

9/11 AND AFTER

HOW STUDENTS IN 12 COUNTRIES ARE TAUGHT ABOUT 9/11



Twelve teenagers born after 9/11 told us what they have learned about the event and its aftermath — and what has been left out.

BY DAMIEN CAVE AND YOUSUR AL-HLOU SEPT. 10, 2021

For those born after Sept. 11, 2001, there are no memories of that dark day to shape their views. There is only education — formal, and informal.

With the terrorist attack and the wars that followed having entered the realm of history, we sought to understand how these events are being taught. What is stressed? What is overlooked?

We examined textbooks from all over and talked with educators. But mostly we wanted to hear directly from young people, and so we interviewed students born after the attacks in 12 countries.

Their voices offered only a hint of the diversity of instruction on Sept. 11 worldwide, but their impressions and experiences were striking.

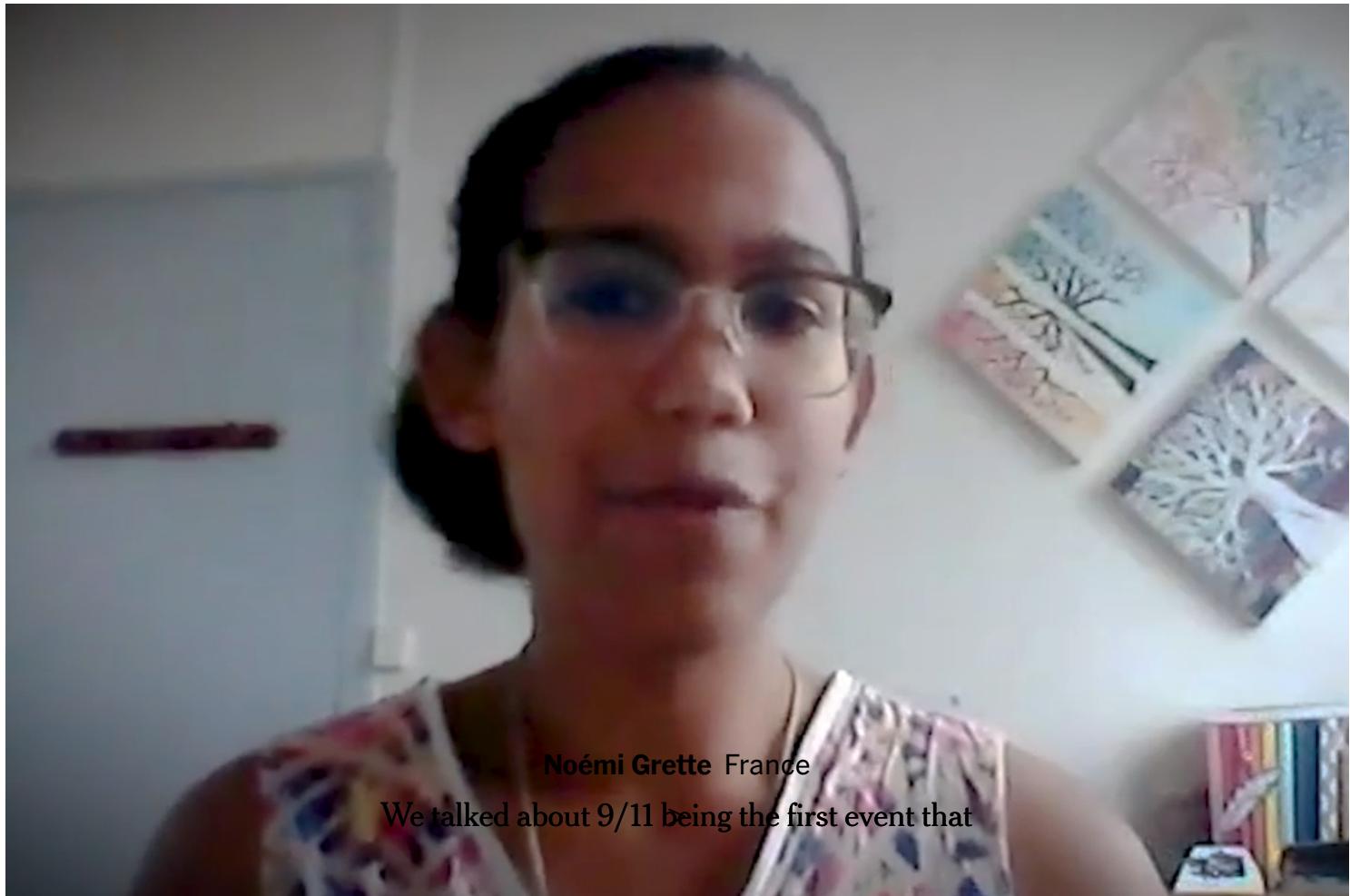
From Moscow to Manhattan, from Karachi to Caracas, from Berlin to Baghdad, students have come away with very different perspectives on terrorism, Islam, war and American power.

