly hard to find in the Muslim world.

Teaching and learning real history require hard work. A recent satire, for example, asked key historical figures: “Why did the chicken cross the road?” Some mock responses: Locke: “Because he was exercising his natural right to liberty.” Marx: “It was an historical inevitability.” Lincoln: “The world will little note, nor long remember, why this chicken crossed the road.” FDR: “This administration will establish an agency—The Poultry Crossing Control Commission—to monitor all road crossings by chickens.” JFK: “Ask not why the chicken crossed the road; ask what road you can cross to build a better America.” I distributed this spoof to classes of advanced placement history seniors at several of the most prestigious high schools in Massachusetts and the students were puzzled, embarrassed and unresponsive. They were, as the kids might say, clueless as to what was being satirized because they had never learned much about these “dead, white males.”

As we approach September 11th, to paraphrase the 1983 commission on excellence in education, we must understand that, if the enemies of open, democratic societies had used force to impose this historical and civic ignorance upon us and our children, we would consider it an act of war.

★ ★ ★

Sheldon M. Stern served as historian at the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston from 1977 to 1999.

## HEROES AND VICTIMS

by SANDRA STOTSKY

The political principles and institutions that most Americans prize are resented and despised by many people around the world. One civic lesson that students ought to learn in the aftermath of 9/11/01 is that we cannot defend those principles and institutions from the hatred and violence of a well-financed worldwide network of religious psychopaths without a clear understanding of what these principles and institutions are or of the personal qualities that help maintain them. While all those who perished on 9/11 should be mourned as victims of the suicide bombers, teachers should help their students remember and honor some of the innocent civilians as heroes. These include not only the hundreds of firefighters and police who struggled to rescue those entombed in the World Trade Center and who died in the line of duty when the two towers collapsed, but also those courageous passengers on the United Airlines flight who stormed the cockpit and caused the plane to crash into a field in Pennsylvania instead of into a populated area and a major landmark symbolizing our country.

*We cannot defend those principles and institutions from the hatred and violence of a well-financed worldwide network of religious psychopaths without a clear understanding of what these principles and institutions are or of the personal qualities that help maintain them.*

To place the events of the day into a civic framework and to encourage their participation in a venerable civic tradition, conscientious teachers might have students discuss the following questions:

- How do the political principles and institutions we value as Americans differ from those of the societies from which the terrorists came?
- Why is the way of life that Americans enjoy so resented by people like the religious fanatics who chose to murder thousands of innocent civilians (and to commit suicide in the process)?
- What are the qualities of a hero? What motivated these firefighters and policemen to carry out their duties in a situation of extreme danger? What motivated the United Airlines passengers to act on behalf of the lives of unknown others in the face of their own certain death?
- What are other examples from our own history that illustrate courage in the face of mortal peril? Invite a veteran of World War II to talk about incidents known to him or her. Those who took part in D-Day, for example, can tell students remarkable stories about the wartime expe-

riences that brought out the character of ordinary Americans and created heroes out of them. Are these the costs of maintaining a free society?

- Would your students like to write letters of shared sorrow to the children of those who lost their lives on 9/11, much as students did after the Challenger disaster or the death of President John F. Kennedy? What is the value of this expression of civic identity, to them and to the families of those who died?



Sandra Stotsky is Senior Associate Commissioner in the Massachusetts Department of Education. She is currently directing the revision of the Massachusetts history and social science curriculum framework. For the past four summers, she has directed a week-long institute, “We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution,” co-sponsored by the Center for Civic Education and the Lincoln and Therese Filene Foundation.

## FIGHTING COMPLACENCY

by KENNETH R. WEINSTEIN

A key reason that Al Qaeda operatives wreaked havoc on September 11, 2001 was that almost no one, especially among our political and cultural elites, believed that our national security was in any serious jeopardy. Our system of democratic capitalism exacerbated that naiveté by leading us to believe that other societies simply offered mirror images of our own. Prior to September 11th, both the American right and left suffered from a similar hubris: that liberal democracy, with its promise of prosperity and individual fulfillment, was soon to triumph throughout the world.

