

B. Learning to See in Terms of Cardinal Anchor Facts

1. Anchor facts are not merely facts about the past; they are facts that explain how the world we live in came to be the way that it is.
2. Because the past is the explanation of the present, there are many anchor facts. We have to see the *most important ones first*. I call these the “cardinal” anchor facts. (The world “cardinal,” as a noun, refers to the *highest* ranking officials within the Catholic Church. “Cardinal,” as an adjective, thus means of *highest* importance.)
3. *Cardinal anchor facts* help us see the connection between past and present, and also to see the story we are learning as one integrated story. This helps us to maintain the connection between past and present as we continue to learn more facts, thus helping us to learn and remember.

C. The Cardinal Anchor Facts of American History

1. How the World Became What It Is Today: 9-11-2001
 - a) Among all the facts of American history that explain the state of the *world* today, none stands out more dramatically than “9-11.”
 - b) On September 11, 2001, terrorists, following a violent interpretation of the religion of Islam, hijacked four passenger liners and used them as bombs to destroy various building in America. The attack was a form of “jihad” (“holy war” in Islam).
 - c) From that day forward, the United States became focussed on fighting what has come to be known as the “War on Terror.” It attacked Afghanistan (where the government was known to support terrorists, including Osama Bin Laden, who planned the attack of 9-11), and then Iraq, which America’s leaders believed would also help terrorists.
 - d) Since 2001, in two other countries (Syria and Libya) terrorists have also caused civil wars, ruining the lives of millions.
 - e) *One* of the reasons Americans recently voted for Donald Trump as president was the perception that he would do the best job to stop terrorists.
 - f) It is difficult to exaggerate how much the world has changed since 9-11. That is the kind of event that qualifies as a *cardinal* anchor fact.



September 11, 2001: the day the world changed from what it was before into what it is today — the first of the *cardinal* anchor facts of American history today.