If there is a consensus, it can be found in what students told us their education has been missing: depth.

They want to know more.

What did you learn about 9/11 in school?

The lessons taught about 9/11 reflect national agendas — if it is taught at all.



Noémi Grette France

We talked about 9/11 being the first event that

Schools around the world vary widely in their approach to teaching 9/11, if they teach it at all.

Biz Herman, a doctoral candidate in political science at the University of California, Berkeley, has collected 850 textbooks from 90 countries. We worked with Ms. Herman to examine many of the textbooks commonly used by middle and high school students and found that Iran, Venezuela, Egypt, Syria and Mozambique are a few of the countries that do not mention the attack.

In New York and elsewhere in the United States, the Sept. 11 curriculum has been overtly personal and emotional. Students have been asked by their teachers to explore the experiences of their own families.

But at a remove from the bloodshed, and with attitudes of varying warmth toward the U.S., other countries handle the subject with their own nationalistic tilt.

In England, descriptions of the attack appear in one popular textbook in a section titled “Terrorist Groups in Action,” which also explores how the British government handled the Irish Republican Army. Spanish, French and Russian textbooks discuss Sept. 11 alongside terrorist attacks that struck their own citizens.

126 **Ungelöste Konflikte der Gegenwart**

Warum gibt es terroristische Anschläge?



1 – Anschlag auf das World Trade Center in New York am 11.09.2001. Foto:

ETA
Eduardo Ta Aaktivisten
bestreiten für Baslerland
und Freiheit. Zahl
Mitglieder des Baslerland
unter Spanien.

IRA
Irish Republican Army.
Ziel
die Irlande gegen
Fremden.

Osama bin Laden
(1957–2011) wurde stell
eines Mullahs und ead
Laden Islam und Qaeda
der Terrorgruppe Al-Qa
da.

Islamisten
der lange eines radikalen,
antwestlichen Islam. Sie
guten dem Westen und
der Globalisierung, Globali
sierung, Globalisierung
und umstehen Werte, die
Islam zu verstoßen.

Terror als Waffe
Seit etwa 30 Jahren gibt es über all in der
Welt überraschende Angriffe bewaffneter
Gruppen auf staatliche Einrichtungen oder
Touristenzentren. Bei diesen Angriffen werden
dann zufällig Anwesende ermordet oder ver
letzt.

Mit den Angriffen wollen diese Gruppen
ihre politischen Forderungen mit Hilfe des
Terrorismus erreichern. Der letzten Jahr
zehnten traten mit Terroranschlägen bes
onders hervor die **ETA** im Baslerland,
die **IRA** in Nordirland, die Hamas in Palä
stine und die Al-Qaida **Osama bin Ladens** in
Pakistan.

Die Terrorgruppe Al-Qaida
Die **islamistische Al-Qaida** bildet ein inter
nationales Netzwerk von Terrorgruppen vor
allem in Asien und Afrika. Alle Gruppen
handeln im Namen von Osama bin Laden. Die
größte Aufsehen erregte Al-Qaida als die
Gruppe am 11. September 2001 vier Flug
zeuge in ihre Türme des World Trade Centers in New
York (Bild 1), eines in das US-Verteidi
gungsministerium und eines zerschellt in
Pennsylvania. Diese Anschläge forderten et
wa 3000 Todesopfer. Dies Attentate waren
der Auftakt für eine weltweite Serie von Ter
roranschlägen.

**Q1 Osama bin Laden schrieb 1998 in ei
ner Erklärung:**
... Alle Verbrechen und Sünden, die von den
Menschen begangen wurden, sind eine
offene Kriegserklärung an Gott, seinen
Propheten und alle Muslime. Es wird best
immt, dass es die religiöse Pflicht jedes
Muslim ist, in jedem Land der Welt und wo
immer möglich die Amerikaner und deren
Alliierte zu töten ...

① Erklärt anhand von Bild 1 und Q1, warum
das World Trade Center als Ziel des An
schlags ausgewählt wurde.

Die Sympathisanten des Terrors
Die Menschen reagierten weltweit – Christ
en, Juden, Muslime, Ascheu und Em
schen auf diesen Anschlag.

