

★

**GREAT WAR, FLAWED PEACE,
AND THE LASTING LEGACY
OF WORLD WAR I**

★



THE UNITED STATES
WORLD WAR ONE
CENTENNIAL COMMISSION

PRITZKER
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FOUNDATION

NHD
NATIONAL
HISTORY DAY

WAR MEMORIALS AT HOME

CONSTRUCTING THE LEGACY OF THE GREAT WAR



GUIDING QUESTION: What can local war memorials tell us about the importance of the World War I and the debate over a monument in our nation's capital?

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WHY?

I have been fascinated with the diversity of war memorials since I first experienced the memorials located on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Those memorials present a national statement about the value of sacrifice for one's nation. In many small communities across the country, a much more personal question needed to be answered. How do we memorialize our family members whom we have lost and speak with a sense of place that fits our community's character? These local memorials are a time capsule for the era in which they were built and the culture of people who created them.

OVERVIEW

Either in person or using photographs, students will study in detail a local World War I memorial, examining its figures, inscriptions, symbolism, materials, and location. After learning about the components that are important to include in any memorial, students will study and critique proposed designs for a National World War I Memorial in Washington, D.C.

OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this activity, students will be able to

- > Recognize key details of World War I memorials in their local community and elsewhere;
- > Evaluate the importance of the World War I effort on their local community's history; and
- > Consider monument themes within proposed plans for a national WWI memorial in D.C.

STANDARDS CONNECTIONS

CONNECTIONS TO COMMON CORE

- > CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9 Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.
- > CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.
- > CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.1.A Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among the claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

DOCUMENTS USED

PRIMARY SOURCES

Memorial Design Competition Stage II Finalists, 2016
United States World War I Centennial Commission
<https://www.worldwar1centennial.org/stage-ii-finalists.html>

National WWI Memorial Design Competition Stage II Report, 2016
United States World War I Centennial Commission
<https://www.worldwar1centennial.org/index.php/stage-ii-design-development/stage-ii-competition-jury-report/viewdocument.html>

"Victory Memorial Drive Dedicated to the City's War Dead," *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*, June 12, 1921
Minnesota Historical Society
<http://www.mnhs.org/newspapers/lccn/sn83016772/1921-06-12/ed-1/seq-13>

War History Activities, *Minnesota Quarterly*, 1921
Minnesota Historical Society
<http://collections.mnhs.org/mnhistorymagazine/articles/4/v04i3-4p152-210.pdf>

SECONDARY SOURCES

Blake Paterson, "Washington's Battle for a World War I Memorial," *Politico*, May 28, 2018
<https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2018/05/28/washington-world-war-i-memorial-218543>

Sarah Johnson, "Victory Memorial Drive," *Hennepin History*, 2014
<http://www.sarahjohnsonwrites.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Victory-Memorial-Drive.pdf>

The World War I Memorial Inventory Project
<http://ww1mproject.org/>

Video, *Did You Know There Is No National WWI Memorial in Washington DC?*

United States World War I Centennial Commission
<https://www.worldwar1centennial.org/honor/national-wwi-memorial.html>

MATERIALS

- › Reconstructing Your Local World War I Monument handout
- › Designing a National World War I Memorial handout
- › Memorial Design Competition Stage II Finalists, 2016

ACTIVITY PREPARATION

- › Determine location of nearest World War I Memorial and plan walking trip or take photographs.
 - » **Teacher Tip:** Memorials are often located in public places such as cemeteries, parks, or government buildings. Search those sites in your community or search online.
- › Make one copy of the Reconstructing Your Local World War I Monument handout for each student.
- › Make one copy of the Designing a National World War I Memorial handout for each student.
- › Familiarize yourself with the Memorial Design Competition Stage II Finalists plans.

PROCEDURE

ACTIVITY ONE: STUDYING A LOCAL WORLD WAR I MEMORIAL (45 MINUTES, NOT INCLUDING TRAVEL TIME)

- › Gather at the memorial.
 - » **Teacher Tip:** If a field trip is not feasible for the class or the memorial is too far away, the teacher should visit prior to this activity and take photographs from multiple angles. Students can view the photos either digitally or via a station activity.
- › Distribute the Reconstructing Your Local World War I Monument handout to each student.
- › Ask the students: *How does this memorial represent our community and the effect World War I had on the people who lived here at the time?*

- › Instruct students to study the monument for ten minutes without taking any notes, viewing all angles, details, and inscriptions that are part of the monument.
- › Provide students an additional ten minutes to roughly sketch the monument on Part I of the handout, prompting them to consider the inscriptions, symbols, figures, materials, and location of the monument.
 - » **Teacher Tip:** If visiting the memorial, this part of the lesson could be adapted to allow students to take photographs instead of sketching the monument.
- › Direct students to answer the questions in Part II of the handout either individually or in small groups

ACTIVITY TWO: REVIEWING DESIGNS FOR NATIONAL WORLD WAR I MEMORIAL IN WASHINGTON, D.C. (45 MINUTES)

