After suffering the worst terrorist attack in its history when airplanes crashed into the Pentagon and the World Trade Center, the United States launched a massive effort to end international terrorism.

Key Terms and Names
terrorism, state-sponsored terrorism, Osama bin Laden, al-Qaeda, anthrax

Main Idea
After suffering the worst terrorist attack in its history when airplanes crashed into the Pentagon and the World Trade Center, the United States launched a massive effort to end international terrorism.

Reading Strategy
As you read about America's war on terrorism, complete a graphic organizer similar to the one below to show the different reasons terrorists attack Americans.

Reading Objectives
• Describe the development of Middle East terrorism.
• Explain the response of the United States to the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

Section Theme
Global Connections International terrorists targeted Americans in order to coerce the United States.

Preview of Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1979 Soviet Union invades Afghanistan</td>
<td>Al-Qaeda is organized</td>
<td>Bombs explode at U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania</td>
<td>Attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An American Story

At 8:45 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time on September 11, 2001, a Boeing 767 passenger jet slammed into the North Tower of the World Trade Center in New York City. As people below gazed in horror, a second plane collided with the South Tower. Soon afterward, a third plane crashed into the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. At 9:50 A.M., the South Tower collapsed in a billowing cloud of dust and debris. The North Tower fell about 40 minutes later. The falling towers killed thousands of people, burying them beneath a vast mound of rubble.

The airplanes did not crash accidentally. Hijackers deliberately crashed them into the buildings. Hijackers also seized a fourth airplane, United Airlines Flight 93, probably hoping to crash it into the White House or the Capitol. Many passengers on Flight 93 had cell phones. After hearing about the World Trade Center, four passengers—Todd Beamer, Thomas Burnett, Jeremy Glick, and Mark Bingham—decided to do something. An operator listening over a cell phone heard Todd Beamer's voice: "Are you ready, guys? Let's roll." Soon afterward, Flight 93 crashed in a field in Pennsylvania. At that moment, Vice President Dick Cheney was in a bunker under the White House. After hearing that Flight 93 had crashed, he said, "I think an act of heroism just took place on that plane."

—adapted from Let's Roll: Ordinary People, Extraordinary Courage

September 11, 2001

The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, killed all 266 passengers and crew members on the four hijacked planes. Another 125 people died in the Pentagon. In New York City, nearly 3,000 people died. More Americans were killed in the attacks than died at Pearl Harbor or on D-Day in World War II.
The attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were acts of terrorism. Terrorism is the use of violence by nongovernmental groups against civilians to achieve a political goal. Terrorist acts are intended to instill fear in people and to frighten their governments into changing their policies.

Middle East Terrorism Although there have been many acts of terrorism in American history, most terrorist attacks on Americans since World War II have been carried out by Middle Eastern groups. The reason Middle Eastern terrorists have targeted Americans can be traced back to events early in the twentieth century.

As oil became important to the American economy in the 1920s, the United States invested heavily in the Middle East oil industry. This industry brought great wealth to the ruling families in some Middle Eastern kingdoms, but most of the people remained poor. Some became angry at the United States for supporting the wealthy kingdoms and families.

The rise of the oil industry increased the Middle East’s contact with Western society. As Western ideas spread through the region, many Muslims—followers of the region’s dominant religion—feared that their traditional values and beliefs were being weakened. New movements arose calling for a strict interpretation of the Quran—the Muslim holy book—and a return to traditional Muslim religious laws.

These Muslim movements wanted to overthrow pro-Western governments in the Middle East and create a pure Islamic society. Muslims who support these movements are referred to as fundamentalist militants. Although the vast majority of Muslims believe terrorism is contrary to their faith, militants began using terrorism to achieve their goals.

American support of Israel also angered many in the Middle East. In 1947 the UN divided British-controlled Palestine into two territories to provide a home for Jews. One part became Israel. The other part was to become a Palestinian state, but fighting between Israel and the Arab states in 1948 left this territory under the control of Israel, Jordan, and Egypt.

