After the Attacks

Trace how September 11 changed U.S. policy abroad and at home.

USH.7.4 "Explain the background and effects of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on U.S. foreign and domestic policy."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details about the background of the attacks, circle two foreign-policy responses, and number two domestic-policy changes 1 and 2. Use your marks to trace how the attacks led to policy changes.

A Turning Point in U.S. Policy

1 Before 2001, the militant group al-Qaeda had attacked U.S. targets overseas, including American embassies in East Africa in 1998 and the USS Cole in Yemen in 2000. Its leaders opposed U.S. troops stationed in Saudi Arabia and other U.S. policies in the Middle East. The Taliban government in Afghanistan allowed al-Qaeda to operate there. On September 11, 2001, 19 al-Qaeda hijackers seized four passenger planes. Two struck the World Trade Center in New York, one struck the Pentagon, and passengers fought back before the fourth crashed in Pennsylvania. Nearly 3,000 people were killed.

2 The attacks changed U.S. foreign policy because leaders treated al-Qaeda as a continuing threat, not only as the organizer of one crime. Congress authorized military force against those responsible and those who sheltered them. In October 2001, the United States and allies invaded Afghanistan to target al-Qaeda and remove the Taliban government that had sheltered it. U.S. forces remained in Afghanistan for two decades, fighting a long war as officials tried to prevent new attacks. The United States also expanded cooperation with other countries to track suspected terrorists and disrupt their funding. These choices extended U.S. action far beyond its borders.

3 At home, the federal government changed how it tried to prevent attacks. Congress passed the USA PATRIOT Act in 2001, expanding investigative powers, including access to certain records. The Transportation Security Administration took over airport passenger screening, and a new Department of Homeland Security brought several security agencies together. Supporters argued that these measures could stop another attack. Critics warned that wider surveillance could threaten privacy and that some Muslim Americans faced suspicion and discrimination. The debate showed a lasting tension: how could the country protect people while also protecting civil liberties? The attacks reshaped both everyday travel and arguments about government power.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did al-Qaeda's earlier actions and the Taliban's role help explain the U.S. response after September 11?

2. Why did the United States invade Afghanistan in 2001, and how did that goal relate to Congress's authorization of force?

3. Choose two domestic-policy changes in the passage. How was each meant to help prevent another attack?

4. What tension did the domestic response create? Explain how a policy in the passage illustrates it.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write an 80 to 100 word museum label titled "A Turning Point." Explain one condition that preceded the attacks, one foreign-policy response, and one domestic-policy response, then show a trade-off or lasting effect connected to those responses.

After the Attacks

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details about the background of the attacks, circle two foreign-policy responses, and number two domestic-policy changes 1 and 2. Use your marks to trace how the attacks led to policy changes. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did al-Qaeda's earlier actions and the Taliban's role help explain the U.S. response after September 11?	**Al-Qaeda had attacked U.S. targets before, and the Taliban had allowed the group to operate in Afghanistan. Leaders therefore treated the group as a continuing threat and acted against both al-Qaeda and the government that sheltered it.**
2	Why did the United States invade Afghanistan in 2001, and how did that goal relate to Congress's authorization of force?	**The invasion aimed to target al-Qaeda and remove the Taliban government that sheltered it. Congress had authorized force against those responsible for the attacks and those who sheltered them.**
3	Choose two domestic-policy changes in the passage. How was each meant to help prevent another attack?	**For example, the USA PATRIOT Act expanded investigative powers to help identify threats, while the Transportation Security Administration took over airport screening to improve passenger security.**
4	What tension did the domestic response create? Explain how a policy in the passage illustrates it.	**The tension was between preventing attacks and protecting civil liberties. For example, wider access to records could aid investigations but also raise privacy concerns.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A Turning Point

Before September 11, al-Qaeda had attacked U.S. targets overseas, and the Taliban allowed the group to operate in Afghanistan. After al-Qaeda hijackers killed nearly 3,000 people, the United States invaded Afghanistan to target the group and remove the Taliban government that had sheltered it. At home, the USA PATRIOT Act expanded federal investigative powers, including access to certain records. These responses aimed to prevent future attacks, but they also changed the reach of U.S. power abroad and at home. The long war and concerns about privacy showed that security decisions can have lasting costs.

Accept other accurate background details and policy responses from the passage. For the museum label, look for a clear connection between the attacks and both a foreign and a domestic response, plus an explained trade-off or lasting effect.