

How Events Affect People Around
the World in Different Ways

5. UNDERSTANDING

OTHERS

EXPLORE YOUR IDEAS



What to Do

Read the introduction and article below, then write your thoughts on the facing page.

The circumstances of a particular event can affect people far away from where the event originally occurred. People respond to world events in different ways. When we need to understand world events in other countries, we often depend on the *media*—television, radio, newspapers, magazines, and the Internet—to get information.

September 11, 2001, was an event that affected people around the world in many different ways. (See the inside back cover for details about what happened that day in world history.) Read the article below about a student whose community experienced hate crimes after the events of that day.

Excerpt from “This Is Our Country, Too”

Zaki Barzinji, 12, was studying Arabic at his family's *mosque* (Muslim place of worship) when terrorists attacked the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. “My first reaction was pure shock,” Zaki told *Junior Scholastic*. “Then after the shock, I felt fear for Muslims around the country.” Zaki worried that enraged people might target Muslims.

Zaki's fears were soon realized. Vandals spray-painted part of his Sterling, Virginia, mosque with anti-Muslim slurs and did other damage.

Across the U.S., Muslim- and Arab-Americans have been targets of vandalism, insults, and violent assaults. The suspected terrorists were from Arab countries with connections to extremist Islamic groups. So some Americans took out their anger on fellow citizens who happened to be Arab or Muslim. In one incident in Arizona, a gas station attendant who wore a turban was murdered though he was neither Muslim nor Arab.

This reaction greatly saddened Zaki's mom, Afeefa Syeed. “After the attacks, I wanted to give blood, as a way to help the victims,” she says. “But my friends told me they didn't think it was safe to go out.” Zaki's family later joined prayer services with other Muslims, Christians, and Jews.

“At first I was angry at whoever vandalized the mosque,” Zaki says. “Then came a sense of understanding about why they did it, that they didn't understand Islam. Islam means peace. Even the way we Muslims greet one another—*Salaam Aleikum*—means peace be upon you. What these terrorists did, Islam condemns. These were the actions of individuals. You can't blame an entire religion for what they did....”

Zaki's mom, whose family moved to the U.S. when she was 5, tells of friends being told to “Go back to your country!”

Excerpt from “This Is Our Country, Too,” *Junior Scholastic*, October 29, 2001.

1. What is your reaction to this article?

2. Describe Zaki. Where is he from? How old is he? What is his heritage?

3. What are the two main events that concern Zaki and his mother? Can you explain how the two events might be related?

4. Describe Zaki's mother. How does her attitude change toward the events of 9/11?

5. Describe how you think Zaki might feel. What is he concerned about? Why do you think so?

6. What does *Salaam Aleikum* mean? Why is this phrase important to Zaki?