The Palestinians wanted their own nation. In the 1950s, they began staging guerrilla raids and terrorist attacks against Israel. Since the United States gave military and economic aid to Israel, it became the target of Muslim hostility. In the 1970s, several Middle Eastern nations realized they could fight Israel and the United States by providing terrorist groups with money, weapons, and training. When a government secretly supports terrorism, this is called state-sponsored terrorism. The governments of Libya, Syria, Iraq, and Iran have all sponsored terrorism.

A New Terrorist Threat In 1979 the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. In response, Muslims from across the Middle East headed to Afghanistan to join the struggle against the Soviets. Among them was a 22-year-old Muslim named Osama bin Laden. Bin Laden came from one of Saudi Arabia’s wealthiest
families. He used his wealth to support the Afghan resistance. In 1988 he founded an organization called al-Qaeda (al KY·duh), or “the Base.” Al-Qaeda recruited Muslims and channeled money and arms to the Afghan resistance.

Bin Laden’s experience in Afghanistan convinced him that superpowers could be beaten. He also believed that Western ideas had contaminated Muslim society. He was outraged when Saudi Arabia allowed American troops on Saudi soil after Iraq invaded Kuwait.

Operating first from Sudan and then from Afghanistan—then under the control of Muslim fundamentalists known as the Taliban—bin Laden dedicated himself and al-Qaeda to driving Westerners, and especially Americans, out of the Middle East. In 1998 he called on Muslims to kill Americans. Soon afterward, bin Laden’s followers set off bombs at the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

Shortly after these bombings, President Clinton ordered cruise missiles launched at terrorist facilities in Afghanistan and Sudan. The attacks did not deter bin Laden. In 1999 al-Qaeda terrorists were arrested while trying to smuggle explosives into the United States in an attempt to bomb Seattle. In October 2000, al-Qaeda terrorists crashed a boat loaded with explosives into the USS Cole, an American warship, while it was docked in the Middle Eastern country of Yemen.

America Unites

The attack on the Cole and the attempted bombing of Seattle were overshadowed by the close presidential election of 2000 and the policies of President George W. Bush’s new administration. Then, on September 11, 2001, terrorists struck again, hijacking four American passenger planes and executing the most devastating terrorist attack in history.

Citizens Respond to the Crisis

The attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon shocked Americans, but they responded rapidly to the crisis. Firefighters and medical workers from other cities headed to New York to help. Across the nation, Americans donated blood, raised money, and collected food, blankets, and other supplies. Within weeks, Americans had donated over one billion dollars.

Everywhere across the nation, Americans put up flags to show their unity and resolve. They held candlelight vigils and prayer services as they searched for ways to help. If the terrorists had hoped to divide Americans, they failed. As the Reverend Billy Graham noted at a memorial service: “A tragedy like this could have torn our country apart. But instead it has united us and we have become a family.”

A National Emergency

The American government also responded quickly. All civilian airliners were grounded. The armed forces were put on high alert. Americans in the National Guard left their civilian jobs and reported for duty. The Air National Guard began patrolling the skies over major cities, and
Army National Guard troops headed to airports to strengthen security.

On September 14, President Bush declared a national emergency. Congress voted to authorize the use of force to fight the terrorists. Intelligence sources and the FBI quickly identified the attacks as the work of Osama bin Laden and the al-Qaeda network.

President Bush decided the time had come to end the threat of terrorism in the world. While Secretary of State Colin Powell began building an international coalition to support the United States, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld began deploying troops, aircraft, and warships to the Middle East.

The president then issued an ultimatum to the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, demanding they turn over bin Laden and his supporters and close all terrorist camps. He also declared that although the war on terrorism would start by targeting al-Qaeda, it would not stop there. "It will not end," he announced, "until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated."

The president also announced that the United States would no longer tolerate states that aided terrorists. "From this day forward," the president proclaimed, "any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime."

The war, President Bush warned, would not end quickly, but it was a war the nation had to fight:

> Great harm has been done to us. We have suffered great loss. And in our grief and anger we have found our mission and our moment. ... Our Nation—this generation—will lift a dark threat of violence from our people and our future. ... 

—President George W. Bush, Address to Joint Session of Congress, September 20, 2001

### A New War Begins

In a letter to the *New York Times*, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld warned Americans that "this will be a war like none other our nation has faced." The enemy, he explained, "is a global network of terrorist organizations and their state sponsors, committed to..."
denying free people the opportunity to live as they choose.” Military force would be used to fight terrorism, but other means would be used as well.

