



Exploring Race and Memory in America: The Power of our Art

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(Albemarle Road Middle School IB Magnet School of Excellence)

This curriculum unit is recommended for:
(Social Studies, Individuals & Society, World Civilization, Civil Rights, 6th grade, 7th grade, 8th grade)

Keywords: Monuments, Memorials, Civil Rights, Ancient Egypt, West Africa, Mansa Musa, Confederate memorials, Temple of Karnak, Luxor, Birmingham, Memphis, Montgomery, Silent Sam,

Teaching Standards: See [Appendix 1](#) for teaching standards addressed in this unit.

Synopsis:

The word “history” comes from the Greek word “historia” and means inquiry as in the act of seeking knowledge. Questioning the narratives told throughout history, in part, through memorials and monuments is important to understand the true history as well as the different perspectives which are told. Whose story is it? Whose stories are correct? What multiple perspectives can be valid? When the phrase “her story” was introduced as an alternative for his-story, many people thought that was ridiculous, but, in truth, we should ask questions about what is told in historical narratives. What can memorials past and present tell us about history? How has iconoclasm impacted what we know about historical facts? “The destruction, removal and re-interpretation of monuments has drawn the world’s attention and they have often been flash points for intense political and social debate as public symbols of white supremacy.”¹ This quote expresses the importance of memorials and monuments and their impact on society, past and present. Art and architecture were important in ancient civilizations because it showed the power, beauty and wealth of a civilization. Art & Architecture reflected the values of ancient civilizations, just as it does today. Memorials and monuments are important for city landscapes because they keep past events alive and reflect the values of that society.

¹ “Re-Writing History? Monuments, Iconoclasm, and Social Justice Movements in 2020.” Re-writing history? Monuments, iconoclasm, and social justice movements in 2020 - The University of Nottingham. Accessed November 6, 2022.

<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/crvc/research-seminars/re-writing-history-monuments-iconoclasm-and-social-justice-movements-in-2020.aspx>.

*I plan to teach this unit during the coming year to 110 students in **Individuals & Society, Social Studies, 6th grade.***

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Introduction

Demographics

Albemarle Road Middle School/IB Academy, an IB Magnet School of Excellence. We are a partial magnet, with 10% of our student population in the IB program, however, we teach the IB curriculum to all students. Our school has a total of 1080 students. Our racial breakdown is 48.5% Latino, 36.2% African American, 7.4% Asian, 5.9% white, 1.7% Two or more races, .02% Pacific Islander, 0.1% Native American. The percentage of our school population that is economically disadvantaged is 44.5% We are a Title 1 School.

My classes mirror the population of school. I teach many of the IB students, but we teach the IB Programme to all of our students. My classes are very diverse, have different skill levels and a variety of backgrounds. This unit will focus on topics that are very inclusive.

Rationale

As an IB school, our Social Studies discipline is actually “Individual and Societies”. According to the IB Programme, I & S “encourages learners to respect and understand the world around them and equips them with the necessary skills to inquire into historical, contemporary, geographical, political, social, economic, religious, technological and cultural factors that have an impact on individuals, societies and environments.”² We focus on global as well as local contexts “ This unit aligns with our IB Unit(s) and the new NC Social Studies Standards as well as the CMS Social Studies Curriculum. These goals will connect to this curriculum unit because students will analyze memorials and monuments by exploring the impact of these and how they reflect that particular society. Students will understand that they don’t have to look at these structures as being an accurate reflection of history and that it’s important to use critical thinking skills to consider the intention and the meaning of the monument. Students can consider the

²Iborganization. “Studying Society in the DP.” International Baccalaureate®. Accessed November 6, 2022.
<https://www.ibo.org/programmes/diploma-programme/curriculum/individuals-and-societies/>.

historical significance as well as what they might reflect politically, socially, religiously or what other factors influenced the memorials or monuments. Studying memorials can help students build empathy.³ Memorials can remind people of their social history, without having to leave the classroom.⁴ Helping students develop empathy is vital but bringing history to life is much more engaging to students.

History and social studies have been targeted by extreme groups in limiting what they think should be taught. I believe that using the study of memorials and monuments is a way to teach historical narratives from different perspectives, which is an important part of our Social Studies Standards. However, it's important that they know what is historically accurate. According to "Thinking and the School Curriculum", students should be able to make relevant connections and connect to what happens in our society. Students can then begin to have a "conception of themselves as social and political beings".⁵ This is an important aspect of learning about history. By studying the importance of the meaning of memorials and monuments in the past, they can have a better understanding of why certain structures are erected and how and what it reflects about that society.