Auch danach fanden islamistische Hasp
prediger immer wieder Anhänger und Men
schen, die bereit waren, ihr Leben für einen
Anschlag zu opfern. Eine Rolle spielt dabei,
dass die Hasp prediger erklären, ihr Kampf
sei ein „Heiliger Krieg“ und jeder Muslim
habe die Pflicht, den Glauben zu verteidigen.

здравому смыслу, США не отменили поправку Джексона—Вэнника (1974), согласно которой предоставление СССР режима наибольшего благоприятствования в торговле увязывалось с предоставлением свободы еврейской эмиграции, хотя никаких ограничений на неё в демократической России не было.

Серёзные поводы для недовольства политикой стран Запада возникли и в России. Несмотря на возражения России, членами НАТО стали Венгрия, Польша и Чехия, а блок осуществил агрессию против Югославии (1999). В 2002 г. США в одностороннем порядке вышли из договора по ПРО от 1972 г., взяв курс на создание национальной системы противоракетной обороны и наращивание военной мощи. Началось дальнейшее расширение состава НАТО за счёт государств Балтии, Румынии, Болгарии, Словакии.

Российская дипломатия подчеркивала, что проблемы современного мира слишком многообразны и сложны, чтобы их решала одна держава, даже столь влиятельная, как США. Идея многополярности в мировом развитии, подразумевающая акцент на равноправии государств — членов ООН, получила поддержку во многих странах.

С наступлением ХХI в. отношение России к зарубежными госу
дарствами стало более динамичными и одновременно более слож
ными.

После нападения террористов на Нью-Йорк и Вашингтон 11 сен
тября 2001 г. Россия выразила солидарность с США в борьбе с меж
дународным терроризмом. В 2002 г. был подписан Договор о со
хранении стратегических наступательных потенциалов (СНГТ). Он
предусматривал сохранение паритета ядерных сил США и РФ, их сокращение к 2012 г.
до 1700–2200 ядерных боеголовок.

Начали успешно реализовываться круп
ные международные проекты с участием на
шей страны, в частности в мирном освоении
космического пространства. Россия активно
участвует в создании и эксплуатации Меж
дународной космической станции. Россий
ские носители стали выводить на орбиту
космические аппараты европейских стран.

Российская Федерация исходит из того,
что на любые военные вызовы и угрозы она
найдёт адекватные ответы. В то же время,
как неоднократно указывал министр ино
странных дел РФ

**Террористическая атака на
Всемирный торговый центр**



423

8.4 9/11 and its consequences



United Airlines Flight 175 crashing into the South Tower of the World Trade Centre in New York on 11 September 2001

Globalisation and its effects have thus resulted in one of the greatest sources of insecurity in the modern world – terrorism. Globalisation has not only provoked Islamic terrorists to attack the West, but it has made it easier for them to plan and carry out attacks. Quick and easy air travel and modern telecommunications, the Internet and cell phones help terrorists to keep in touch and make plans. Some of the technology can also be used to set off explosive devices.

‘The United States is reaping the thorns that its rulers have sown in the world ... When God strikes, no one can stand in the way of His power.’

Quoted in: BBC News Team, *The Day that Shocked the World: Understanding September 11th*, London: BBC Books, 2001, p. 128

Source M: Saddam Hussein speaking on Iraqi television, 12 September 2001

9/11
On September 2001, Al Qaeda attacked targets in the USA. It hijacked civilian American aircraft and flew them into the ‘heart’ of the United States: the World Trade Centre in New York’s financial district; and the Pentagon in Washington, which is the headquarters of the US Department of Defence. Another aircraft may have been intended to fly into the White House, where the US president lives, but the pilot was overpowered by the passengers and it crashed into the ground instead. Over 3 000 people died in these attacks. Many of them were not Americans, because globalisation had brought many foreigners, including South Africans, to work in the World Trade Centre.

Did you know?

Osama bin Laden was the son of a rich Saudi Arabian industrialist. In the early 1980s he moved to Pakistan and helped to set up a volunteer force called the *mujaheddin* to fight the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. The American government secretly provided money and weapons for the *mujaheddin*.



오늘날 텔레비전은 가장 중요한 매체가 되었다. 전 세계인은 텔레비
전에서 미국 뉴욕 세계 무역 센터 쌍둥이 빌딩이 비행기 충돌로 지상 테
러로 무너지는 장면을 보면서 모두 눈을 의심하였다.