**Cutting Terrorist Funding** One important way to fight terrorist organizations is to cut off their funding. On September 24, President Bush issued an executive order freezing the financial assets of several individuals and groups suspected of terrorism. The president also asked other nations to help, and within weeks, some 80 nations had issued orders freezing the assets of suspected terrorists.

**Fighting Terrorism At Home** As part of his effort to protect the American people from further terrorist attacks, President Bush created the Office of Homeland Security to coordinate the dozens of federal agencies working to prevent terrorism. He then appointed Pennsylvania governor Tom Ridge to serve as the agency’s director.

The president also asked Congress to pass legislation to help law enforcement agencies track down terrorist suspects. Drafting the legislation took time. Congress had to balance Americans’ Fourth Amendment protections against unreasonable search and seizure with the need to increase security.

President Bush signed the new antiterrorist bill—known as the USA Patriot Act—into law in October 2001. The new law allowed secret searches to avoid tipping off suspects in terrorism cases. It also allowed authorities to obtain a single nationwide search warrant that could be used anywhere. The law also made it easier to wiretap suspects, and it allowed authorities to track e-mail and seize voice mail.

In the months following the attack, the Office of Homeland Security found it difficult to coordinate all of the federal agencies fighting terrorism. In June 2002, President Bush asked Congress to merge the agencies responsible for the public’s safety into one department to be called the Department of Homeland Security.

The president’s proposal led to an intense debate in Congress, but after the midterm elections in November 2002, the new department was created. It controls the Coast Guard, the Border Patrol, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the Customs Service, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and many other agencies.

**Bioterrorism Strikes America** As the nation tried to cope with the events of September 11, a new terrorist attack began. On October 5, 2001, a Florida newspaper editor died from anthrax. Anthrax is a type of bacteria. Several nations, including the United States, Russia, and Iraq, have used it to create biological weapons. Antibiotics can cure anthrax, but if left untreated, it can kill quickly.

Soon after appearing in Florida, anthrax was found at several news organizations in New York City. In Washington, D.C., a letter filled with anthrax arrived at Senator Tom Daschle’s office. It became clear that terrorists were using the mail to spread anthrax. Several postal workers contracted anthrax, and two died. The FBI investigated the anthrax attacks, but no suspects were publicly identified.

**War in Afghanistan** On October 7, 2001, the United States began bombing targets in Afghanistan. In an
address to the nation, President Bush explained that he had ordered the military to attack al-Qaeda’s camps and the Taliban’s military forces. He explained that Islam and the Afghan people were not the enemy, and he announced that the United States would drop food, medicine, and other supplies by parachute to Afghan refugees. The president also explained that the attack on the Taliban was only the beginning:

"Today we focus on Afghanistan, but the battle is broader. If any government sponsors the outlaws and killers of innocents, they have become outlaws and murderers, themselves. And they will take that lonely path at their own peril. ... The battle is now joined on many fronts. We will not waiver; we will not tire; we will not falter; and we will not fail. Peace and freedom will prevail."

—President George W. Bush, Address to the Nation, October 7, 2001

While American warplanes bombed the Taliban’s forces, the United States began sending aid to a coalition of Afghan groups, known as the Northern Alliance, that had been fighting the Taliban. The American bombing campaign quickly shattered the Taliban’s defenses. The Northern Alliance then launched a massive attack on Taliban lines. By early December, the Taliban regime had collapsed. The United States and its allies then helped Afghan leaders create a new government, and they promised more than $4 billion in aid. Meanwhile, thousands of American and allied troops began arriving in Afghanistan to act as peacekeepers and to hunt for al-Qaeda terrorists.

By March 2002, Taliban and al-Qaeda forces had begun to regroup in the mountains near Pakistan’s border. The United States responded by launching Operation Anaconda. Several Americans died during the difficult battle high in the mountains, but the al-Qaeda troops were defeated and forced to scatter. Throughout 2002, the United States and its allies continued their worldwide hunt for al-Qaeda members. By the end of the year, hundreds of people had been captured or killed.