As students learn about the importance and impact of memorials and monuments of ancient civilizations, they will have the opportunity to analyze important memorials past and present in US History. What stories do they tell? What values do they reflect of that time and place? It will be important for students to understand the purpose of memorials, both what we might consider positive and/or negative. We recently viewed a Flocabulary "Week in Rap" Video which told about the Emmett Till statue that was unveiled in Mississippi. The statue is a 9 foot bronze statue that shows Emmett dress slacks, shirt and one hand on the brim of a hat.⁶ The photo often shown of Emmett Till shows him wearing a similar hat. This information led to an interesting class discussion about what happened to him and how no one was convicted of that horrific tragedy. The Smithsonian will display a historical marker and opened "Reckoning with Remembrance: History, Injustice and the Murder of Emmett Till"⁷ that will display the bullet-ridden sign which marked where his body was found in the Tallahatchie River in

³ Ansbach, Jennifer. "Using Memorials to Build Critical Thinking Skills and Empathy." *The English Journal* 105, no. 4 (2016): 81–87. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26359232>.

⁴ Gurler, Ebru Erbas, and Basak Ozer. "The Effects of Public Memorials on Social Memory and Urban Identity." *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 82 (2013): 858–63. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.06.361>.

⁵ Matthew Lipman, Ann Margaret Sharp and Frederick S. Oscanyan "Thinking and the School Curriculum." Book. In *Philosophy in Education*. Temple University Press, n.d.

⁶ "Mississippi Unveils Emmett Till Statue near Where White Men Kidnapped and Killed Black Teen Decades Earlier." NBCNews.com. NBCUniversal News Group, October 22, 2022. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/mississippi-unveils-emmett-statue-white-men-kidnapped-killed-black-tee-rcna53560>.

⁷ "Smithsonian to Display Emmett Till Historical Marker." Smithsonian Institution. Accessed November 26, 2022. <https://www.si.edu/newsdesk/releases/smithsonian-display-emmett-till-historical-marker>.

Mississippi. His casket was donated to the Smithsonian. The fact that this marker is bullet-ridden adds to the discussion about Emmett Till, as well as the new movie, *Till*. All of these are memorials to the memory of Emmett Till. There are memorials for all the lynchings that have been verified at the Museum of Peace and Justice. Peace for these past wrongs is an interesting question for students to ponder. Does a memorial like the Emmett Till statue, exhibits in the Smithsonian or a movie offer reconciliation or peace for such a horrific time and event? The news story on the event is an opportunity for students to see the type of impact a memorial like this can have on society as everyone interviewed was very emotional. Conversely, when memorials are erected for a reconciliation and peace impact, there are those that vandalize and criticize the memorials that to commemorate the life of someone who was brutally murdered because of racism.

This unit begins with exploring the Temple in Karnak to learn about Ancient Egypt and some of the stories that those monuments tell about that civilization. We will explore past memorials in US History, such as Confederate memorials and what it tells us about society at that time, through today where we see memorials that commemorate a horrible part of history such as slavery, Reconstruction, Jim Crow, Civil Rights and beyond. As someone who went on the Civil Rights Tour, I intend to teach information from the memorials, museum and historical markers that we visited. What does The Legacy Museum and the Peace and Justice Memorial tell us about society today? It will be interesting and a great opportunity for engaging discussion and use of critical skills to look at these memorials and determine what it says about society and what it means for new memorials to be erected and for some to be torn down. Local relevance: We will look at memorials in the City of Charlotte and use that to connect that to other memorials past and present. Including photographs from the Know CLT Walking Tour will bring local history to students. This curriculum unit will feature Ancient Egypt, Middle Ages West Africa, and issues that are relevant and current.

Content Research

The opportunity for students to have an in depth look at monuments, memorials and sites that impact our society today will be extremely engaging and a way to understand the importance of studying art and architecture of ancient civilizations. Studying memorials and monuments offer unique opportunities to enhance and build on history and engage students more than just reading about the historical event in the classroom.⁸ Using visuals to teach history is beneficial to all students.

“Seems like memorials were used as weapons”⁹ Is this true? Why or why not? This is an excellent question to begin an engaging discussion about the impact and meaning of memorials and monuments. Students can look at examples of memorials that memorialize historical figures that could have a dubious past. An example might be a statue of Christopher Columbus and a

⁸ Marcus, Alan S. “Representing the Past and Reflecting the Present: Museums, Memorials, and the Secondary History Classroom.” *The Social Studies* 98, no. 3 (2007): 105–10. <https://doi.org/10.3200/tsss.98.3.105-110>.