미국 대통령과 족친 전 세계 자유 국가에 대비해 전쟁에 동참해 춤
을 축구하였다. 그러나 미국의 꽁꽁 대성이 일어나니스민의 티백
한 망을 하고 죽었을 때 깃발을 심는 순박한 사람들을 확인하면서 대리에
대한 웅장은 필요하지만 무고한 사람의 희생이 이루어지는 한우리의
목소리가 충돌되었다. 이처럼 텔레비전은 정보를 현장에 가정까지
생생하게 전달하고 같은 생각을 만드는 데 이바지한다.

영화의 발전

영화는 1895년 처음 나온 이후 100년 동안 인간의 꿈을 대신 실현시
켜 주었다. 1970년대에는 텔레비전의 발달로 한때 사양길에 접어
들기도 했지만 비디오가 발명되면서 다시금 발전의 길을 열었다.

영화는 제2차 세계 대전 중에 이탈리아에서 새로운 표현 양식
을 얻기 시작하였다. 신사실주의를 추구하는 이탈리아 영화는 도
파나 모렐 영화에서 담배와 현실을 그대로 묘사하기 시작하였
다. 새로운 기법을 도입해서 영화를 만드는 운동은 1950년대 브
랑스에서 시작되었다.

그러나 오늘날에는 할리우드 영화가 새로운 기법, 그리고 무엇
보다도 제작과 기술, 및 배우를 뛰어 젊은 세대를 기획하고 있다.
따라서 미국은 영화의 자유로운 유통을 더욱 크게 주장하면서 지
혜택을 넓혀야 하지만 문화적인 차원에 부단하고 있다.

▲ 영화 *Titanic*의 표지



Klockan är 9.03 på morgonen den 11 september 2001. Om några sekunder kommer det andra planet att flyga rätt in i det södra tornet på World Trade Center i New York. Mindre än en timme senare rasar båda tornen samman helt.

2001-09-11 och kriget mot terrorismen

En av de händelser som överraskade dem som trodde att världen skulle bli fredligare efter kalla krigets slut ägde rum vid mitten på morgonen den 11 september 2001. Hundra års äldsta skyskraporna vid *World Trade Center* i New York. Förr trodde man att det var fråga om en olycka men snart visade det sig att passagerarplanen hade kapats av en grupp terrorister som med avsikt styrdes in dem i byggnaderna. De båda rövfligorna var med sina 110 vänningar nära av USA:s högsta byggnader, och där hade flera av världens största företag sina viktigaste

kontor. Skyskraporna kunde på så sätt uppfattas som en symbol för USA:s ställning som det rikaste landet i världen.

Knapp en timme efter den första attacken startade den andra upp i sydligaste delen av flygplatsnäcket i USA:s militära försvarsbyggningskvarter, den färdliga kontorsbyggnaden *Pentagon* i huvudstaden Washington. Ett fjärde kapat plan störtade på en åker i Pennsylvania. Trotsigen var detta plan också på väg mot Washington, kanske för att flyga in i *Vita huset*, den amerikanska presidentens bostad eller in i *kongressen*, byggnaden som rymmer USA:s parlament. Det

Mot en bild vänt 333

SECTION 3 How September 11, 2001, Changed America

BEFORE YOU READ

MAIN IDEA

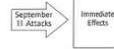
A horrific attack on September 11, 2001, awakened the nation to the threat of terrorism and changed America's view of the world.

- What happened on September 11, 2001?
- What was the background to the September 11 attacks?
- How did the United States respond to the attacks?
- How did the 9/11 attacks eventually lead to war with Iraq?

KEY TERMS AND PEOPLE

9/11
Rudolph Giuliani
Osama bin Laden
al Qaeda
Taliban
Department of Homeland Security
USA PATRIOT Act

TAKING NOTES
As you read, take notes about the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and their aftermath. Record your notes in a graphic organizer like the one shown here.



Attack on the World Trade Center

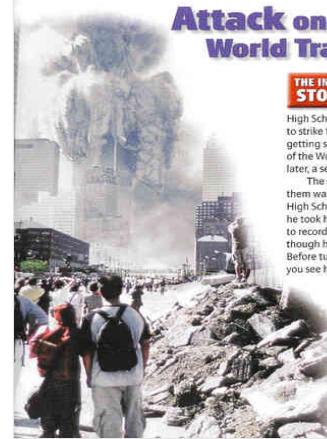
THE INSIDE STORY

What would you do if terrorists struck your neighborhood? On September 11, 2001, students at Stuyvesant High School in New York City prepared for a strike on their community. Yet that morning, just as school was getting started, an aircraft slammed into one of the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center, about five blocks away. A second airplane struck the second tower.