The libertarian right fosters the conviction that capitalism dissolves ancient barriers by bringing individuals together on the ground of self-interest. The cultural left admits these differences but paradoxically downplays their violent basis through relativism and multiculturalism. It views cultural diversity and national differences as matters of taste, arguing that the greatest crime of all is judgmentalism. Strangely enough, these right and left wing dogmas culminate in the same social characteristic: the quintessentially American virtue of niceness, which, in the end, led us to be less suspicious of terrorists in our midst than we ought to have been.

Through one of the most costly civics lessons ever, our generation has learned the price of such complacency. It ended in dramatic fashion on September 11th as the passengers of United Airlines flight 93, in true Tocquevillian fashion, formed a spontaneous voluntary association to wrest the cockpit from the hijackers and save the White House from destruction.

Complacency, though, is bound to arise in the future, especially if presidential leadership and American ingenuity forestall further horrific attacks. Americans need to maintain their vigilance against the unpredictable nature of such asymmetric threats. Such vigilance is a cornerstone to any effective homeland defense.

Teachers of American civics have a special role to play by promoting this vigilance as a corrective to the niceness that has become an American virtue. We need instead to recognize America's challenged status in the world.

Strangely enough, the best way to come to a renewed appreciation of the threat we face would be to take seriously the hate-filled words of our most significant enemies. An American populace cognizant of Osama bin Laden's intent would never have allowed our shores to har-

*Teachers of American civics have a special role to play by promoting this vigilance as a corrective to the niceness that has become an American virtue.*



bor his lieutenants.

In the end, though, the inclusion of our enemies' hate-filled rhetoric should be just a small part of American civics, the larger share of which should remain the province of the words and deeds of our founders and greatest heroes.

★ ★ ★

*K*enneth R. Weinstein is vice president of Hudson Institute and director of its Washington office.

## WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT WAR

by JAMES Q. WILSON

*The most mischievous view about killing innocent people is that a killer who is a terrorist to his victims is a hero to his supporters. That argument has been used in an effort to undermine the moral blame that ought to attach to people who kill innocent women and children, whether the killers are members of the Irish Republican Army, Soviet leaders who tried to “purge” their societies, the Nazis who killed millions of Jews and Gypsies, or Pol Pot who killed millions of his fellow Cambodians. They were terrorists pure and simple, not heroes. Historians know this. Their own countrymen know this. Our teachers must ensure that our children come to know this.*

*The most mischievous view about killing innocent people is that a killer who is a terrorist to his victims is a hero to his supporters.*

Our children also need to understand the nature of war—a topic some teachers eschew because it is so unpleasant, others because it is such an old-fashioned way to explain history. Yet throughout human history, people have waged war against one another. Peace has often been no more common than battles. For at least two thousand years, however, thinkers have debated the circumstances under which it is right to fight a war. This does not mean they have always come to the right conclusions. Philosophers and religious authorities sometimes err. Yet the influence of their ideas can be seen in how often newspapers and television programs raise questions about whether American troops fighting in Afghanistan or Vietnam have unnecessarily killed innocent people.

The argument that war can sometimes be justified is called the “just war” theory. Its central arguments are that war cannot be used for unimportant reasons and that, in a war, it is wrong to attack innocent civilians deliberately and without it being an inherent part of a campaign against military targets.

If innocent civilians are deliberately killed when they are not the accidental casualties of a military campaign, we call such killing terrorism. Terrorism is designed to frighten civilians, wreak revenge, call attention to the terrorists, and undermine a government’s desire to defend its citizens.

The United States has frequently been the victim of terrorist attacks, as when Pan Am flight 103 was exploded in the air, when bombs were set off in the World Trade Center in 1993, when American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania were bombed, and when over three thousand people were killed by hijacked airliners on September 11, 2001.

That people have been affected by the “just war” argument can be seen in the tendency of some anti-American leaders to claim that September 11th was caused by secret American agents or by Jewish leaders. No one believes this nonsense, but it is worth noting that it is an effort to deflect blame away from the terrorists who actually ordered the attacks.