⁹ Upton, Dell. *What Can and Can't Be Said: Race, Uplift, and Monument Building in the Contemporary South*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016.

list of his accomplishments. Of course, many accomplishments taught in the past about Christopher Columbus are not actually true. For example, people in Ancient Civilizations did not think the earth was flat and there were literally maps created long before his voyage. Students can analyze historical primary source documents that portray Christopher Columbus in a very negative and brutal way. If a memorial is offensive to a segment of the population, for legitimate reasons, is it something that should stay in place? Was Christopher Columbus a hero or not? Also, why was the narrative pushed that he was one of the few who believed that you could sail around the world because it wasn't flat. In fact, Mansa Musa, King of Mali relayed the story of his predecessor Mansa Abubakr II who wondered what was across the ocean from Mali and sent a fleet of ships to go across the Atlantic. They had two years of supplies and were instructed not to return to Mali unless they ran out of supplies. They never returned to Mali. There is evidence that they have made it to their destination, such as Christopher Columbus speaking of black traders in the Americas and gold on the tips of spears that could have come from West Africa.¹⁰ Timbuktu as a memorial could be analyzed. The history of West Africa is amazing and has not always been taught. In the past, history about Africa focused on it being a savage and barbaric continent, nothing about the richest civilizations in the history of the world. Mansa Musa is the richest person ever and I learned that fact when I became a 6th grade Social Studies teacher. In Africa, there is also The Tomb of Askia, built by the Emperor of Songhai, exemplifies the majesty of that empire. There is a new exhibit that pays tribute to Mansa Musa's legacy called, "Caravans of Gold, Fragments in Time: Art, Culture and Exchange Across Medieval Saharan Africa."¹¹

The story of a kidnapped prince, Abdulrahman Ibrahim Ibn Sori, who was sold into slavery and kept as a slave for 40 years until he was recognized as royalty. He was considered very valuable to the slave owner who bought him because he was very educated and knew quite a bit about cotton as it was grown in his kingdom. The connection between this and memorials is how history is portrayed versus what is the truth. Slaves were considered subhuman by white supremacists and were treated as such, but here we have a different narrative about West Africa which is contrary to how it was portrayed.

Students can brainstorm what they think a memorial is and what the purpose(s) of memorials are. This is an opportunity for them to create questions to use in analyzing memorials and monuments. In this country, there is definitely a history of using monuments and memorials as weapons of intimidation. A few points to consider is the time period when Confederate Statues were erected, and what issues were relevant to that time period, such as was it during Reconstruction or Jim Crow? This gives an insight into the society at that time. This topic of the importance of memorials is so relevant today especially when looking at the push for removing Confederate Statues and other memorials of historical figures that have a history that is very

¹⁰ Boakye, Bridget. "Way before Columbus, Ancient Malians Sailed to the Americas in 1311." Face2Face Africa, November 12, 2020. <https://face2faceafrica.com/article/way-before-columbus-ancient-malians-sailed-to-the-americas-in-1311>.

¹¹ Magazine, Smithsonian. "New Exhibition Highlights Story of the Richest Man Who Ever Lived." Smithsonian.com. Smithsonian Institution, February 5, 2019. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/richest-man-who-ever-lived-180971409/>.

different from the way they are portrayed. New memorials are created in new and different ways and that reflects society as well.

In Ancient Egypt, there are many excellent memorials and monuments for students to analyze and study. Ancient civilizations used art & architecture to show their power and wealth and it reflected the values of that society at that time. The Karnak Temple is the largest structure built for religious purposes. It is interesting to look into why these were created and what importance they were trying to convey. What were they saying about themselves? It's interesting to speculate as to why some monuments were destroyed. For example, why did Thutmose III destroy Pharaoh/Queen Hatshepsut statues and other items with her likeness? Why were references to Akhenaten and his family destroyed at Karnak? Could it have been because he changed Egyptian society to monotheism instead of polytheism? What values were reflected in the ancient civilizations when looking at their art and architecture? It is a perfect opportunity for students to make connections to art (with the focus on memorials) that reflects the values of our society. Other possibilities are Classical Greek monuments, such as the Parthenon and the influence on the Lincoln Memorial. Connections that students can make to history and events of today is always a great way to get them engaged and see the importance of learning about history.

“The Greeks, the Italians, and the Indians, from whom we get our ideas, erect monuments to ideas; we erect ours to men, and of such monuments we have an oversupply.”¹² **Gutzon Borglum**. This is an excellent quote to agree or disagree with and use some of the memorials they have been exposed to for evidence.

According to Teaching History with Museums,¹³ there are important reasons to use Memorials

for teaching because of the following characteristics of monuments and memorials:

- Serve a variety of purposes while influencing collective memory
- Represent Narrow Perspectives
- Present Local History within a National Context
- Unique

These characteristics offer the opportunity for dynamic discussions and for studying moments in history. The many photos from the Civil Rights Trip from LaGrange, Ford's Crossing, Georgia, Montgomery and Birmingham, Alabama, and Memphis, Tennessee will be used for students to make the connections between history and memorials.

Unit Goals

IB Goals

¹² “Gutzon Borglum Quotes.” BrainyQuote. Xplore. Accessed November 6, 2022.
<https://www.brainyquote.com/authors/gutzon-borglum-quotes>.

¹³ Marcus, Alan S., Jeremy D. Stoddard, and Walter W. Woodward. In *Teaching History with Museums Strategies for K-12 Social Studies*, 135–36. Milton: Taylor and Francis, 2017.

