



*The U.S. and the World:*  
SS.7.CG.4.4  
**September 11, 2001**  
**READING #6**

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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



**SS.7.CG.4.4 Benchmark Clarification 6:** Students will explain how the heroic actions of passengers on United Airlines Flight 93 reflect the principles of liberty and the responsibilities of citizenship.

At 8:42 AM on September 11th, 2001, **United Airlines Flight 93**, a Boeing 757 with 44 people onboard, took off from Newark International Airport, heading to San Francisco. At 9:28 AM it was hijacked by **al Qaeda** terrorists. By this time, the passengers were aware of what happened at the **Twin Towers** in New York City with the other hijacked aircraft. So they had a decision to make: do they try to fight and take back the plane or do they sit and hope that this hijacking will not be the same as the others?

**Democratic principles** are foundational to our beliefs as Americans and our responsibilities as citizens. The actions of the passengers of Flight 93 reflect our deep commitment to the principles of liberty and the responsibilities of citizenship, even in the most dire of circumstances. Before acting, the passengers took a vote, agreeing to work together to take on a huge and terrifying task: trying to take back the plane. They trusted that their fellow citizens on this flight would support each other in the effort to take back the plane. Knowing that the liberties and the very lives of other Americans were at stake, some of them reached out to their families and other people on the ground by phone. They warned them, the best that they could, what was happening and what they were going to do. They demonstrated an important sense of **patriotism** and love of both their country and their fellow citizens.

Most importantly, they never stopped fighting in their effort to defend the values and principles threatened by the terrorists. Experts believe that the terrorists were planning on crashing into the **U.S. Capitol Building**. Instead, the plane crashed in an open field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania while the passengers and terrorists fought for control. Through their action, the passengers of Flight 93 saved countless lives and as well as one of the most important symbols of our nation. They showed their devotion to the principles of liberty and the responsibilities of citizenship and reflected the best of the American spirit.

**United Airlines Flight 93** - a Boeing 757 carrying 44 people that crashed into a field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania after passengers fought to regain control from terrorists

**al Qaeda** - extremist Islamic terror group responsible for multiple global terror attacks against Western targets, including the events of September 11th, 2001

**Twin Towers** - common name for the North and South Towers of the World Trade Center

**democratic principles** - founding principles of the United States, which include an appreciation for the rights of the people, the people as foundational to government power, and the importance of democracy

**patriotism** - support for one's country

**U.S. Capitol Building** - center of legislative power for the United States in Washington, D.C., where the U.S. Congress meets