It is sometimes hard to draw a bright, clear line between a military campaign in which innocent people are killed and a deliberate terrorist attack on innocent people. Some critics of the American military have argued that, when the United States bombed the civilian sections of German and Japanese cities during World War II, they were committing illegal acts. In my view that argument is wrong, since the goal of these bombing campaigns was to defeat military opponents and thus, in the long run, save lives. But it is worth discussing these arguments in order to help students appraise the “just war” philosophy.

The terrorist attacks of September 11th were carried out by Muslims, but this does not mean that the Islamic faith believes in terrorism any more than atrocities committed by American forces means that Christianity or Judaism endorses terrorism. No religion asserts that innocent people should be the object of a deliberate attack that lacks any legitimate military purpose. In every religion, there have been extremists who corrupt the teachings of their faith in order to justify terrorism, just as in some political philosophies, such as Marxism, there have been people who justified not only terrorism but the execution of many innocent citizens because they were thought to be “enemies of the state.”

These are some of the things that our children need to learn about war from their teachers.

★ ★ ★

*J*ames Q. Wilson, a criminologist, economist and political analyst, is professor emeritus at the University of California at Los Angeles.

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS

Listed below are numerous additional resources suggested by the authors of these essays and other wise counselors. While no such list could be comprehensive, the resources gathered here offer much food for thought on the topics of American history and civics, patriotism, political philosophy and the Middle East. At the very least, curious and persistent educators should find this collection to be a useful launch pad for their own explorations.

Three major categories follow: (1) U.S. history and civics; (2) Terrorism, the Middle East and Islamic history; (3) Character development, autobiography and historical fiction. Within each, we turn first to books, then (as warranted) to articles, then to pertinent web sites.

### U.S. HISTORY AND CIVICS

#### Books

Adler, Mortimer. *We Hold These Truths: Understanding the Ideas and Ideals of the Constitution*. New York: Collier Books, 1987.

*A thought-provoking look at the foundations of our government, how it has changed, and the ideals to which it should aspire.*

Berns, Walter. *Making Patriots*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001.

*A keen and passionate look at how even the most self-interested of men can become patriots. Draws heavily from the life and works of Lincoln.*

Boorstin, Daniel J. *The Americans: The Colonial Experience*. New York: Random House, 1964.

*The first in a trilogy, this book examines how the beliefs and habits of America's early settlers shaped our lives today.*

———. *The Americans: The National Experience*. New York: Random House, 1967.

*Second in the trilogy, it explores the patterns of living that shaped the character of the United States from the Revolution to the Civil War.*

———. *The Americans: The Democratic Experience*. New York: Random House, 1974.

*Concludes Boorstin's trilogy with an account of post-Civil War America.*

Bowen, Catherine Drinker. *Miracle at Philadelphia: The Story of the Constitutional Convention, May to September 1787*. Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1966.

*A classic and splendidly wrought account of that seminal event.*

Brookhiser, Richard. *Founding Father: Rediscovering George Washington*. New York: Free Press, 1996.

*Traces Washington's career as soldier and statesman and shows how his character and values shaped our early politics.*

Cheney, Lynne V. *America: A Patriotic Primer*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002.

*Written by our Second Lady, this book paints for young children a patriotic portrait of America from A-Z.*

Crevecoeur, J. Hector St. John. *Letters from an American Farmer*. 1782. Reprint, edited by Susan Manning. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

*Considered by some the first work of American literature, this classic addresses the question of national identity and celebrates America's ideals.*

Davis, David Brion and Steven Mintz, eds. *The Boisterous Sea of Liberty: Documentary History of America from Discovery through the Civil War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

*An invaluable anthology of original historical documents.*

Educational Policies Commission. *The Education of Free Men in American Democracy*. Washington, DC: National Education Association, 1941.

*Written at the outset of World War II by George S. Counts, a professor of education, this work eloquently explains what American democracy is, why it is precious, and how it must be defended—and the schools' role in relation thereto.*

Ellis, Joseph J. *Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000.

*Focusing on six critical moments, this book shows that the truths we now hold to be self-evident were quite contentious in our early history.*

Hakim, Joy. *A History of US: Eleven Volume Set*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

*A lively, well-written, comprehensive and somewhat opinionated American history series written for school children.*

Kammen, Michael. *A Machine That Would Go of Itself: The Constitution in American Culture*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986.