The topic of memorials and monuments is such a controversial issue in our country. There is also an outrage over “CRT”, which is not actually taught in K-12 schools. The goal of this curriculum unit is for students to critically analyze monuments and memorials and determine their impact on society, both positive and negative. It will focus on events from the history of the US through the introduction and opportunity to analyze memorials and monuments, and their impact on the diverse population that we have and examine false narratives. Students can critically analyze the intent of and different aspects of the memorial, such as the placement of those memorialized as well as the wording on the monument. Who is depicted and why?

Our Statement of Inquiry for our IB program (we are a partial magnet but teach as a full magnet) for our River Valley Civilizations is Principles and discoveries influence communities in the development of civilizations, innovations and revolutions. Art and architecture is an important element of a civilization.

I believe that this completed CU will also be able to be modified for other disciplines such as art, architecture, religion, music, and other core classes.

The goal of this curriculum unit will be for students to critically analyze monuments and memorials and determine their impact on society.

The new Social Studies Standards Middle Grades has an Inquiry Band, which focuses on students to develop the ability to construct compelling questions, supporting questions, gathering and evaluating sources, developing claims and using evidence and communicating those ideas. The final band is taking informed action. From the standards, “...**the intent is that by the end of grade 8 students will have been exposed to the skills essential to developing critical thinking skills in social studies.**”

Teaching Strategies

Analyze. Students will have opportunities to view photos of different types of memorials/monuments.

Alphaboxes A chart with every letter in the alphabet for students to use to record vocabulary words or to summarize a text.

Big Paper/ Silent Discussion: Pictures of memorials, quotes, and/or text can be put on big paper, such as bulletin board sheets. Students respond to the prompt using a marker, with each student in a group with a different color. Students can write at the same time. This allows students to share their thoughts as well as read their peers’ ideas as well. They can also agree or disagree (respectfully) and add comments. This strategy gives students time to think more deeply about the topic and is a silent activity. The time for this part should be about 10-15 minutes. Students then will walk around and read the posters of other students and then add their

comment (**Gallery Walk**). When students return to their poster they will read comments written on theirs and discuss with their group. Full class discussion by asking the class what they learned or some variation. **Exit Ticket**: They can write it on a strip of paper given to them or electronically such as **Padlet/Jamboard**.

Brainstorm questions that they have about the photograph of the monument/memorial. This is a big focus for Social Studies Standards.

Compare/Contrast between memorials and monuments from different civilizations.

Cooperative Graffiti: Students have a big sheet of paper in their group and individually write or illustrate their thoughts on the paper. This can be timed and then students can work together to organize what was written about the topic.

Critical Thinking Questions: From Teaching with Memorials, the following questions can be used as a scaffold for student analysis of a given monument:

- ❖ Whose stories are being told?
- ❖ Whose stories are privileged (i.e., which social group's power is justified by that story)?
- ❖ Whose are minimized?
- ❖ To what purpose?
- ❖ How does the process of memorialization, in this case, reflect society's view of itself?¹⁴

What happens when a memorial is removed? Which of the following is/was implemented?

Removal

The memorial is permanently removed from public view (either to storage or disassembly)

Retention

The memorial remains where it is, in its current state

Relocation

The memorial is moved to a different location (e.g., a non-public space or a museum)¹⁵

Reformulation

The memorial is changed, altered, or reconceptualized, to present a new or different perspective¹⁶

These should be used for reflection and discussion of memorials.

Freewrite or journal response to a prompt

Gallery Walk

Jamboard/Padlet: these platforms allow students to share their ideas as well as reading what their peers have written. They can also react to a classmates' comment or respond in writing.

¹⁴ Percy, Mark Mark. Rep. *There Is No End to Remembering: Teaching About Memorials through Truth and Reconciliation* 57. 1st ed. Vol. 57. Ohio Social Studies Review , 2021.

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Ibid

Opinion Statement. Students can create an opinion statement about the memorial/monument and support it with **evidence**. They can explore the time period as well as the story that they think is being told with the memorial.

Quotes Students can look up quotes about one of the topics or for the person they think should have a memorial.

Research. Students will have the opportunity to research specific memorials/monuments.

See/Think/Wonder

Exhibit photos of different memorials and monuments and have students write their observations describing the photo.

Snowball Discussion or Think/Pair/Share or small group discussion This begins as an individual reflection or answer to a prompt or question. Then two students combine to discuss and it continues on from there. Students have the opportunity to hear different opinions and perspectives.

The NC Bill that limits removing memorials § 100-2.1. Protection of monuments, memorials, and works of art. The removal of Silent Sam from the campus of University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill had many obstacles as a result of this bill that most believe was to protect Confederate memorials and statues from being removed. “In North Carolina, state law prohibits the permanent removal of an “object of remembrance located on public property” with severely limited exceptions. The law, passed in 2015 by the Republican-led General Assembly and signed by former Governor Pat McCrory, has already been cited by the NC Historical Commission in its vote against relocating three Confederate monuments from the State Capitol to Bentonville Battlefield.”¹⁷ The governor’s “task force” recommended not moving the Confederate monuments from the Capitol but, instead, to add “plaques and memorials honoring African Americans.”¹⁸ Students can explore the limitations on removing a statue and construct an opinion on the topic of Confederate statues and their removal.