- › Divide the students into groups of four or five students each.
- › Provide each student with a copy of the Designing a National World War I Memorial handout.
- › Ask the students: *What would you say if I told you that there is no national World War I memorial in Washington, D.C.?*
- › Watch the World War One Centennial Commission video on the need for the national memorial.
- › Explain that an effort supported by the United States World War One Centennial Commission is underway to establish a National World War I Memorial to be constructed in Washington, D.C., that will honor the service men and women of World War I. Five Stage II Finalists were selected from over 360 entries and were evaluated based on three criteria.
 - » Create a lasting and inspirational memorial.
 - » Develop a usable and inviting urban park.
 - » Address the unique urban design context of the site relative to Pennsylvania Avenue and the immediate surroundings.
- › Tell the students that, working in groups, they will examine each the proposed designs from each of the Stage II Finalists.
- › Project the designs provided in the Memorial Design Competition Stage II Finalists document, one at a time.
 - » 0013 Plaza to the Forgotten War
 - » 0037 World War One Memorial Concept (Grotto of Remembrance)
 - » 0077 The Weight of Sacrifice
 - » 0263 An American Family Portrait
 - » 0329 Heroes' Green
- › Allow time for students to consider the details of each design and record what that their group finds most and least compelling.

- > Direct each group to rank the five finalist designs once all five have been viewed, and to answer the question: *Based on the details in each of the designs, which do you think is the best design for the National World War I Memorial to be located in Washington, D.C.? Explain why you thought the design you selected was stronger than the other four.*
- > Direct each group to select a spokesperson and prepare to share and explain their ranking with the rest of the class. During each of the presentations, students should be able to refer to designs.
 - » **Teacher Tip:** If desired, the teacher could project one proposed design, allow all groups who selected that design to explain their rankings, and then project the next design, repeating the process until all student groups have presented.
- > Project *The Weight of Sacrifice* plan again and tell the students that it was selected as the design for the National World War I Memorial. In making their recommendation, the committee said:
 - » *The Weight of Sacrifice comes closest to meeting all National World War I Memorial goals.*
 - » *Taking cues from the surrounding city and the existing park design, the designer created a strong and deceptively simple concept resulting in a masterful site plan.*
 - » *The design creates two distinct but interrelated spaces within the site.*
 - » *This integration succeeds in creating both an evocative memorial space and a functional urban park.*
 - » *Properly executed, this design concept promises to remind and inspire visitors for generations to come about American involvement and sacrifice in World War I. And it promises as well to become a popular, well functioning, animated urban park in the heart of the nation's capital.*
- > Students could evaluate the debate regarding the national World War I memorial by reading the article, "Washington's Battle for a World War I Memorial" and conducting an in-class debate over the pros and cons suggested by those who wish to see a monument constructed and those who do not.
- > Students who are interested in learning more about why *The Weight of Sacrifice* was selected over the other four Memorial Design Competition State II Finalists can read the National WWI Memorial Design Competition Stage II Report.

ASSESSMENT

- > Direct students to write a short essay comparing *The Weight of Sacrifice* to the local memorial, answering the guiding question, "What can local war memorials tell us about the importance of the First World War and the debate over a monument in our nation's capital?"
- > Remind students to reflect on what they have learned about elements in World War I monuments and what those monuments represent to the people who create them.