The students fled the school in search of safety. Among them was Ethan Moses, the photographer for the Stuyvesant High School newspaper, *The Spectator*. When he left the school, he took his camera along. As a student journalist, he felt driven to record what was taking place in his neighborhood—even though he was terrified by what he saw and could have run. Before turning to run for his own safety, he snapped the image you see here of one of the Twin Towers collapsing.

Moses knew that he must preserve the images of what took place that day. Like Americans throughout the country, he overcame his horror and faced the September 11 attacks with courage and resolve.

◀ The horror of September 11, 2001, changed the way Americans looked at themselves and the world.



INTO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY 1091

Textbooks from (clockwise from top left) Germany, Russia, South Korea, the U.S., Sweden and South Africa. Source: Biz Herman, University of California, Berkeley

But some countries teach students that the events of that day offer a lesson, or perhaps a warning, for the world's powers.

South Korean and Indian students learn that the strikes on the World Trade Center in New York and on Washington were a consequence of globalization. A Pakistani textbook describes the attack, which left almost 3,000 dead, as an “incident,” and dwells on the risks that come from American hegemony.

Striking an even sharper note, a textbook of Modern and Contemporary World History from China includes a photo of the twin towers in flames near a section on geopolitics. “No one power can dominate the world on its own,” it says.

“What are textbooks and what are they for?” Ms. Herman asks. “It would seem simple: that it's for educating kids. But it's actually for setting national agendas, for sharing a particular narrative. And sometimes it's for educating kids.”

How did you first learn about 9/11?

Horrific images endure. But what came next is often poorly explained.



Faisal Rehman Pakistan
that came to our house regularly.

Many people born after Sept. 11 learn about that day at a young age, but how it happens varies. Some see documentaries about the attack, but others stumble across it on YouTube or hear a chance remark that sets them on a path to learn more.

Many of the students we interviewed said they had first heard 9/11 referred to obliquely, as if the adults talking had forgotten that they were not alive when the attack happened. When asked, the adults would give

them a basic rundown of the facts — the hijacked planes, the toppled buildings, the number killed — without much context.

What they remember are the images.

“When you see the archival images, you’re like: How is this possible?” said Noémi Grette, 18, a recent high school graduate from Bordeaux in France.

But the photos and video leave so much unanswered, say young people like Ariadna Clareth Sánchez Rojas, 16, a 10th grader in Ciudad Los Teques, Venezuela.

“The questions that I have are: First, why was it so easy for the Taliban to hijack four airplanes from the U.S.?” she said, mixing up the Taliban with their allies in Al Qaeda. “And the other question that I have is: Why did that war really start between the U.S. and Afghanistan?”

What impact did 9/11 have on your world?

For some teenagers, the American response to 9/11 matters as much as the attacks





Jelena Marie Bielke Germany

that there are, of course, bad people

When the post-9/11 generation assesses the impact of the attack on their lives, they often point to what they can see: the long waits to get through airport security, the concrete bollards at the front of public squares to block a potential truck bomb.

But for many students, the lines between that day and the wars that followed are something of a blur, like a thunderstorm with clouds that have merged.

The ramifications can be deeply personal.

Faisal Rehman, 18, said that America's invasion of Afghanistan led Taliban fighters to safe houses in the border region of Pakistan where his family lived, forcing them to leave for Karachi. Mujtaba Ali al-Saadi, an 18-year-old high school senior in Baghdad, said that if not for the events of Sept. 11, "Saddam Hussein would have still been among us."

"Regime change" ended dictatorship, he noted, but it also produced more terrorism inside Iraq. His father was shot and killed in 2005 when Mujtaba was just a toddler.