¹⁷ “Law Remains Major Obstacle in Relocating the More than 100 Confederate Monuments in North Carolina.” ABC11 Raleigh-Durham, June 9, 2020.

<https://abc11.com/confederate-monument-nc-monuments-in-north-carolina/6237650/>.

¹⁸ “Task Force Says Confederate Monuments Should Stay at Capitol, but Urges New Memorials for African Americans.” ABC11 Raleigh-Durham, August 22, 2018.

<https://abc11.com/confederate-monuments-state-capitol-grounds/4029593/>.

Implementation

Part 1: Historical Monuments & Memorials-Ancient Egypt

This can tie in to introduce art and architecture to students or as an introduction or review for Ancient Egypt. The Temple of Luxor in Thebes 2081–1939 BCE. The remains at the ancient historical sites like these give us insight into their architecture, religion, customs and their daily lives.



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Students will have the opportunity to describe characteristics of Ancient Egyptian life by watching a video of The Temple of Karnak.

Students will examine a website on The Temple of Karnak to look for evidence of Ancient Egyptian culture, religion and/or political life and complete the [alphabox graphic organizer](#). The inquiry questions are on the second page. The link will force you to make a copy. This can also be printed, but I would recommend deleting the visual and possibly removing the part about adding a visual in the directions.

Students can Think/Pair/Share to make sure that they have all of their boxes completed and compare with what their partner (or group) has recorded in their graphic organizer.

Information for teachers: Thutmose III destroyed almost everything related to Hatshepsut, he was angry that she became Pharaoh instead of being Queen so he could become Pharaoh. Akhenaten decided to worship the Sun god Aten and changed the polytheistic civilization of Ancient Egypt to monotheistic. His son Tutankhamun changed Egypt back to polytheism. Because of his decrees on religion, after death much of what he did was destroyed.²⁰ The 2nd pylon was built using the materials from destroyed monuments of Pharaoh Akhenaten. This is

¹⁹ “7 Amazing Historical Sites in Africa.” Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. Accessed November 13, 2022.

<https://www.britannica.com/list/7-amazing-historical-sites-in-africa>.

²⁰ “Karnak Temple Great Court.” Discovering Ancient Egypt, July 29, 2018.

<https://discoveringegypt.com/karnak-temple/karnak-temple-great-court/>.

important in looking at memorials and monuments and why some are removed or destroyed. Is it justified?

Student Inquiry:

What does Thutmose III Pylon memorialize? What story is being told? This [link](#) will go directly to that page.

Find the 2nd Pylon. Whose story is being told? What stood out to you in the text? This [link](#) will take you directly to that page.

Both Akhenaten and Hatshepsut had memorials and monuments to them destroyed. Why were they destroyed? Find at least two facts that explain why their memorials were destroyed. Hint for Akhenaten, why was he called the “Heretic King”? Do you think it was fair to have traces of them destroyed? What story does it tell?

Part 2: Introduction to Memorials-Critical Analysis

This part will introduce memorials and monuments to students to evaluate and analyze on a critical thinking level.

Students will brainstorm their thoughts to the following questions:

What is a memorial?

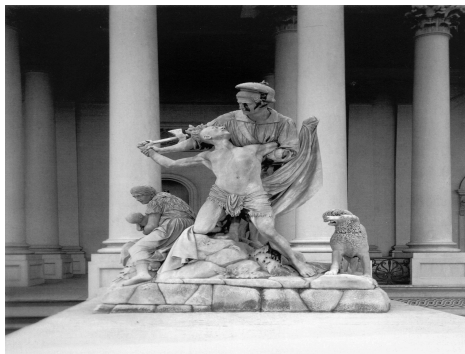
Who gets a memorial?

Who should get a memorial?

Who owns a public memory?

Warm-up: Here are [Google Slides](#) with an interesting photo of a statue of Stonewall Jackson. The statue was erected in 1940, during the Jim Crow era in the Manassas National Battlefield Park. Both the horse and Stonewall Jackson are portrayed to be heroesque as in very muscular.

Students will be shown this picture of Luigi Persico's “Discovery of America.” (Architect of the Capitol) and will analyze using I See, I Think, I Wonder. Class discussion or Think Pair Share would be advised.



Students will answer the following analytical questions.

How is Christopher Columbus portrayed?

How is the Native American portrayed?

Who or what is portrayed positively?
Who or what is portrayed negatively?

