

8th Grade Fall ELA Performance Task

Is it appropriate to build a Muslim community center near the World Trade Center site?

Student Name:

Did You Know?		
	Yes	No
There was a Muslim prayer room located on the 17th floor of Two World Trade Center (the South Tower).		
The Muslim community center, as proposed, is a 16-story building that will include a library, a gym, a swimming pool, a basketball court, a 500-seat auditorium, a restaurant, a 9/11 memorial, child care facilities, a culinary school, and a two-story prayer space.		
Landing gear and other debris from one of the 9/11 hijacked planes crashed through the upper two floors of the proposed Muslim community center building back when it was still a Burlington Coat Factory store.		
The Muslim community center, as proposed, will be located about two blocks from the World Trade Center site . There currently is a Muslim Mosque and an Off-Track Betting facility are all located within four blocks of the World Trade Center site.		
Human remains from the Sep. 11th attacks were found within 350 feet of the planned community center location.		

Background Information:

Mosque- a building where Muslims worship/pray

Muslim- a person who believes in the religion of Islam

Background: *"Is it appropriate to build a Muslim community center (aka the 'Ground Zero Mosque') near the World Trade Center site?"*



(Click to enlarge image)

Aerial photograph of Ground Zero.
Source: Associated Press, "Attacks Reconstruction,
Changing NYC Pictures,"
www.newshopper.sulekha.com, March 22, 2009

The debate over whether or not it is appropriate to build a Muslim community center (aka "Ground Zero Mosque," aka Cordoba Initiative, aka Park51 project) near the World Trade Center site has grown from a local discussion to an issue of international importance, prompting protests in the streets of New York and drawing responses from well-known American political leaders.

Proponents argue that the 16-story Muslim community center will be an asset to the neighborhood and local economy, and that its construction demonstrates America's religious tolerance. **Opponents** argue that the "Ground Zero Mosque" is an insensitive and disrespectful political ploy by radical Islamists that will inflict emotional distress on families who suffered casualties on Sep. 11, 2001.

On Dec. 8, 2009, the *New York Times* published an article titled "Muslim Prayers and Renewal Near Ground Zero," which noted that an Islamic center was planned for the 45 Park Place location, where some Muslims had been holding Friday prayers since the building was purchased in July. On Dec. 21, 2009, Daisy Khan, wife of Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf (slated to be the spiritual leader of the Muslim community center), was interviewed by guest host Laura Ingraham on Fox News's *The O'Reilly Factor* about the project. During the interview, Khan explained that the center will deliver a message of tolerance and love, and Ingraham stated that she "can't find many people that really have a problem with it."

Formal plans for the project were introduced at a meeting of the Finance Committee of Local Manhattan Community Board No. 1 on May 5, 2010, and approved by a 12-0 vote. Officially titled the Cordoba House, the plans called for demolishing the current buildings at 45-51 Park Place and replacing them with a \$100 million facility that would include a mosque, a September 11th memorial, a library, a culinary school, a 500-seat auditorium, and recreation facilities such as a swimming pool, a gym, and a basketball court. The location is approximately one-tenth of a mile from the northern side of the World Trade Center site.



(Click to enlarge image)

The current building at 45 Park Place, the location of the proposed "Ground Zero Mosque."
Source: City Realty, "Landmarks Commission Holds Raucous Hearing on Proposed Mosque Near Ground Zero," www.cityrealty.com, July 13, 2010



(Click to enlarge image)

Artist rendering of what the "Ground Zero Mosque" will look like.
Source: New York Architecture, "Park51-Mistrust and the Mosque," www.nyc-architecture.com, Sep. 2, 2010

Read both points of view, 'pro' and 'con'. As you read, underline the important points for both sides.

Write a 'P' next to items you thought were important from the 'Pro' side.

Write a 'C' next to items you thought were important from the 'Con' side.

Pro & Con Arguments: "Is it appropriate to build a Muslim community center (aka the 'Ground Zero Mosque') near the World Trade Center site?"

