

# Five Days in September



## Big inquiry question

How did Gander Newfoundland come together as a community after the 9/11 attack?

## About this activity

On September 11, 2001, 38 diverted transatlantic flights carrying nearly 7,000 passengers arrived in Gander, Newfoundland, a community of fewer than 10,000 people. In this activity, students will watch the video *Five Days in September* to explore why Gander was able to receive so many aircraft and how people across the community worked together to meet the needs of thousands of unexpected visitors.

## Grade Level

6-12

## Learning goals

Students will:

- identify how Gander's location and aviation history influenced its role during September 11, 2001
- identify examples of how people, places and resources were used to respond to an unexpected challenge
- use evidence from the video to explain what helped make Gander's response possible.

## LESSON BREAKDOWN

### Get Thinking

Before showing the video, introduce students to the situation connected to the aftermath of 9/11. Explain that Gander, Newfoundland, had a population of fewer than 10,000 people in 2001. On September 11, 38 diverted international flights carrying nearly 7,000 passengers unexpectedly arrived at its airport.

Have students complete the **Get Thinking** section of their worksheet to begin brainstorming the challenge this community faced. Ask students to imagine that their own community suddenly had to support thousands of unexpected visitors for several days.

Have students choose three needs they think would have to be addressed first if their community suddenly had to support this many additional people.

- ☐ food
- ☐ shelter
- ☐ transportation
- ☐ medical needs
- ☐ clothing and basic necessities
- ☐ communication
- ☐ safety and organization
- ☐ emotional support

Have students briefly explain one of their choices. As a class, discuss whether everyone chose the same priorities and why different communities might make different choices. Do not reveal how Gander responded yet.

### Explore, Notice & Gather

Introduce the video *Five Days in September*.

Explain that the video tells two connected stories:

1. why Gander became an important aviation location
2. how the community responded when thousands of passengers unexpectedly arrived in September 2001.

As students watch, have them complete the Explore, Notice & Gather chart on their worksheet.

Students are to watch for evidence related to five areas:

- Gander's location and airport
- transportation
- food
- shelter
- health and basic needs
- community support

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Remind students that they do not need to write complete sentences while watching. Encourage them to record short notes, examples or keywords. After the video, allow students a few minutes to add details they remember and take up the chart as a class.

## Dive Deeper

Draw students' attention to the many different parts of the community involved in Gander's response. Explain that responding to an emergency does not depend on only one thing. Communities draw on the people who can help, places that can be used and resources that are available.

On the board write the following three words: People, Places, Resources. Using the student's organizer on their student worksheet, have students complete the chart using evidence they learned from the video. Clarify what each category involves:

- **People → Who helped?**

Students may identify people or groups such as volunteers, bus drivers, pharmacists, local residents or community organizations.

- **Places → Which existing spaces were used in new ways?**

Students may identify schools, churches, community halls, homes, the airport or other local facilities.

- **Resources → What goods, services or equipment helped meet people's needs?**

Students may identify food, clothing, buses, telephones, medications, beds or other necessities.

Once students have organized their evidence, have them respond to the following question: *Which was most important to Gander's response: its people, its places or its resources?*

Remind students that there is no single correct answer. Strong responses use evidence from the video and explain the relationship between the community's needs and the way those needs were met.

Have students:

- choose one category;
- provide two pieces of evidence from the video;
- explain why those examples made that category especially important.



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## Teacher Support

Use the following questions for a short class discussion. These do not need to be completed in writing.

- How did Gander's geography and aviation history help prepare the community for something no one expected?
- Which parts of Gander's response depended on physical places and resources, and which depended mostly on people?
- Could every Canadian community have responded in exactly the same way as Gander? Why or why not?

Return to the Big Inquiry Question: *How did Gander Newfoundland come together as a community after the 9/11 attack?* Invite students to offer one example from the video that helps answer the question.

## Optional Extension

Ask students to think about their own community and how it could respond to an emergency situation. Have them identify:

- one place that could be used differently during an emergency;
- one group of people that could help;
- one resource or service that would be important to support a large number of people all at once
- One idea how you could individually support your community

Students can use their examples to respond to: *What strengths does your community already have that could help people during an unexpected emergency?*



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## FIVE DAYS IN SEPTEMBER STUDENT WORKSHEET

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Big inquiry question:

How did Gander Newfoundland come together as a community after the 9/11 attack?

### Get thinking

Imagine that your community suddenly needs to support thousands of unexpected visitors for several days. Which **three** needs do you think should be addressed first?

- ☐ Food
- ☐ Shelter
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Medical needs
- ☐ Clothing and basic necessities
- ☐ Communication
- ☐ Safety and organization
- ☐ Emotional support
- ☐ Other: your own idea

Choose one of your selections. Why would it be a priority?

### Explore, notice & gather

As you watch the video: *Five Days in September*, collect examples of how Gander prepared for and responded to the arrival of thousands of unexpected visitors. You can use short notes or keywords.

| What to notice                | Evidence from the video |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Gander’s location and airport |                         |
| Transportation                |                         |
| Food                          |                         |
| Shelter                       |                         |
| Health and basic needs        |                         |
| Community support             |                         |

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**Look more closely**

1. What did you learn about Gander’s geography or airport history that helps explain why so many planes could land there?  

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2. Identify one example of an ordinary place being used in a new way during the response.
  - a. Place: 

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  - b. How it was used: 

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3. Identify one example of people changing their normal routines to help.  

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**Dive Deeper**

Use examples from the video to complete the organizer

| People<br>(who helped?) | Places<br>(What spaces were used?) | Resources<br>(What goods, services or equipment were used?) |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
|                         |                                    |                                                             |

**Make a claim**

Which was most important to Gander’s response: its people, its places or its resources?

- My choice: 

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- My reasoning/evidence: 

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**Final thinking**

Complete the sentence:  
Gander was able to respond to an unexpected challenge because...

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