After answering the questions students can decide if the memorial is appropriate or offensive. A strong argument against the memorial came from a member of the Omaha Tribe of Nebraska, Leta Myers Smart, “The American Indian is no longer — if he ever was — the blood-thirsty savage Greenough made him out to be in this group of sculpture,” “We feel we ought to rescue the Indians from these deplorable straits.”²¹

Ultimately, it was removed from the Capitol. “The statues were put into temporary storage in 1958 while the East Front of the Capitol was under construction. Scholars say Smart’s letters — to legislators, art critics and the Architect of the Capitol — played a **decisive role in the removal**.”²²

Agree or Disagree: Students will then answer if they agree or disagree with the decision to remove that statue.

Here is a link to a basic [Google Slides](#) with the questions, text and picture. This would be good to use with PearDeck because students can respond on the slides.

Further investigation of Christopher Columbus memorials:
Students will explore the [website](#), to gain an understanding of the impact of memorials on society. They can answer why they think so many memorials of Christopher Columbus have been created and erected and whether or not they agree with that. They can use evidence from the text to support their opinion. Christopher Columbus is #3 in the US for having a memorial.

Part 3 Why are some historical figures memorialized while others are not?

Mansa Musa was King of Mali in 1312 CE to 1337 CE and is the richest person ever. Mali was a very rich kingdom and Mansa Musa’s riches were legendary. He was a devout Muslim on his Hajj or Pilgrimage and when traveling through Egypt, he gave away so much gold that he caused inflation and the value of gold to drop. He gave out gold to help others as part of the 5 Pillars of Islam (alms or zakat). It is interesting that while he was in Cairo, Egypt he told the story of his predecessor, Abu Bakr II who took 2,000 ships to cross the Atlantic Ocean. He never returned and Mansa Musa became the king. This is according to the 14th century Arab historian al-Umari. There are many theories and some argue, evidence that these Malians made it to the

²¹ Youjin Shin, Nick Kirkpatrick. “Columbus Monuments Are Coming down, but He's Still Honored in 6,000 Places across the U.S. Here's Where.” The Washington Post. WP Company, October 26, 2021.

²² Ibid

Americas. The dates would be 200 years before Christopher Columbus ever set sail to the Americas.²³

Students can investigate information and potential evidence and determine whether or not they think that the Malians reached America. Christopher Columbus, himself, described black skinned traders that he saw. “The strongest evidence even comes from Columbus, who is believed to be the first outsider reaching America in 1492. In his journal, he mentioned that Native Americans confirmed, “Black-skinned people had come from the south-east in boats, trading in gold-tipped spears”.²⁴ We have the richest person ever, telling the narrative of his predecessor sailing across the Atlantic, yet, this is not history or even historical theory that has been taught, at least not to any degree.

[Interesting information about a Mali voyage to the Americas.](#)

[Caravans of Gold, Fragments in Time: Art, Culture, and Exchange across Medieval Saharan Africa: Block Museum](#)

There are very few monuments left in West Africa, most were destroyed by Europeans. The narrative about Africa has been more about savagery and not about the wealthy, amazing civilizations in West Africa. Why is that?

Slavery began in the 1600’s in the Colonies in America. The narrative had to be that these Africans were subhuman, not capable of the same things and feelings of those enslaving them. In fact, an African prince was kidnapped and enslaved in Natchez, Mississippi for 40 years.

Students can analyze this quote and use evidence from the website to support their opinion. “The legacy of medieval trans-Saharan exchange has largely been omitted from Western historical narratives and art histories, and certainly from the way that Africa is presented in art museums,” Kathleen Bickford Berzock, associate director of curatorial affairs at the Block.²⁵

As students research the websites about the legendary journey of Mansa Musa’s predecessor, they can determine if there is enough evidence to support the theory that he made this journey. A discussion of their opinion and evidence using Turn & Talk or Snowball Discussion Strategies.

²³ Abreu, Kristine De. “Exploration Mysteries: An Early African Voyage to the Americas? ” Explorersweb.” Explorersweb, August 9, 2022.
<https://explorersweb.com/exploration-mysteries-an-early-african-voyage-to-the-americas/>.

²⁴ Abreu, Kristine De. “Exploration Mysteries: An Early African Voyage to the Americas? ” Explorersweb.” Explorersweb, August 9, 2022.
<https://explorersweb.com/exploration-mysteries-an-early-african-voyage-to-the-americas/>.

²⁵ Magazine, Smithsonian. “New Exhibition Highlights Story of the Richest Man Who Ever Lived.” Smithsonian.com. Smithsonian Institution, February 5, 2019.
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/richest-man-who-ever-lived-180971409/>.

Part 5 Local Memorials and Monuments

Going on a field trip is a great opportunity for students to explore memorials and monuments in Charlotte. A great opportunity to see Charlotte's past is to download the KnowCLT walking tour. This is a virtual tour where you can virtually see buildings that were in the Brooklyn neighborhood in uptown Charlotte. Here are [pictures](#) from the tour.

The Brooklyn neighborhood in Charlotte was built in the late 1800's and was there until the 1960's and was the economic and cultural center for black owned businesses, schools, and homes in Charlotte.

