

SPECIAL REPORT

Attack on Paris

OBJECTIVE

Students will read an article closely, identifying its central ideas.

KEY STANDARDS

RH.6-8.1, RH.6-8.2

TIME FRAME

Approximately one class period

ARTICLE SUMMARY

This article explores key issues surrounding the recent terrorist attacks in Paris, including who was behind the attacks, why the plot wasn't detected, and how the U.S. and the world have responded.

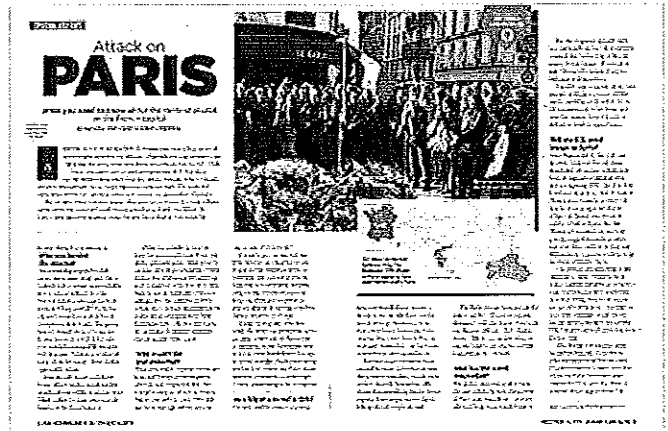
STEP-BY-STEP LESSON PLAN

Before Reading

- 1 BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE (10 MINUTES)**
Distribute the skills sheet *Determining Central Ideas: What Do You Know About the Paris Attacks?*, which features a KWL chart. Have students complete the *K* and *W* columns. (They will complete the *L* column later.)

Read & Analyze

- 2 INDEPENDENT READING (15 MINUTES)**
Have students read the article on their own, underlining key ideas.
- 3 FULL-CLASS DISCUSSION (15 MINUTES)**
Use these questions to guide a discussion.
 - What is ISIS? (*ISIS—also called the Islamic State and ISIL—is a radical Islamist army that has taken over large parts of Syria and Iraq. The group has imposed laws based on a harsh interpretation of Islam.*)
 - Why did the group attack France? (*ISIS said the attacks were revenge for France's part in a U.S.-led coalition that is bombing ISIS territory. The group also sees Paris as a symbol of a decadent Western culture that is opposed to Islam.*)
 - How might Europe's migrant crisis have contributed to the attacks? (*Authorities say that one of the attackers was able to enter France by first entering Greece, pretending to be a migrant.*)



- According to a senior U.S. intelligence official, why are these attacks considered a “game changer”? (*U.S. and world leaders have long believed that ISIS was mainly a threat in the Middle East, not the world at large. The attacks in Paris, however, show that the influence of ISIS is spreading.*)
- What are some specific responses to the attacks? (*French warplanes bombed the Syrian city of Raqqa. The U.S. struck a convoy of ISIS trucks carrying oil in Syria.*)

Extend & Assess

- 4 RETURN TO THE KWL CHART**
Have students complete the rest of the KWL skills sheet. Then go over it as a class.

DIFFERENTIATING

Lower Level Have students read just a few sections of the article so they can concentrate on comprehension.

Higher Level Have students come up with a theme for a sixth section for the article, then conduct research and write the section.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCE



Skills Sheet

- *Determining Central Ideas: What Do You Know About the Paris Attacks?* (online)

Attack on PARIS

What you need to know about the recent terrorist assault on the French capital

BY PATRICIA SMITH AND VERONICA MAJEROL

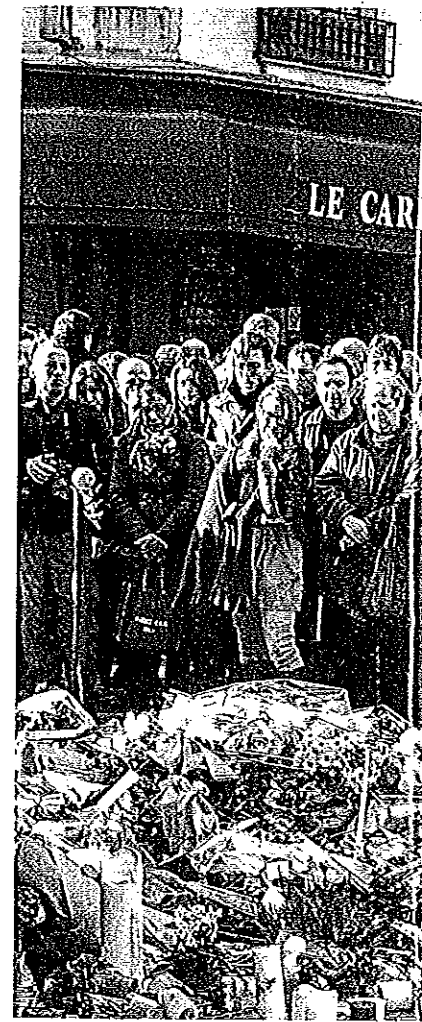
The Eiffel Tower lit patriotically a few days after the attack



ON THE NIGHT OF NOVEMBER 13, France was rocked by a series of terrorist attacks that killed at least 129 people and injured more than 350. It was the worst bloodshed there since World War II (1939-1945).