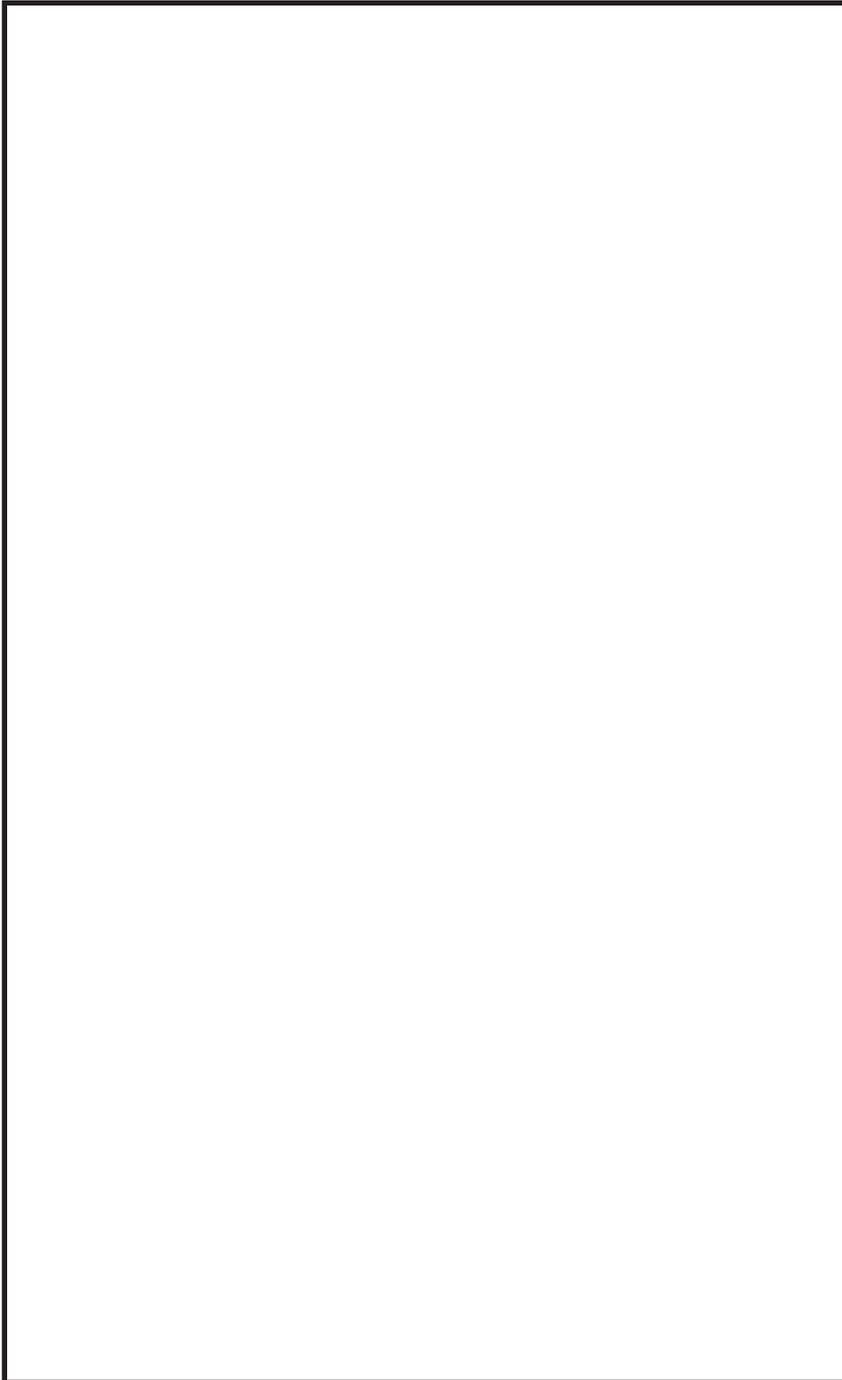
METHODS FOR EXTENSION

- > Students could use Proquest.com, Newspapers.com, or other local newspaper repositories to locate articles that discuss the dedication of their local World War I monument. As a primary source, this would give students a stronger understanding of the original intent of the memorial.
- > Students could make contact with American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) posts, which often have excellent resources regarding local memorials and may have had a role in the construction of the memorial itself or have a role in maintaining its current condition.

RECONSTRUCTING YOUR LOCAL WORLD WAR I MONUMENT

Part I: Visit and sketch your local World War I Memorial

In the box below, sketch the local World War I monument, paying special attention to the types of details listed to the right of the sketch box. Do not forget to take photographs of the monument as well!



Keep an eye out for these kinds of details!

Inscriptions

Names, messages, quotes, and dates on the monument

Symbols

Objects, logos, icons, crests, seals, or other images

Figures

Individuals/groups carved or three-dimensional

Materials

Types of metals, rock, or other substances used

Location

The surroundings, such as a public park or city hall

RECONSTRUCTING YOUR LOCAL WORLD WAR I MONUMENT

Part II: Study your monument

In the space provided below, answer the following questions based on the World War I monument you sketched. If there is evidence for your answer, make sure to mention it!

1. Based on your monument, how would you describe how significantly World War I affected your local community?

Hint: In addition to considering the details you documented in Part I, also pay attention to whether this monument is dedicated just to World War I or includes other conflicts.

2. Why do you believe that your community chose to put the monument in this particular space? Is it significant locally?

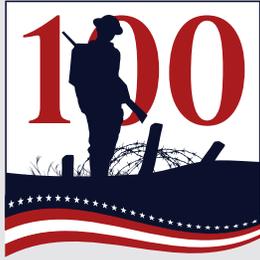
3. Which one detail did you think is most unique about this WWI monument? Why do you think those in your community and the designer chose to include that detail?

DESIGNING A NATIONAL WORLD WAR I MEMORIAL

In the space provided below, complete the chart for the five design finalists for a National World War I Memorial, and rank your favorite designs based on the discussion of each by your group. Answer the question as a group.

	WHAT WE LIKED	WHAT WE DISLIKED	RANK
0013 Plaza to the Forgotten War			
0037 World War One Memorial Concept (Grotto of Remembrance)			
0077 The Weight of Sacrifice			
0263 An American Family Portrait			
0329 Heroes' Green			

Based on the details in each of the designs, which do you think is the best design for the National World War I Memorial to be located in Washington, D.C.? Explain why you thought the design you selected was stronger than the other four.



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