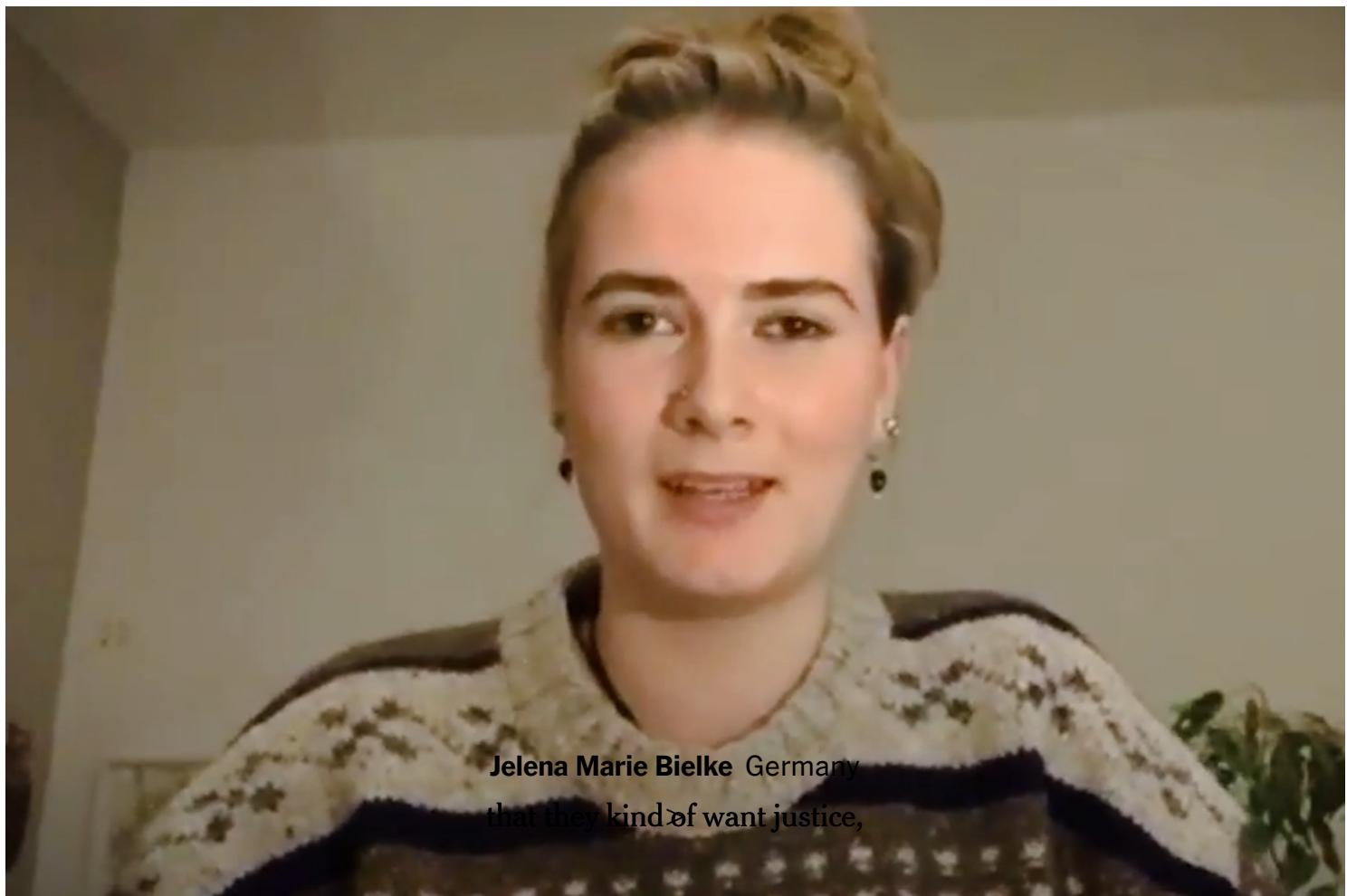
"He was washing his car, which was a big car," he said. "I was standing next to him."

For others, like Dorea Nengese, 18, who recently graduated from an East London high school filled with students whose families migrated from Afghanistan, Iran and other Middle Eastern countries, Sept. 11 will be forever remembered as a spark for anti-Islamic prejudice and intense debates about whose narratives should be given prominence.

Why, she asked, are students "expected to know everything about America" without learning about how global affairs are viewed by people from other countries?

What did these events teach you about America?

Students aware of 9/11 and what followed are often deeply skeptical of American motives.



Jelena Marie Bielke Germany
that they kind of want justice,

For many Americans, remembering Sept. 11 means grappling with the legacy of trauma. With a more international perspective, young people elsewhere often find themselves asking how such a powerful country could be so vulnerable — and what lay at the root of its response at home and around the world.

Some students said American power should still be seen as a force for good. Xolisa Nohenda, 17, a 12th grader in Johannesburg, South Africa, said most of her peers believed that the U.S. “plays a big role in defending people.”

But for many, it has become common to question American motives.

In almost any lesson that touches on the United States, textbooks from many countries emphasize American military might. Some also suggest that the U.S. attacked Afghanistan and Iraq to obtain oil or other natural resources.

