



Black and white postcard photograph. "Dedication of Site K.C. Liberty Memorial Nov. 1, 1921". Reviewing stand with allied nations flags and crowds behind.

Online Collections Database, 1986.189.108, www.theworldwar.org/research/database. National WWI Museum and Memorial. Online.

WILL YOU REMEMBER ME?

EXAMINING WORLD WAR I MEMORIALS

Recommended Grade Levels: 7-12

Course/Content Area: World History / Art History

Authored by: Tim Garner, National WWI Museum and Memorial Teacher Fellow

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- How do countries memorialize their war dead?
- What does this tell us about that nation's experience in World War I?

SUMMARY	With this lesson, students will assess the impact World War I had on various nations as they examine monuments from around the world. Students will then process their learning to design their own WWI memorial.
STANDARDS ALIGNMENT:	<p>Common Core English Language Arts Standards for History/Social Studies:</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.6: Evaluate authors’ differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors’ claims, reasoning, and evidence.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.7: Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.</p> <p>National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) C3 Framework Standards:</p> <p>D2.His.1.9-12. Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts.</p> <p>D2.His.6.9-12. Analyze the ways in which the perspectives of those writing history shaped the history that they produced.</p> <p>National Core Art Standards – Anchor Standards: Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Perceive and analyze artistic work. 8. Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work. 9. Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work. 11. Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding.
TIME NEEDED:	One 50-minute class period for examining the monuments; creation of their own monument is given as homework.

OBJECTIVES:	<i>Students will:</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● analyze World War I monuments in order to better understand how the war impacted nations that fought in World War I.
INTERDISCIPLINARY:	Art and Architecture
THEMES & CONNECTIONS:	This lesson would be taught at the end of the study of World War I.
MATERIALS NEEDED:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● video projector ● Internet access ● Pre-Assessment questions (Appendix A) ● Copies of viewing questions (Appendix B) ● WWI Memorials PowerPoint ● Copies of PowerPoint pictures or student access to devices. <i>Save the PowerPoint images in a common folder that students can access via their computers.</i>

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

After the conclusion of the Great War, participating nations erected monuments to commemorate their participation in the conflict and to memorialize those who died.

Some nations erected national monuments, while others had numerous memorials erected throughout the countryside. Some memorials were built with state money, while others were built with donations from its citizens. For example, in 1919, within a year of the war's armistice, the citizens and community leaders in Kansas City, Missouri raised more than \$2.5 million in just 10 days¹. This memorial would become a lasting monument to those men and women who had served in the war. In two years, supreme Allied commanders dedicated the site of the Liberty Memorial². Construction and the dedication of the Liberty Memorial occurred in 1926. At the time he dedicated the memorial, President Coolidge stated,

“It [the Liberty Memorial] has not been raised to commemorate war and victory, but rather the results of war and victory which are embodied in peace and liberty... Today I return in order that I may place the official sanction of the

¹ Derek Donovan, *Lest the Ages Forget* (Kansas City: Kansas City Star Books, 2001), 23.

² Donovan, *Lest the Ages Forget*, 52.

national government upon one of the most elaborate and impressive memorials that adorn our country. The magnitude of this memorial, and the broad base of popular support on which it rests, can scarcely fail to excite national wonder and admiration.”

Liberty Memorial Dedication Speech, President Calvin Coolidge, November 11, 1926³.

In 2014, Congress recognized the Museum and Liberty Memorial as the National World War I Museum and Memorial. This is just one country and its memorial’s story. This lesson seeks to examine how this process differed from country to country.

³ Donovan, *Lest the Ages Forget*, 78-79.

LESSON

PRE-ASSESSMENT:

Students will answer the following questions regarding monuments/memorials:

1. Name a few famous monuments, either in the U.S. or overseas.
2. What purposes do monuments serve? Why do nations build them?
3. How can a monument convey a message or belief?
4. Why would a nation build a monument or a memorial after a war? What might that memorial tell us about the nation's experience in that war, and what that war means to that nation?

DIRECTIONS:

1. Post or project the pre-assessment questions on the board. Find a copy of the questions in **Appendix A**. (*Note: If you prefer, you can print the questions for the students.*)
2. Explain to students that many nations constructed monuments and memorials after WWI to honor the fallen and those who served. These monuments reflect the experiences each nation had during the cataclysmic conflict.
3. Tell them they will be examining several monuments in a **PowerPoint** and answering questions about each one.

OPTION ONE:

- Show the WWI Memorials PowerPoint to the students.
- Students will quietly answer questions in their packets for each monument/memorial. (See **Appendix B**.)
- After a few moments, prompt the students to share their answers about each monument as you progress through the slides.

OPTION TWO:

- Students will access the WWI Memorials PowerPoint independently on their devices and complete the accompanying questions.
- After completing all the slides, students will share their answers in groups of 3-5 students.

OPTION THREE:

- Show the WWI Memorials PowerPoint to the students.
- Process through the questions using a whole class method, such as a Socratic seminar, a group discussion or partner/table discussions.

4. Following this exercise, revisit the questions posed at the beginning of the

lesson, and then give the assignment listed below.

5. Assignment:

- Students will design (draw and describe) a monument for WWI. The written description should pay special attention to these questions:
 - What would this monument look like?
 - What message would you want this memorial to convey? Why?
 - This could be done as homework for the following day or could be done during class the following day.
 - Optional: Consider turning this into a contest for the best design. The [National WWI Memorial in Washington, D.C.](#) and the [Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.](#) were both designed and chosen in this manner.
- After completing their designs, students should then share.
 - Host a gallery walk for students to see each other's work.
 - If there is a competition, this would be a great time to let students explore and then vote on their favorite design.