The attacks were coordinated with precision. At 9:20 p.m., a suicide bomber blew himself up outside a sports stadium. Within minutes, shooters and bombers had targeted restaurants. The highest death toll was at a concert hall, where gunmen with assault weapons killed 89 people.

The incident came less than a year after terrorists killed 16 people in Paris, including 12 at the office of the French satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo*. Here's what you need to know about the attacks and what they mean for the world.



Who was behind the attacks?

The terrorist group ISIS—also called the Islamic State and ISIL—immediately claimed responsibility. ISIS is a radical Islamist army that has taken over large parts of Syria and Iraq since 2014, imposing laws there based on a harsh interpretation of Islam. The group said that its attacks were revenge for France's part in a U.S.-led coalition that is bombing ISIS territory. ISIS also sees Paris as a symbol of a decadent Western culture that is opposed to Islam.

French authorities said that three teams of terrorists carried out the attacks. Seven of the terrorists were killed, either by their own suicide bombs or by French police.

Although the attacks appear to

have been directed from Syria, most of the gunmen either were French citizens or had grown up in France. France has a troubled relationship with a number of its 5 million Muslims. Many of them are crammed into ghetto-like suburbs of Paris, where there is high unemployment and a sense of segregation from French society. ISIS has been able to tap into a deep resentment to recruit people to its cause.

Why wasn't the plot detected?

U.S. and European intelligence officials had suspected that ISIS was planning an attack in France. But as one official said, "We did not have enough information to take action to disrupt it."

Porous internal borders within

Europe, which can allow terrorists in and out of countries without detection, are another problem. Authorities have traced the planning for the attacks to a city in Belgium, France's neighbor, a country that is ill-equipped to handle the security challenge.

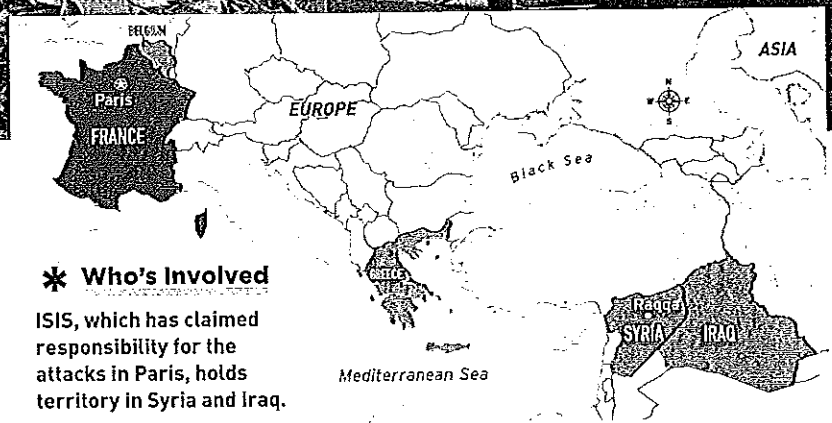
Europe's migrant crisis has made the situation even more complicated. Hundreds of thousands of refugees, many fleeing the war in Syria, have flooded into Europe in recent months. Authorities have verified that one of the Paris assailants had entered France through Greece, pretending to be a migrant.

How big of a threat is ISIS?

The U.S. and its allies have long believed that ISIS is mainly a threat to the Middle East, not the world



People mourn the victims at the site of one of the attacks.



* Who's Involved

ISIS, which has claimed responsibility for the attacks in Paris, holds territory in Syria and Iraq.

at large. In an interview that aired hours before the Paris attacks, President Barack Obama told ABC News that “we have contained them” in Iraq and Syria.

But recent developments have caused Western authorities to fear that the group is spreading its influence farther. In early November, ISIS claimed responsibility for the downing of a Russian plane over Egypt, killing all 224 people aboard. The Paris attacks have raised

the stakes even further. “This was a game changer,” said one senior U.S. intelligence official. “This clearly shows ISIS is . . . capable of carrying out large-scale attacks outside Iraq and Syria.”

How has the world responded?

The global outpouring of sympathy for and solidarity with the people of Paris was immediate—as were offers of help from world leaders.

The response quickly went beyond words, though, as French warplanes bombed the Syrian city of Raqqa, where ISIS is based. “France is at war,” French President François Hollande told reporters.

The U.S. also stepped up its own attacks, striking a convoy of ISIS trucks carrying oil in Syria. (ISIS controls oil fields there and uses the money from the sale of that oil to fund its operations.)

Will the U.S. send troops to fight ISIS?

Since August 2014, the U.S. and its allies have conducted more than 8,000 air strikes in Iraq and Syria in support of local armies that are fighting ISIS. The U.S. already has 3,500 troops in Iraq, and President Obama recently announced that he is sending a small unit of Special Operations forces to aid the effort in Syria. But the Obama administration, wary of getting bogged down in another war after the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, opposes sending large numbers of troops there.

The president’s handling of the situation has become a major issue in the 2016 presidential race. Republicans accuse Obama of withdrawing U.S. troops from Iraq too quickly. The absence has left “an incredible vacuum [that] allows for the development of things like ISIS,” presidential candidate Ben Carson has said.

Whether or not Obama shifts his ISIS policy, says Matthew Olsen, a former director of the National Counterterrorism Center, the attack on Paris “increases pressure on the U.S. and the West to respond more aggressively.” ♦

With reporting by *The New York Times*