*Described as a "landmark study of the cultural impact of the American Constitution."*

Library of America, ed. *Lincoln: Selected Speeches and Writings*. New York: Vintage Books, 1992.

*A wide-ranging collection of Honest Abe's writings.*

MacDonald, Forrest. *Novus Ordo Seclorum: The Intellectual Origins of the Constitution*. Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1985.

*A classic.*

Middlekauff, Robert. *The Glorious Cause: The American Revolution 1763 – 1789*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.

*An account of the Revolution that aims to separate fact from fiction.*

Morgan, Edmund S. *Inventing the People: The Rise of Popular Sovereignty in England and America*. Reprint, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1988.

*An analysis of the concept of popular sovereignty.*

- Novak, Michael. *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982.  
*A groundbreaking theological and political defense of democratic capitalism as ideal and as reality.*
- Pangle, Lorraine Smith and Thomas L. Pangle. *The Learning of Liberty: The Educational Ideas of the American Founders*. Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1993.  
*An exploration of the Founders' views on public education and civic instruction.*
- Rabb, Theodore K. and Sherrin Marshall, ed. *Origins of the Modern West: Essays and Sources in Renaissance and Early Modern European History*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993.  
*A look at political, military, social, economic, artistic, scientific and religious history during the Renaissance. Includes a chapter on religious dissent.*
- Remini, Robert. *Henry Clay: Statesman for the Union*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991.  
*A powerful biography of one of our more interesting statesmen.*
- Schlesinger, Jr., Arthur M. *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multi-Cultural Society*. Rev. and enl. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998.  
*An examination of multiculturalism gone awry. Includes an annotated list of core books on the American experience.*
- Tarnas, Richard. *The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View*. Reprint, New York: Harmony Books, 1991.  
*A critical survey of Western thought, including key ideas about which every student should learn.*
- West, Thomas G. *Vindicating the Founders: Race, Sex, Class and Justice in the Origins of America*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1997.  
*Debunks many of the myths circulating about the Founders.*
- Wheeler, Richard, ed. *Voices of 1776: The Story of the American Revolution in the Words of Those Who Were There*. Reprint, New York: Crowell, 1972.  
*A thrilling compilation of Revolutionary War-era letters, journals and diaries.*
- Wood, Gordon S. *The American Revolution: A History*. New York: The Modern Library, 2002.  
*Written by an eminent historian of the Revolution and Constitution, this short book deals not only with the military conflict but also with the emergence of our national commitments to freedom, equality and constitutionalism.*

## Articles

- American Federation of Teachers, “**Education for Democracy: A Statement of Principles**,” 1987.  
*A strong statement of how to teach students about democracy and engender patriotism. Includes “guidelines for strengthening the teaching of democratic values.”*

Gordon, David T., "Teaching Civics After September 11," *Harvard Education Letter*, July/August 2002.  
<http://www.edletter.org/past/issues/2001-nd/civics.shtml>

*Discusses the imperative of strong civics education.*

Hanson, Victor Davis, "The Civic Education America Needs," *City Journal*, Summer 2002.  
[http://www.city-journal.org/html/12\\_3\\_the\\_civic.html](http://www.city-journal.org/html/12_3_the_civic.html)

*Makes a powerful case for a rigorous pro-America civics education.*

## **Web sites**

### *American Political Science Association*

<http://www.apsanet.org/CENnet/thisconstitution>

*A set of essays commissioned for the Bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution by prominent history, law and political science scholars. A great "one-stop" information source for teachers.*

### *Back Pack Catalogue*

<http://www.thebackpack.com>

*Targeted to home-schoolers but useful for all, this site sells books, music and other resources on U.S. history (and other subjects). Some have a Christian orientation; all feature a healthy dose of patriotism.*

### *Bill of Rights*

<http://memory.loc.gov/const/bor.html>

*An online version of the Bill of Rights, courtesy of the Library of Congress.*

### *Bill of Rights Institute*

<http://www.billofrightsinstitute.org>

*Lots of great, free lesson plans dealing with the Founders, U.S. history and citizenship, including one focused on the civic values that Americans demonstrated on 9/11/01.*