Additional information about the [Brooklyn Neighborhood](#).

Evaluate the memorials and markers listed in the historical database. What stands out to you? Choose 5 markers and put them in chronological order. Compare and contrast earlier monuments to later ones. Extend the learning: students create a timeline using their five choices and add facts about the current events of time, through research. The timeline can be on paper or a platform such as Preceden.

[Historical Markers and War Memorials in Charlotte, North Carolina](#)

Part 6 Removing Confederate Statues

What happens when a memorial is removed? Which of the following is/was implemented?

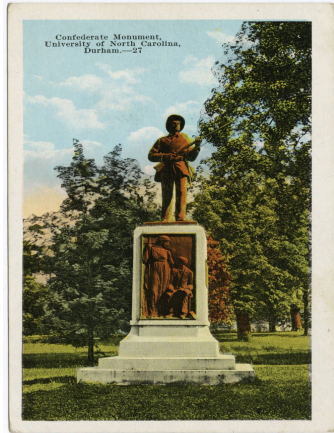
The memorial is permanently removed from public view (either to storage or disassembly)

Retention: The memorial remains where it is, in its current state

Relocation: The memorial is moved to a different location (e.g., a non-public space or a museum)

Reformulation: The memorial is changed, altered, or reconceptualized, to present a new or different perspective²⁶

²⁶ Percy, Mark Mark. Rep. *There Is No End to Remembering: Teaching About Memorials through Truth and Reconciliation* 57. 1st ed. Vol. 57. Ohio Social Studies Review, 2021.



The controversy of Silent Sam, previously on the campus of The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. As someone who attended UNC-CH in the early 80's, Silent Sam was not something that most students realized was a Confederate statue. Since this controversy occurred, I'm somewhat horrified that I didn't know that it was a Confederate memorial when I attended Carolina. For this lesson, students will examine what happens when a memorial is offensive and needs to be removed. Students will answer this question after exploring the memorial and the controversy: How does memorialization reflect society's view of itself? And how does the removal process reflect society's view of itself?

Students will read this quote and rewrite in their own words then write a response or they could highlight the key words then discuss what the intent of the quote means.

"For more than a century, Silent Sam stood as a sentinel of white supremacy that lent dignity and respectability to systematic mob violence. This is the larger issue of law and order that is at stake in recent events. It has haunted our state and nation for generations, and as yet it remains unresolved." By James Leloudis, Professor of History at UNC Chapel Hill²⁷

Historical Milestones of Silent Sam

June 2, 1913: "The Confederate monument that will come to be known as "Silent Sam" is erected on the campus of UNC-Chapel Hill to memorialize UNC students who fought on behalf of the Confederacy in the Civil War. At its unveiling, industrialist and UNC alumnus Julian Carr brags about having horse-whipped a Black woman on Franklin Street for disrespecting a white woman and makes an explicit connection between the statue and the white supremacist ideology for which the Confederacy stood. About one-third of the statue's cost was raised by the United Daughters of the Confederacy. University historians can find no deed of gift or formal agreement between the UDC and the university establishing the group's ownership of or property rights to the statue."²⁸

²⁷ "The History Department's Statement on the Confederate Memorial at UNC (Aka 'Silent Sam' Statue)." Department of History. Accessed November 15, 2022. <https://history.unc.edu/silent-sam/>.

²⁸ Killian, Joe, Joe Killian, About the author Joe KillianJoe Killian, and Joe KillianJoe Killian. "New 'Silent Sam' Revelations Contradict Past Public Assurances Offered by UNC Chancellor

Should this monument be on a public university campus? Why or why not? Padlet or Jamboard is great for students to record their opinion for this question. What does this text tell us about the beliefs and values of those who created the statue and those who were responsible for having them put up in place?

Let's look at what happened next:

- **2015:** A national movement to remove Confederate monuments gains traction. In response, North Carolina legislators passed a law prohibiting a “monument, memorial, or work of art owned by the State to be removed, relocated, or altered in any way without the approval of the North Carolina Historical Commission.” Protests against Silent Sam intensify and neo-Confederates, some of them armed, begin to rally at the statue.²⁹

What are your thoughts on this legislation from NC legislators? Why do you think they would pass a bill such as this? Here is a [copy](#) of this legislation. What attitudes and beliefs does this bill reflect? Why do you think former Governor Pat McCrory lobbied for this legislation? Do you think that is a good bill for society? What impact do you think this statue had on students at UNC-CH after they began to ask for it to be taken down?

