Lesson #1: Judging powerful memorials

This is the first lesson plan in a three-lesson sequence—Creating Memorials of Past Injustices—developed by The Critical Thinking Consortium for The Sunflower Project: World War One Internment Memorial Murals:

• Lesson #1: Judging powerful memorials
• Lesson #2: Deciding what to memorialize
• Lesson #3: Designing the memorial

This project has been made possible by a grant from the Endowment Council of The Canadian First World War Internment Recognition Fund

Critical task
Determine the two most powerful memorials from the samples provided.

Objectives

• Learn the different purposes and functions of memorials, including those that memorialize Canada’s First World War Internment Operations
• Learn the components of a powerful memorial.
• Appreciate the importance of honouring those who have suffered past injustices, and of helping to reduce the likelihood of the reoccurrence of similar injustices.

Overview

In this first lesson of a three-part sequence, students are introduced to memorials use to commemorate historical injustices. They begin by examining samples in their local community to better understand the purpose and function of memorials. Students develop criteria for a powerful memorial, and apply these to the examination of a selection of memorials from around the world. In groups, they critique one of the memorials, and present their findings to the class. Individually, students determine the two most powerful memorials based on the agreed-upon criteria.

Pre-planning

Locate local examples of memorials

• In preparation for an introduction to memorials, gather images or take photographs of various kinds of memorials from your local community or region that students may be familiar with (e.g.,
cenotaph, statues, tombstones, plaques). Create a visual display of these images to project for students.

Teaching Instructions

Show sample memorials

• To introduce students to memorials, display images of various memorials from your local community or region that you have assembled. Pose two questions to students:
  • Have you noticed these memorials? If so, what were your reactions or thoughts?
  • What are the purposes of these memorials?

Describe purpose of memorials

• Building on student responses, explain that memorials serve as a focus for remembering something, usually a person or an event. Memorials can include landmark objects or art objects such as sculptures, statues or fountains, and even entire parks. The most common types of memorials are the gravestone or the memorial plaque. Also common are war memorials or cenotaphs commemorating those who have died in wars. Online memorials and tributes are becoming increasingly popular. Invite students to share examples of other memorials of historical people or events they are familiar with (e.g., cenotaph war memorials, statues, museum exhibits, educational centers). Ask them to consider the specific purpose of a memorial in each case.

Introduce criteria for a powerful memorial

• Referring to the display of sample memorials from your local community, ask students to discuss in pairs which memorial is the most powerful, and why this is the case. Record student responses on the board. Building on the characteristics that students generated, suggest the following criteria of powerful memorials:
  • captures important aspects of the event that the public should know about
  • sends a powerful message or conveys powerful feelings
  • uses interesting symbols or images.

Introduce the internment during WWI

• Explain that some memorials are designed to mark an event associated with a social injustice. These memorials help us learn about difficult events in history, and keep alive the memory of those who have suffered. Inform students that they will examine memorials of past injustices around the world, and determine which of these memorials are the most powerful. Ask students what they know about First World War Internment. Add to their prior knowledge by viewing two short videos: the Take 2 video on Historical Significance http://tc2.ca/teaching-resources/special-collections/pivotal-voices.php and the video Internee Descendants at http://www.internmentcanada.ca/pop-video4.html.

Examine a First World War Internment memorial

• Project the image found on Blackline Master #2, First World War Internment. Distribute a copy of Blackline Master #1, Memorial Critique, for each student to complete during this whole group
activity. As a class, invite students to describe the key features and to comment on this memorial in light of the criteria established earlier in the lesson. Encourage students to record their conclusions on Blackline Master #1.

**Examine other memorials**

- Distribute another copy of Blackline Master #1 and a copy of one of the five memorials found on Blackline Masters #3-7 to each pair of students. Invite each pair to repeat the process they just completed: summarize the main aspects of the injustice and analyse the memorial in light of the criteria. Encourage students to use the link beneath the image to learn more about their featured event. Once each pair has examined its assigned memorial, ask them to join with the other students who critiqued the same memorial in order to share their conclusions. Request that each of these groups develop a short summary of its analysis for presentation to the rest of the class.

**Share conclusions with the class**

- Distribute *Ranking the Memorials* (Blackline Master #8) to each student. During each presentation, suggest that students record key ideas about their assigned memorial on Blackline Master #8. Following the last presentation, ask students to rank the two most powerful memorials and explain the reasons for their ranking at the bottom of the page. Ask a sampling of students to share their rankings and their reasoning.

**Evaluation**

- Use the rubric in Blackline Master #9, *Assessing powerful memorials*, to assess students’ understanding of powerful memorials based on their responses on Blackline Master #1 and #8.
Memorial critique

Injustice to be memorialized: ________________________________

What I know about the injustice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Describe the aspects, feelings/message and symbols/images in the memorial</th>
<th>Explain what is effective about the memorial</th>
<th>Suggest what might be done to strengthen the memorial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Captures important aspects or details to educate the public about the event and its significance</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sends a powerful message or feeling about the event</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uses interesting symbols and images to represent the event</td>
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During the years 1914-1920, the Canadian government placed Ukrainians and other Eastern Europeans in Internment Camps. Having emigrated from territories under the control of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Canada’s adversary during WWI, they were branded enemy aliens and were subjected to mistreatment and the loss of their property and rights. For more information visit the following websites: www.internmentcanada.ca/about-logo.cfm and www.uccla.ca.
The Killing Fields refers to the genocide committed by the Khmer Rouge regime against its own civilians between 1975 and 1979. Roughly a quarter of the country’s population was killed during this period. For more information visit:

Symbolic interpretation of the history of the Chinese immigrants
by sculptor Peter Sawatsky

Chinese immigrants to Canada experienced severe forms of racial discrimination and exclusion in the early twentieth century. For more information visit: http://chinesecanadian.ubc.ca, http://tc2.ca/teaching-resources/special-collections/pivotal-voices.php
Given the significant contributions Canada made to the war effort, many regard The First World War (1914-1918) as the period where Canada truly became an independent nation in the 20th Century. For more information visit: www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/exhibitions/guerre/home-e.aspx
www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/exhibitions/guerre/home-e.aspx
The Rwandan genocide refers to the genocide of Rwandans of Tutsi descent by Hutu extremists in 1994. It is argued that this atrocity could have been avoided if the international community did not turn its back against Rwanda. For more information visit, 
http://history1900s.about.com/od/rwandangenocide/a/Rwanda-Genocide.htm
### Ranking the memorials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the injustice and type of memorial</th>
<th>Important information or details</th>
<th>Strong message or feeling</th>
<th>Interesting symbols or images</th>
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The two most powerful memorials based on the criteria are:

1. [Rationale]  
2. [Rationale]
**Assessing powerful memorials**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
<th>Very good</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Understands the contents or message</strong></td>
<td>Demonstrates excellent understanding of the memorial’s contents or message</td>
<td>Demonstrates a good understanding of the memorial’s contents or message</td>
<td>Demonstrates some understanding of the memorial’s contents or message</td>
<td>Shows no understanding of the memorial’s contents or message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identifies positive features of a memorial</strong></td>
<td>Thoughtfully identifies important positive features for each criterion</td>
<td>Identifies some important positive features for each criterion</td>
<td>Identifies a few positive features</td>
<td>Does not identify any important positive features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Points out areas for improvement</strong></td>
<td>Suggests insightful and relevant improvements to the memorials for all three criteria</td>
<td>Suggests relevant improvements to the memorials for all three criteria</td>
<td>Suggests a few improvements to the memorials</td>
<td>Does not suggest any relevant improvements to the memorials</td>
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