### *Chapel of the Four Chaplains*

<http://www.fourchaplains.org/story.html>

*An inspiring story of valor and selflessness during World War II with parallels to the heroism of the passengers on United flight 93, which crashed in Pennsylvania.*

### *Common Sense by Thomas Paine*

<http://www.ushistory.org/paine/commonsense/index.htm>

*On online edition of Paine's classic tract challenging Britain's authority over the American colonies.*

### *Declaration of Independence*

<http://memory.loc.gov/const/declar.html>

*A convenient electronic version of an essential primary source, courtesy of the Library of Congress.*

### *Dialogue on Freedom*

<http://www.dialogueonfreedom.com>

*Initiated by Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy and sponsored by the American Bar Association, this site explores American values and civic traditions by fostering communication between legal experts and high school students.*

### *Federalist Papers*

<http://memory.loc.gov/const/fed/fedpapers.html>

*A convenient online collection of these classic essays by Hamilton, Madison and Jay, meant to explain the new Constitution and build support for its ratification.*

### *“Four Freedoms,” Franklin D. Roosevelt’s speech to Congress, January 6, 1941*

<http://www.libertynet.org/~edcivic/fdr.html>

*Celebrates the “four freedoms” that the U.S. strove to preserve in World War II.*

### *Gettysburg Address*

<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/gadd/4403.html>

*Lincoln’s classic text here offered in several dozen languages.*

### *Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History*

<http://www.gilderlehrman.org>

*An extraordinary variety of resources, textbook chapters and lesson plans on America’s history and founding ideals.*

### *John Locke’s Second Treatise on Government*

<http://www.liberty1.org/2dtreat.htm>

*An online version of this classic political text from which we derive the principle of government by the consent of the governed.*

### *K12’s Patriotism Curriculum*

<http://patriot.k12.com/index.html>

*A wonderful collection of famous quotes from American patriots, information on ten great patriotic places across America, and lessons that teach the importance of patriotism in America’s past.*

### *Library of Congress*

<http://www.loc.gov>

*An invaluable resource for educators. Offers links to the American “founding documents” as well as the popular “Today in History” series, information on pending congressional legislation and the world’s largest “card catalogue.”*

### *Liberty Fund, Inc.*

<http://www.libertyfund.org>

*An educational foundation dedicated to promoting freedom and responsibility. Offers many resources*



exploring “the interrelationship of liberty and responsibility in individual life, society, governance, or economics.”

*The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave*

<http://www.history.rochester.edu/class/douglass/duglas11.txt>

*Mandatory reading on the ills of slavery written by an extraordinary American.*

*National Archives’ Digital Classroom*

[http://www.archives.gov/digital\\_classroom/index.html](http://www.archives.gov/digital_classroom/index.html)

*An excellent resource that helps document the rights of American citizens and the actions of their legislators.*

*Restoring America Project*

<http://www.4america.com>

*Dedicated to restoring moral character to America’s youth and designed for secondary school students and teachers, this site provides information about celebrated historical figures.*

*Ronald Reagan’s speech on the Challenger Disaster, January 28, 1986*

<http://www.reaganfoundation.org/reagan/speeches/challenger.asp>

*An extraordinary speech delivered by President Reagan at a time of national sorrow.*

*“Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior in Company and Conversation”*

<http://gwpapers.virginia.edu/civility/transcript.html>

*Drawn from George Washington’s papers, these maxims are believed to be the moral foundations upon which he built his character.*

*United States Constitution*

<http://memory.loc.gov/const/const.html>

*A handy online version of our nation’s governing centerpiece, courtesy of the Library of Congress.*

*U.S. History*

<http://www.ushistory.org>

*Billed as the “Congress of Websites,” this site offers a host of resources on the period in our early history when Philadelphia was the nation’s capital.*

*Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom*

<http://lcweb.loc.gov/exhibits/religion/f0510s.jpg>

*Jefferson’s classic defense of religious freedom.*

## TERRORISM, THE MIDDLE EAST AND ISLAMIC HISTORY

### Books

Bennett, William J. *Why We Fight: Moral Clarity and the War on Terrorism*. New York: Doubleday, 2002.  
*Stands up for America and for moral absolutes through an examination of the guiding principles of the war on terror.*

Kramer, Martin. *Ivory Towers on Sand*. Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2001.