The NC Bill that limits removing memorials § 100-2.1. Protection of monuments, memorials, and works of art. The removal of Silent Sam from the campus of University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill had many obstacles as a result of this bill that most believe was to protect Confederate memorials and statues from being removed. “In North Carolina, state law prohibits the permanent removal of an “object of remembrance located on public property” with severely limited exceptions. The law, passed in 2015 by the Republican-led General Assembly and signed by former Governor Pat McCrory, has already been cited by the NC Historical Commission in its vote against relocating three Confederate monuments from the State Capitol to Bentonville Battlefield.”³⁰ The governor's “task force” recommended not moving the Confederate monuments from the Capitol but, instead, to add “plaques and memorials honoring African Americans.”³¹ Students can explore the limitations on removing a statue and construct an opinion on the topic of Confederate statues and their removal.

Guskiewicz.” NC Policy Watch, February 5, 2021.

<https://ncpolicywatch.com/2021/02/04/new-silent-sam-revelations-contradict-past-public-assurances-offered-by-unc-chancellor-guskiewicz/>.

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ “Law Remains Major Obstacle in Relocating the More than 100 Confederate Monuments in North Carolina.” ABC11 Raleigh-Durham, June 9, 2020.

<https://abc11.com/confederate-monument-nc-monuments-in-north-carolina/6237650/>.

³¹ “Task Force Says Confederate Monuments Should Stay at Capitol, but Urges New Memorials for African Americans.” ABC11 Raleigh-Durham, August 22, 2018.

<https://abc11.com/confederate-monuments-state-capitol-grounds/4029593/>.

Part 7 Memorials to Heal

Engagement Prompt

“Seems like memorials were used as weapons” Agree or Disagree? Support your opinion. This can be a class discussion or writing prompt. The photos are from the Peace and Justice Memorial in Montgomery, Alabama and they show information about lynchings. Each column represents a county where lynchings occurred. Each column has the names of those lynched in the counties. I took these photos when I was on the Civil Rights Tour in June 2022. It is a very emotional and hard place to visit. Students can reflect on how most Confederate statues were erected as a way to intimidate black people during the Jim Crow Era and during the struggle for Civil Rights. This website had interesting information for students to read. “In 1956, Georgia redesigned its state flag to include the Confederate battle flag; and in 1962, South Carolina placed the flag atop its capitol building.”³²

[How the US got so many Confederate Monuments](#)

A quote by Ida B. Wells

“The way to right wrongs is to turn the light of truth upon them.”³³

[Gallery Walk](#) with pictures from The Peace and Justice Memorial in Montgomery, Alabama, The Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, TN and Kelly Ingram Park in Birmingham, Alabama. These photos can be printed or the Google Slides can be shared. Students can formulate questions about what they see or write comments. Here is a [Google Docs](#) with additional photos and information about events in Birmingham and memorials in Kelly Ingram Park. Students can use the Ida B. Wells quote to reflect on if they agree after looking at the memorials and some of the stories behind them.

Part 8 Who should be memorialized?

This part allows students the opportunity to decide who they think is worthy of having a memorial or monument.

Who do you think should have a memorial or monument?

Research and write evidence to support your opinion.

What type of memorial should they have?

³² Little, Becky. “How the US Got so Many Confederate Monuments.” History.com. A&E Television Networks, August 17, 2017.

<https://www.history.com/news/how-the-u-s-got-so-many-confederate-monuments>.

³³ “Ida B. Wells-Barnett Quotes (Author of Southern Horrors and Other Writings).” Goodreads. Goodreads. Accessed November 19, 2022.

https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/102474.Ida_B_Wells_Barnett.

What would you put on the memorial, for example, an object that symbolizes what they are known for or a character trait?

What wording would you use on the memorial?

Is there a quote from the person that you can use? Look for quotes from the person you have chosen.

Students can create a memorial, podcast, interview with their choice or share on Padlet or Jamboard.

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Resources for Students

Chromebooks/devices

[Africa’s Medieval Golden Age](#)

[Akhenaten:historyforkids](#)

[Brooklyn, Charlotte website](#)

[Hatshepsut - Ancient Egyptian Biography for Kids](#)

[Hatshepsut | Biography, Reign, & Facts | Britannica](#)

[Virtual Field Trip to Luxor Temple in Egypt](#)

[Karnak Temple](#)

[Since George Floyd's Death, These Confederate Monuments Have Been Removed In North Carolina | WUNC](#)

[Smithsonian To Display Emmett Till Historical Marker](#)

[UNC History/Silent Sam](#)

Notebook, Journal

Resources for Teachers

[Alphabox Sheet](#)

Bulletin Board or other large paper

Google Docs

[Birmingham, Alabama](#)

Google Slides

[Christopher Columbus](#)

[KnowCLT Photos](#)

[Civil Rights Tour](#)

[Stonewall Jackson](#)

Hyperlinks on slides and documents

Markers

Videos

[The Children's March: Birmingham Children's Crusade](#)

Websites

[Kelly Ingram Park](#)

[Birmingham](#)

[Peace and Justice Memorial, Montgomery, Alabama](#)

[Smithsonian To Display Emmett Till Historical Marker](#)

[The Legacy Museum, Montgomery, Alabama](#)

[The National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Hotel, Memphis, TN](#)