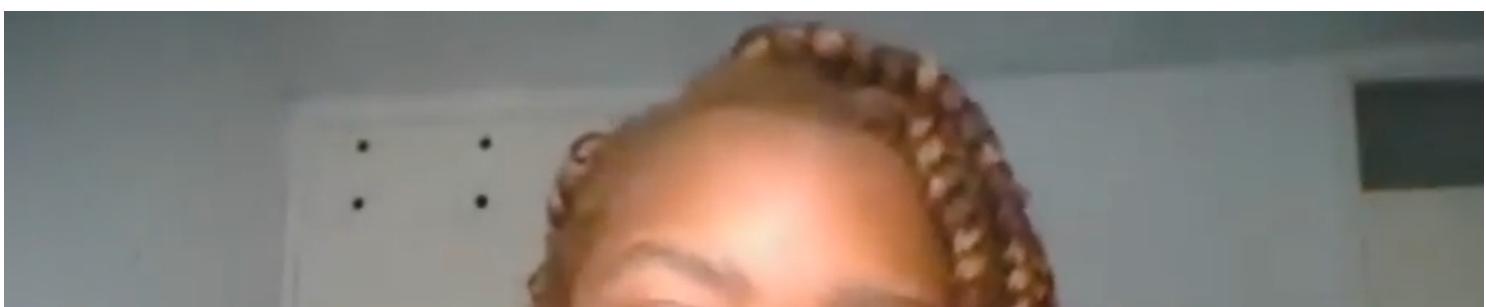
Even teenagers who were not taught from those texts seem to have absorbed a sense of deep skepticism.

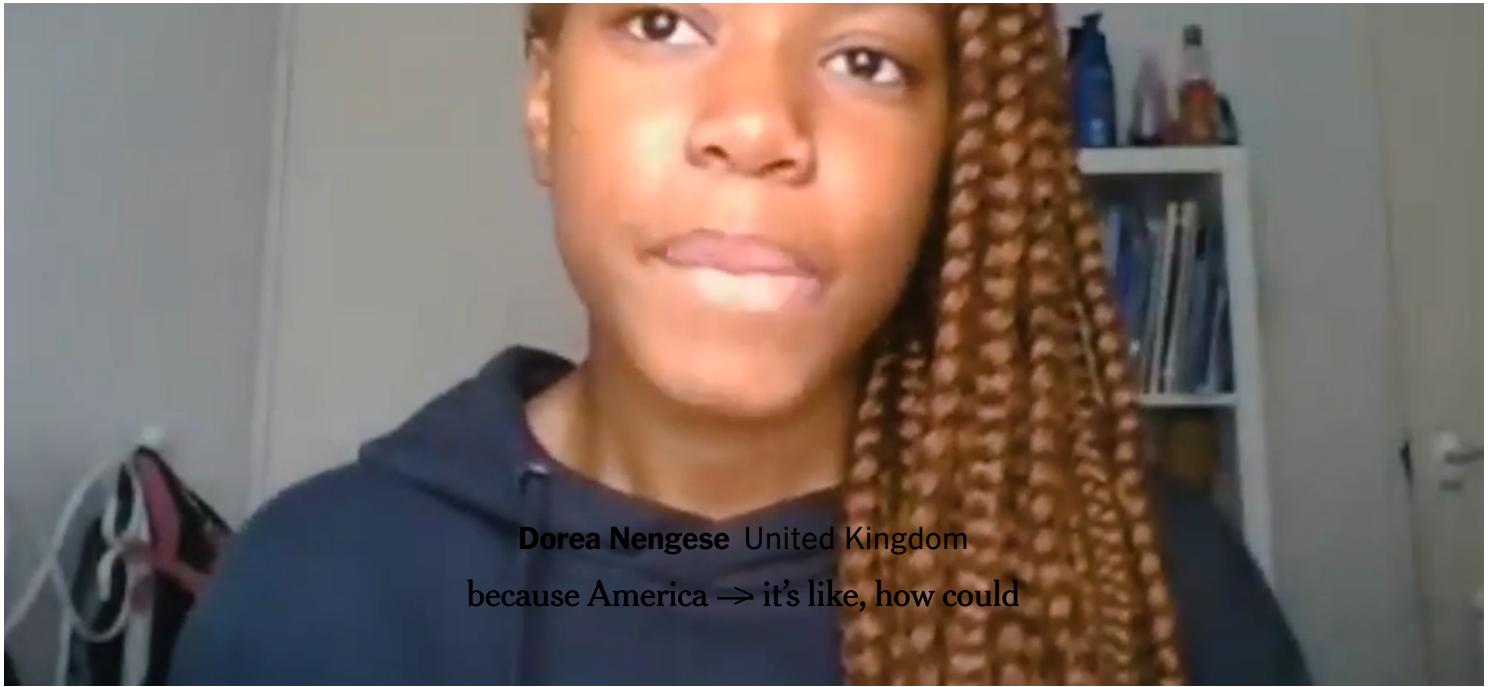
“I don’t know a lot about the war between Iraq and the U.S. but I do know that they, I think, fought about oil, and there was a lot of money involved,” said Jelena Marie Bielke, 16, a high school junior in Berlin. “And the U.S. wanted to get the oil.”