PRO - It is appropriate to build a Muslim community center (aka the 'Ground Zero Mosque') near the World Trade Center site

1. The "Ground Zero Mosque" will be an asset to the city. According to plans - what is planned is a community center with a library, a gym, a swimming pool, a basketball court, a 500-seat auditorium, a restaurant, a 9/11 memorial, child care facilities, and a culinary school.
2. The Muslim community center is a major economic investment that will pump over \$100 million in infrastructure into lower Manhattan and will create as many as 150 full-time and 500 part-time jobs in an area that desperately needs it.
3. Contrary to what many believe, the "Ground Zero Mosque" is not a mosque. A mosque is a Muslim holy place in which only worship can be conducted. The community center is 16-stories high with a 2-story prayer space that is, according to its builders, "open to everyone."
4. The United States was built upon tolerance and religious freedom, and a mosque at Ground Zero would represent American values. We should not allow the 9/11 terrorists' message of intolerance to reign in our country.
5. Muslims have the same right to build a house of worship in Lower Manhattan and to pray for the victims of 9/11 as any other group.] Approximately 60 Muslims were murdered in the 9/11 attacks.
6. The Park51 project allows Muslims to remind Americans that the destruction that

CON - It is not appropriate to build a Muslim community center (aka the 'Ground Zero Mosque') near the World Trade Center site

1. The 9/11 attacks were committed by Muslim terrorists in the name of Islam. Building a Muslim mosque on the hallowed ground near the World Trade Center site is an insult to the memory of those killed on Sep. 11, 2001. The World Trade Center site should remain a sacred burial ground and a war memorial free from the hurtful presence of a nearby mosque.
2. The "Ground Zero Mosque" would become a permanent lightning rod for anti-Muslim feelings. According to former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, "All the proposed Muslim community center near Ground Zero will do is create more division, more anger, and more hatred." That divisiveness is not good for anyone, especially Muslims.
3. There should be no mosques near Ground Zero until there are churches or synagogues in Saudi Arabia, or until Christians or Jews are allowed to enter Mecca. Islamists that call for tolerance need to address their own practices before they criticize America's.
4. Several prominent Muslims believe the "Ground Zero Mosque" should not be built, There are over 100 mosques in New York where Muslims can worship freely
5. The idea of a Muslim mosque near Ground Zero where Muslims killed so many Americans is not moral.
6. Surveys show that 68% of Americans feel that the "Ground Zero Mosque" should not

struck the Twin Towers does not represent Islam. Al-Qaeda was responsible for the 9/11 attacks, not Islam.

7. Iman Rauf (who will lead the Community Center) is an American citizen who says he "votes in elections, pays taxes, pledges allegiance to the flag, and is a Giants fan."
8. It is appropriate for a mosque to be built near Ground Zero because one existed on floor 17 of the South Tower of the World Trade Center and was destroyed in the 9/11 attacks.
9. Several family members of 9/11 victims have publicly supported the project. Frank Tatum, who lost his mother on 9/11, stated, "We do have religious freedom. I know the [9/11] wounds are still very open, mine included, but you have to look at the big picture. You can't practice these freedoms only when it suits us. You have to practice them all along."
10. Cancelling the plans to build the "Ground Zero Mosque" will signal to Islamic extremists that America is anti-Muslim, which may endanger Americans and put the country at risk of a future terrorist attack.
According to Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf, if Park51 were moved "...the headline in the Muslim world will be Islam is under attack in America, this will strengthen the radicals in the Muslim world, help their recruitment..."
11. We are fighting wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to protect Muslims from tyranny. We should also be protecting them from tyranny at home by standing up for their rights, including freedom of religion.
12. The name Cordoba House was chosen to represent Cordoba, Spain, a Middle Age city where Muslims, Christians, and Jews co-existed peacefully during a famous period of cultural enrichment. On July 13, 2010, to satisfy critics, the project was renamed Park51 to put emphasis on the community center aspect of the project rather than religion.

be built at its proposed location.

7. Building the "Ground Zero Mosque" will endanger New Yorkers because anti-Muslim extremists will target it for an attack. [8] On Oct. 3, 2010, the New York City Police Department confirmed it was investigating death threats against Imam Rauf and his wife, Daisy Khan. A Florida pastor threatened to burn 100 Korans on 9/11/10 if the Muslim community center were built at its proposed location.
8. The name Cordoba House proves that the 'Ground Zero Mosque' is intended to be a victory monument for terrorists. The name 'Cordoba House' is a deliberately insulting term that refers to Cordoba, Spain - the capital of Muslim conquerors who symbolized their victory over the Christian Spaniards by transforming a church there into the world's third-largest mosque complex.
9. The proposed location of the "Ground Zero Mosque," sits well within the hallowed ground of the World Trade Center site. Human remains were found within 350 feet of the proposed Muslim community center. Jim Riches, a former New York City Deputy Fire Chief whose son, Jimmy, was killed on 9/11, stated, "I just think it's very insensitive"