*A brilliant critique of the failure of Middle Eastern studies in American academe.*

Lewis, Bernard. *The Middle East: A Brief History of the Last 2,000 Years*. New York: Scribner, 1995.  
*Middle Eastern history explained by the Western world's foremost expert on that subject.*

Lewis, Bernard. *What Went Wrong? Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

*A fascinating exploration of the tensions between the Middle East and the West.*

### Articles

Lewis, Bernard, “**The Revolt of Islam**,” *The New Yorker*, November 19, 2001, 50-63.

[http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?011119fa\\_FACT2](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?011119fa_FACT2)

*America's foremost scholar of Islam explains how the religion's conflict with the West began and how it might end.*

Lewis, Bernard, “**The Roots of Muslim Rage**,” *The Atlantic*, September 1990.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/90sep/rage.htm>

*A prescient article describing the history of the Muslim world that is exceptionally helpful in understanding the present conflict.*

“**Translation of Letter Left by Hijackers**,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 28, 2001.

<http://www.latimes.com/la-092901trans.story>

*A direct translation of a letter—including chapter and verse from the Koran—that the FBI says was left by hijackers of three of the four flights that crashed on September 11th.*

Weigel, George et al. “**In a Time of War**,” *First Things*, December 2001.

<http://www.firstthings.com/ftissues/ft0112/opinion/editorial.html>

*Provides insight into how current assumptions depart from traditional just war theory.*

Zakaria, Fareed, “**The Politics of Rage: Why Do They Hate Us?**” *Newsweek*, October 15, 2001.

<http://www.msnbc.com/news/639057.asp?cp1=1#BODY>

*Offers sharp insight into the roots of anti-American sentiment in the Middle East.*

## Web site

### *Daniel Pipes*

<http://www.danielpipes.org>

*A wealth of information on the Middle East assembled by an authoritative commentator. Valuable for teachers seeking background on that region and on Islam.*

## CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT, AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND HISTORICAL FICTION

### Books

Chambers, Whittaker. *Witness*. New York: Random House, 1952.

*A useful if unexpected book for gaining perspective on the war against terrorism and an understanding of the demands of long, grim and essential struggles.*

Forbes, Esther. *Johnny Tremain*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1943.

*Riveting historical fiction centering on a boy's life in Boston during the Revolution.*

Gibbon, Peter H. *A Call to Heroism: Renewing America's Vision of Greatness*. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2002.

*A sort of curricular Mount Rushmore, combining profiles of dozens of heroes with a careful discussion of why educators should teach children about such people.*

Hale, Edward Everett. *The Man Without a Country*. Boston: Tickner and Fields, 1865.

*A classic tale that reminds us of patriotic duty and the value of loyalty and identity.*

Keith, Harold. *Rifles for Watie*. New York: Crowell, 1957.

*A vibrant children's novel that views the Civil War through the eyes of a young Union soldier.*

Levinson, Daniel J. and T. W. Adorno. *The Authoritarian Personality*. New York: Harper, 1950.

*A classic psychological study of tyrannical personalities.*

Morrow, Honore and Edward Shenton. *On to Oregon!* New York: W. Morrow & Company, 1946.

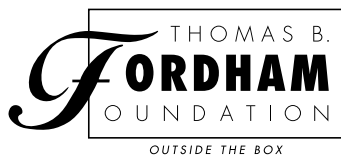
*A wonderful children's book that tells the true story of how 13-year-old John Sanger looked after his six siblings when their parents died on the Oregon Trail.*

## Web site

### *American Girls Collection*

<http://www.americangirl.com>

*History comes alive through stories of spunky (fictitious) girls from the Revolution to the present.*



*Thomas B. Fordham Foundation*

1627 K Street, N.W. • Suite 600 • Washington, D.C. 20006

Telephone: (202) 223-5452 • Fax: (202) 223-9226

<http://www.edexcellence.net>