Reading Check Outlining What steps did the president take in response to the terrorist attacks?

Iraq and Weapons of Mass Destruction

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, showed that terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda were determined to kill as many Americans as possible. President Bush and his advisers were deeply worried that terrorist groups might acquire weapons of mass destruction. Weapons of mass destruction can kill tens of thousands of people all at once. Nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons are examples of weapons of mass destruction.

During the Cold War, very few nations had weapons of mass destruction, and the United States relied on a policy of deterrence to prevent the use of such weapons. Under the deterrence policy, the United States vowed that if a nation used weapons of mass destruction against the U.S., the U.S. would counterattack by using its own weapons of mass destruction. Deterrence worked during the Cold War, but it could not stop state-sponsored terrorism. If a nation secretly gave weapons of mass destruction to terrorists who then used them against the United States, the American military would not know where the weapons came from or whom to attack in response.

In his state of the union message to the American people in January 2002, President Bush warned that an “axis of evil,” made up of Iraq, Iran, and North Korea, posed a grave threat to the world. All three nations actively sponsored terrorism and were developing weapons of mass destruction. “I will not stand by as peril draws closer and closer,” the president promised. “The United States of America will not permit the world’s most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world’s most destructive weapons.”

Of the three nations in the “axis of evil,” President Bush and his advisers believed Iraq to be the most immediate threat. After the Gulf War ended in 1991, UN weapons inspectors found evidence that Iraq, led by Saddam Hussein, had developed biological weapons and had nearly succeeded in building a nuclear bomb. Iraq had also used chemical weapons in its war against Iran in the 1980s and against the Kurds, an ethnic minority in northern Iraq who had rebelled against Saddam Hussein’s regime.

In the summer of 2002, President Bush decided the time had come to deal with Iraq. On September 12, he asked the UN to pass a new resolution on Iraq. If Saddam Hussein wanted peace, he had to give up Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction, readmit the UN weapons inspectors, stop supporting terrorism, and stop oppressing his people.

The 2002 Election While the UN Security Council began debating a new resolution on Iraq, the president asked Congress to authorize the use of force
against Iraq. The request created a problem for Democrats. With the midterm elections only weeks away, many Democrats wanted to focus on the economy. The economy was growing very slowly, unemployment was high, and stock prices remained low. The Democrats hoped that the poor economy would enable them to pick up seats in Congress in the elections.

In mid-October, Congress voted to authorize the use of force against Iraq. Despite getting this vote out of the way, however, the Democrats were still not able to focus on the economy. President Bush actively campaigned for Republicans running for Congress, complaining to voters that the Democrats had delayed the bill creating the Department of Homeland Security. He also called on voters to elect members of Congress who would support him in winning the war on terrorism. The president’s focus on national security worked. Voters were worried about the economy, but they were also worried about security. Usually in midterm elections the president’s party loses seats. In 2002, however, the Republicans picked up seats in the House of Representatives and took back control of the Senate.

Confronting Iraq Soon after the elections, the United Nations approved a new resolution that set a deadline for Iraq to readmit weapons inspectors. It required Iraq to declare all of its weapons of mass destruction, to stop supporting terrorism, and to stop oppressing its people. The resolution threatened “serious consequences” if Iraq did not comply.

The Iraqi government agreed to the return of the UN weapons inspectors. In December, Iraq gave the UN a statement denying it had any weapons of mass destruction. Secretary of State Colin Powell accused the Iraqis of lying. Iraq, Powell warned, was “well on the way to losing its last chance.”

In January 2003, the United States and Great Britain began building up their forces in the Middle East. On January 28, President Bush delivered his State of the Union address. He warned that unless Saddam Hussein disarmed voluntarily, “for the safety of our people, and for the peace of the world, we will lead a coalition to disarm him.” The United States did not want war, the president explained, but “sometimes peace must be defended. A future lived at the mercy of terrible threats is no peace at all.” On March 20, the war began in Iraq.

The attacks on New York City and Washington, D.C., convinced many Americans that more security was needed, even if it meant giving up some freedoms. Write a letter to a newspaper explaining why you are for or against increased security.