

# AFTER 9/11: THE POLITICAL IS PERSONAL

## LESSON PLAN

### LESSON GOALS

- ◆ Students will listen to oral history clips that reflect diverse experiences of Muslims in the political and cultural life of Brooklyn after the 9/11 attacks.
- ◆ Students will use oral history clips to consider how one event affected people differently.
- ◆ Students will use oral history clips to consider how history is written. They will understand that oral histories offer nuanced and authentic human-scale perspectives of historic events.
- ◆ Students will understand that while timelines are important ways to frame history, they are also history written by people who have different perspectives and thus tell different stories.

### MUSLIMS IN BROOKLYN CLIPS

The “After 9/11: The Political is Personal” oral history clips draw on anecdotes that allow us to see how the 9/11 attacks affected everyday life for Muslims not only in 2001, but also in the decades that followed through the registration of Muslim men and surveillance by the NYPD. The narrations exemplify the relationship between an individual’s personal life and broader political forces. This collection is created from oral histories conducted and arranged by Brooklyn Historical Society in 2018 and 2019.

#### “I SAW MY HEADSTONE” 8:51

*Stacey Salimah-Bell describes her experience of witnessing the attack on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001.*

[muslims.brooklynhistory.org/oral\\_history\\_clip/headstone-stacey-salimah-bell](https://muslims.brooklynhistory.org/oral_history_clip/headstone-stacey-salimah-bell)

#### “MUSLIM POLICE OFFICER ON 9/11” 6:09

*Ahmed Nasser describes the experience of working as a police officer in the days after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.*

[muslims.brooklynhistory.org/oral\\_history\\_clip/police-officer-9-11-ahmed-nasser](https://muslims.brooklynhistory.org/oral_history_clip/police-officer-9-11-ahmed-nasser)

#### “MY HORIZONS BROADENED” 4:00

*Linda Sarsour describes her personal introduction to activism through changes in her community post-9/11.*

[muslims.brooklynhistory.org/oral\\_history\\_clip/horizons-broadened-linda-sarsour](https://muslims.brooklynhistory.org/oral_history_clip/horizons-broadened-linda-sarsour)

#### “BECOMING THE BULLY” 4:50

*Rabia Ahsin describes how the 9/11 attacks affected her relationships at school.*

[muslims.brooklynhistory.org/oral\\_history\\_clip/becoming-bully-rabia-ahsin](https://muslims.brooklynhistory.org/oral_history_clip/becoming-bully-rabia-ahsin)

#### “FEAR OF DEPORTATION” 8:43

*Mohammad Razvi discusses how his community was gripped by the fear of deportation in the first two years after the 9/11 attacks.*

[muslims.brooklynhistory.org/oral\\_history\\_clip/fear-deportation-mo-razvi](https://muslims.brooklynhistory.org/oral_history_clip/fear-deportation-mo-razvi)

#### “WE WERE WATCHED” 8:31

*Asad Dandia describes his encounter with an FBI informant in 2012.*

[muslims.brooklynhistory.org/oral\\_history\\_clip/watched-asad-dandia](https://muslims.brooklynhistory.org/oral_history_clip/watched-asad-dandia)

### MATERIALS

All oral history clips and transcripts mentioned in this lesson are available for streaming or download at [muslims.brooklynhistory.org](https://muslims.brooklynhistory.org).

• **Graphic Organizer**

• **Index Cards**

*Oral History Listening Protocol*

## LESSON SEQUENCE

### What Is the Relationship Between “the Political” & “the Personal?”

#### ◆ Think-Pair-Share Prompt

Describe how a recent event or headline affected you, a friend, or your family.

#### ◆ Share

Facilitate a large group discussion by sharing and reflecting on how the personal can be political.

- Are there any events that are purely personal? Purely political?
- Are there differences in opinion about what some students consider personal and political? Ask students to try to explain the relationship between “the political” and “the personal.”

#### ◆ Transition

Say, *Today, we’ll be listening to a series of oral history clips that relate to 9/11 and demonstrate how closely the personal and the political are connected.*

### INTRODUCTION

#### CONTENT WARNING

Please note that this lesson involves discussion of the attacks of 9/11, and Stacey Salimah-Bell recounts her experience of the day at the World Trade Center. This subject matter may be sensitive for teachers and students who have witnessed acts of terror, or who have relationships to the individuals who lost their lives that day and in the wars that followed.

#### TEACHER’S NOTE

##### Teaching 9/11

Visit the “Additional Resources” and “Timeline” sections of [muslims.brooklynhistory.org](https://muslims.brooklynhistory.org) for more information on teaching the history of Muslims and 9/11.