POST-ASSESSMENT:

In a detailed paragraph, respond to the following writing prompt:

What do you think is the purpose of memorials? How can their meaning change over time? Explain your answer. Refer to material covered in class when formulating your responses.

MODIFICATIONS/ACCOMMODATIONS

If using Option One, IEP, ELL or 504 Plan students may need hard copies of the monuments - printed in color. Also, be sure the memorial assignment is printed out for them. Time extensions may be allowed based on individual needs.

Appendix A: Pre-Assessment Questions

1. Name a few famous monuments, either in the U.S. or overseas.
2. What purposes do monuments serve? And why do nations build them?
3. How can a monument convey a message or belief?
4. Why would a nation build a monument or a memorial after a war?
5. Will a monument or memorial mean the same thing to everyone? Why or why not?

Appendix B: PowerPoint Questions

1. Memorial to the Missing of the Somme (Identify)

- Describe the Memorial to the Missing at the Somme battlefield. Why do you think it is so large?
- What does the fact that a memorial to the missing (in action) was built tell us about this battle, and WWI in general?
- Why would a nation want to build a memorial to the missing in action?

2. World War I memorial in Cernobbio, Italy (Synthesize)

- Describe the memorial in detail. How are the soldiers being portrayed in this sculpture?
- Assume you're an officer speaking at a dedication ceremony. Write a short speech answering the following questions.
 - What does this sculpture tell us about the Italian view of the war?
 - How did the soldiers conduct themselves in this war?
 - How does this monument honor the soldiers of Italy?

3. French Memorial at Verdun (Empathize)

This is a memorial to the French dead at Verdun, a battle where approximately a half million French soldiers were killed or wounded.

Imagine that this memorial could talk.

- What would it tell you about the French soldiers who fought at Verdun?
- How does the memorial try to bring peace to the living?
- Why are there no patriotic symbols, weapons or images of soldiers in this war memorial?
- What might that tell us about the message this memorial is trying to convey?

4. American memorial in Bergen County, NJ (Express)

This is an American memorial, located in Bergen County, New Jersey. The Americans were on the winning side of this war.

- What emotions are expressed in this sculpture?

- How does this sculpture reflect an attitude of victory? Of optimism?
- Why might the Americans have this attitude, where the French or British might not?

5. Hungarian World War I Memorial (Compare)

This is a war memorial in Hungary, which was on the losing side of the war.

- What is the “mood” of this memorial? How does it convey the loss and sacrifice that these soldiers suffered?
- Does it convey a sense of honor among soldiers? If so, how?
- Finally, there is a woman with her children in this sculpture. Why would they be present in a memorial?

6. New Zealand World War I Memorial (Identify)

The memorial is from New Zealand, a nation which fought with the British, and was victorious in the World War.

- Describe the features of this memorial. What does its size tell us about the intent of its builders?

- What might the lack of soldiers or weapons at this memorial tell us about how the New Zealanders view this war?

7. National WWI Museum and Memorial in Kansas City, MO (Synthesize)

The Liberty Memorial Tower at the National WWI Museum and Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri was dedicated in the 1920's as a monument to America's involvement in World War I.

Assume you are a public official making a brief speech at the dedication ceremony of the Liberty Memorial Tower upon its completion in 1926. Remember your audience – they very much remember the war – many might be veterans; many might have lost loved ones.

Write a brief speech in which you address the following questions:

- Why is this monument called the Liberty Memorial Tower?
- Why build a monument at such a large scale?
- Why should Americans believe this war was worth fighting? (Regardless of personal beliefs, remember who might be in the audience!)
- Why should Americans memorialize those who gave their lives?

8. National World War I Memorial in Washington, D.C. (Compare)

This is the National World War I Memorial in Washington, D.C., which was built in 2021 as a second national WWI memorial for the United States.

- How is it different from the National WWI Museum and Memorial, the United States' other national memorial?

- Why might a nation have a memorial built in 1926, but then open a new one in 2021?

9. Ulus Victory Monument in Ankara, Turkey (Express)

This monument in Ankara, Turkey was built after the Turkish War for Independence, which was fought from 1919 to 1923, as a result of other world powers occupying and partitioning parts of the Ottoman Empire after they were on the losing side of WWI.

- What emotions are expressed in this statue?
- How does this statue reflect an attitude of victory?
- Why might this statue have been so important that it was placed in a dominant, central square of a large city?
- What is different or similar about this statue from those of other nations that were part of the Central Powers?

Additional Resources:

[Remembrance and Redemption](#) by Jay Winter – this article can be used to help students dive deeper into interpretations of memorials.

[Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning](#) by Jay Winter – this book shares Winter’s study of ‘collective remembrance’ of the Great War and the ways communities found solace after 1918.

[Forgotten Veterans, Invisible Memorials: How American Women Commemorated the Great War, 1917–1945](#) by Allison S. Finkelstein – Finkelstein captures the perspective of many women after the Great War and how they believed memories of those who served should be kept.

[Remembrance in the First World War](#) from the IWM – this video explains a shift in how some parts of the world remember and memorialize those involved in war.

[World War I Memorial Inventory Project](#) – this website has been building a database of WWI memorials that can help provide additional examples of memorials within the United States to explore.

[Commonwealth War Graves Commission](#) – This website provides a WWI memorial guide to explore over 23,000 cemeteries and memorials across the globe. It is another thorough space to look for additional examples of memorials from across the world.

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