The American response to Sept. 11, she said, showed that the Americans “kind of want justice, but in a really weird way — because it’s not really justice to bomb a country.”

What's gone wrong with 9/11 education?

Students blame outdated curricula, fear and political agendas for ignoring 9/11 in schools.





Dorea Nengese United Kingdom
because America → it's like, how could

Many of the students we interviewed offered sharp insights on why their elders do not teach about Sept. 11 with more context and rigor. Some said schools are always slow to adapt, sticking with outdated textbooks that can take years to update.

“I think it’s time for us to change this educational system and, I don’t know, try to focus on something more forward looking,” said Lucas Villar, 18, a high school senior in Rio de Janeiro.

Other students blamed politics and discomfort with trauma.

“I think sometimes some things are not talked about, because maybe the government failed to control it,” said Polina, 19, a university student in Russia, who asked that her surname not be used to protect her privacy and avoid trouble with the authorities.

“Like, I don’t want to get political, but I really do think that some things are not included just because it might sabotage the general picture of the country. Maybe kids would not feel safe in their country, or it might trigger some sort of thought, some negative thinking about their safety, and what they have to go through. Maybe some phobias.”

Felix Tonkin, 17, a 12th grader in Sydney, said some countries (including Australia) may be hindered by a sense of shame about mistakes they made in Afghanistan and Iraq.

“That's a hard thing to teach, absolutely,” he said. “But I think it's an important thing to teach as well.”

In Karachi, Mr. Rehman said he had once asked his teacher to explain and got this reply: “Son, these wars are political. We don't learn such things in school. You can learn about them later in life.”

What grade would you give your education?

Students want a more nuanced, contemporary and international education.



Across the board, students born soon after Sept. 11, 2001, told us they longed for their teachers and school systems to embark on a deeper dive into the subject, from the historical context leading up to the attack all the way through the long-term impact.

For many, 9/11 has come to symbolize one of the flaws of modern education: an unwillingness to look more closely at relatively recent events that shape the present.

“I feel lost, because sometimes I watch the news and I don’t understand anything that’s happening,” said Mr. Villar, in Brazil. “And I think the school could help me with that, having more classes about what’s going on now, and not just what happened 300 years ago.”

Several students also said they needed to know more about Sept. 11 because one day they may be called upon to explain the era of terror to their children.

“I feel like I do have responsibility to not only learn about just what happened, but I feel like also just the long lasting legacy of it, and just all the effects and aftermath,” said Karen Zhang, 17, a rising senior at Stuyvesant High School in Manhattan.

More specifically, she said that along with Sept. 11, “there should be a bit more of, I think, the history of the U.S. in the Middle East.”

Mr. al-Saadi, in Baghdad, said he could understand why so few teachers wanted to teach about 9/11. “When something hurts you, or crushes you from the inside, then of course you don’t talk about it,” he said.

And yet, he and many others argue, that trauma is exactly why the subject must be taught. To process the pain. To learn from the failures. To help the next generation do better than the last.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ‘NEVER FORGET’?

By Dan Barry



HOW A VIRAL VIDEO BENT REALITY

By Kevin Roose



SERVING IN A TWENTY-YEAR WAR

By John Ismay



MUSLIM AMERICANS' 'SEISMIC CHANGE'

By Elizabeth Dias



Ahmed Mohamed Mohamed contributed reporting from Mombasa, Kenya; Eliza Shapiro from New York City; Falih Hassan from Baghdad; Isabella Kwai from London; Isayen Herrera from Caracas, Venezuela; Ivan Kuznetsov from Moscow; John Yoon from Seoul; Lis Moriconi from Rio de Janeiro; Lynsey Chutel in Johannesburg; Melissa Eddy from Berlin; Nori Onishi from Paris; Sofia Villamil in Bogotá, Colombia; and Zia Ur Rehman from Karachi, Pakistan.