### 1 Whole Group Listening

Say, *We’re going to listen to many voices, some who experienced September 11 firsthand and some who have been affected by the laws enacted afterwards. We are going to put the events discussed in these oral histories onto a timeline. First, we’ll listen to one clip all together. Then, you’ll work in small groups through the other clips.*

### LISTENING & REFLECTING

## LESSON SEQUENCE

### 2 Listening Protocol

- Instruct students to fill out the “Oral History Listening Protocol” graphic organizer while listening.
- Play **Stacey Salimah-Bell: “I Saw My Headstone.”**
- After listening and filling out the organizer, instruct students to transcribe the events they noted on their organizer onto individual index cards and then arrange them into a timeline. They may also choose to add additional events that Stacey Salimah-Bell mentions by referring to the transcript.

### 3 Share

Ask individuals to share which events they included on their timelines.

### 4 Reflect

Note how different students have constructed different timelines based on the same information.

- What implication does having different timelines based on the same information have for our understanding of history through a timeline?
- How would your timeline change if it began five years earlier? Ten years earlier? Would the points on your timeline change?
- When do you think the writing of the history of 9/11 should begin? End?

### 5 Transition

*Say, Now we’re going to listen to a series of oral histories that were collected as a part of the Muslims in Brooklyn Oral History project. At the end, we will have constructed a timeline of 9/11 based on these oral histories.*

#### TEACHER’S NOTE

##### Timeline Construction

There are many ways to create a timeline—we recommend using index cards, as this will allow students to add and re-order them as more information is revealed in the next portion of the lesson.

#### TEACHER’S NOTE

##### Historical Interpretation

You should anticipate that each timeline will have a different emphasis. There is no single, official timeline of historical events. Timelines are made through a series of decisions. Official timelines of historical events can always be contested because all timelines are selective representations of past events.

#### TEACHER’S NOTE

##### Using Oral History

See the “How to Use this Curriculum” and the “Additional Resources” section of [muslims.brooklynhistory.org](http://muslims.brooklynhistory.org) for more on the relationship between narrator, interviewer, and listener.

# LESSON SEQUENCE

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## 1 Small Group Listening

Once students have done the listening and timeline activity as a whole group with “**I Saw My Headstone,**” they will repeat that activity with the following five oral history clips included in the **Muslims in Brooklyn Oral Histories** section of this lesson.

## CHOOSE YOUR OWN NARRATION

## 2 Repeat Listening Protocol

- Listen to the oral history **Ahmed Nasser: “Muslim Police Officers on 9/11.”** After listening, they should add events and experiences from Nasser’s oral history to their timeline stack.
- Listen to the oral history **Linda Sarsour: “My Horizons Broadened.”** After listening, they should add events and experiences Sarsour’s oral history to the timeline stack.
- Listen to the oral history **Rabia Ahsin: “Becoming the Bully.”** After listening, they should add events and experiences from Ahsin’s oral history to the timeline stack.
- Listen to the oral history **Mohammad Razvi: “Fear of Deportation.”** After listening, they should add events and experiences from Razvi’s oral history to the timeline stack.
- Listen to the oral history **Ahmad Dandia: “We Were Watched.”** After listening, they should add events and experiences from Dandia’s oral history to the timeline stack.

## 3 Share

Ask students to present their timelines to each other.

## 4 Compare & Contrast

After presenting, note how different groups’ timelines are the same or different. Do the different timelines give different understandings of the events of 9/11?

## LESSON SEQUENCE

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### 5 Summary

Reflect on the following prompts:

- Why do you think we had slightly different timelines?
  - What do these timelines include that is new to you?
  - What do you think is missing from these timelines?
  - How should we understand the impact of 9/11 on Brooklyn's Muslim communities?
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### ☰ Timeline Construction and Analysis

Students can further personalize and differentiate their timelines by adding events not mentioned in the oral history clips. Students should consider the discussion they had during the “Reflect” section—when should their timeline begin? When should it end? What events will they include? As always, work with students to evaluate information found through web searches.

### ☰ Poetry

Alternatively, use the *Black Out and Collage Poetry Lesson* available at [muslims.brooklynhistory.org](https://muslims.brooklynhistory.org). Their work should evoke the themes of the lesson: the impact of 9/11 on a variety of individuals who share the Muslim faith.

## APPLICATION

# ORAL HISTORY LISTENING PROTOCOL

GRAPHIC ORGANIZER



<b>NARRATOR</b>	<b>CLIP NAME</b>
<i>What I Hear</i>	<i>What I Think. What I Feel</i>
<i>What I Wonder</i>	



**BY STUDENT**