

9. War memorial designs



Background: This lesson concludes War Memorials Trust's sequence of cross curricular lessons introducing the topic of war memorials to primary age children. It focuses on the design of different war memorials and encourages pupils to examine why particular design features have often been used on war memorials. Pupils then have the opportunity to apply what they have learned by designing a memorial appropriate to a decided purpose. The lesson could be extended to allow pupils to make their designs.

Suitable for: Key Stage 2

Learning objective: Pupils will learn:

- About key features of some war memorial designs and why these may have been chosen by communities
- To design an appropriate memorial for a specific purpose

Learning outcomes: Pupils will be able to:

- Design a memorial, considering purpose and choosing appropriate designs
- Use a variety of methods to communicate ideas and feelings

Resources: 'Types of war memorials' and 'Teachers' information about war memorials' primary helpsheet, 'War memorial designs' PowerPoint, materials for making pupils' designs.

Introduction

- Slides 1-3: Review what has been learned about war memorials so far to put this lesson into context. In particular, ensure pupils understand that war memorials are unique and the design of each one was down to community decisions.
- Explain that, while war memorials are unique, many have certain design elements in common and that certain themes have been popular for war memorials. Introduce the learning objectives for the lesson.

Suggested teaching points and activities

Different war memorial designs

- Slides 4-10: Look at the pictures of war memorial types and common design features of war memorials. For each one discuss its design, encouraging pupils to consider why these may have been chosen by the community. This could be a group or whole class discussion, and depending on how you choose to structure the discussion you could print additional pictures from our gallery of war memorial images on www.learnaboutwarmemorials.org (please note you may decide not to use all the slides that are provided or may want to add your own).

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- There is further information that may be helpful for leading these discussions on our 'Types of war memorials' primary helpsheet.
- When pupils understand the range of features that are common in war memorial designs, recap the purposes of war memorials. At this stage you may also want to consider why memorials other than those that commemorate a war might be created – as with previous lessons you may have local examples to refer to.
- To get pupils thinking about the feelings of people who create a memorial, you could give groups of children different scenarios or 'characters' to consider, e.g. a parent whose son had been killed, or a group of school pupils who want to remember members of their school community, and what they might want to include in a design for a memorial to them – for example a school memorial may incorporate a school logo. You could also tell pupils to create a list of words that describe the people the memorial commemorates, and what imagery might be used in the design of the memorial to portray this. Stimulus material such as pictures or video depicting the World Wars, or words from well known war poems, might help pupils to generate ideas.

Designing a war memorial

- Slide 11: As a class, use what has been covered in this and previous lessons to decide on a purpose for a memorial (in keeping with the rest of the topic the focus should be on war memorials but you could decide on a different purpose for a memorial if you think this more appropriate for your class).
- Pupils should then have the opportunity to design a memorial appropriate to this purpose, taking into account who it is to and what design elements are therefore appropriate. Depending on the ability of your class, you could discuss possible ideas for their designs and establish certain criteria for the memorial. See 'Support/extension' below.

Conclusion

- Review and assess the designs the pupils have created against the criteria established. Encourage pupils to explain why they chose different aspects of their design and how it relates to the person/people being remembered.

Support/extension

The activities in this plan are suggestions only and teachers will need to adapt the lesson to take account of the needs of their class. However, some suggestions for possible ways of differentiating this lesson are given below.

- Pupils who are less able in this subject may benefit from examining very clear examples of design elements used in war memorials, whereas older or more able pupils could look in more detail at some more complex imagery and think about why it was chosen and what it represents.
- When pupils are designing their own ideas for a memorial, encourage them to link this work to previous lessons and consider wider issues such as the memorial's location and what, therefore, suitable materials for constructing the memorial might be.
- You may wish to support pupils who find the creative element of this lesson challenging by giving them a set of criteria their memorial must meet, for example stipulating what materials should be used, what the inscription should say or what type of memorial they should create.

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- ICT could be used by pupils to create their design, or an online memorial could be done and added to the school's website.

Ideas for further work

There are many further opportunities to extend this lesson and link it with other areas of the curriculum.

- **Art and design/Design and technology:** If time permits, a logical extension of this lesson is to let pupils make their designs using different materials that are available. This could be used as a display or way of sharing your war memorial project with others in your school or wider community, and can provide a creative and meaningful culmination of pupils' work (in some cases it may be impossible to make pupils' designs using the actual materials they have suggested or if their design is too complex but you could use available alternatives to make a model of their designs, or use ICT to improve their designs and create an online memorial).
- **Science:** This lesson has strong links with War Memorials Trust's previous primary lesson, 'What are war memorials made from?' Pupils can be encouraged to use their knowledge from this lesson to inform their design decisions. These two lessons are flexible and you might decide it is appropriate to merge parts of these lessons and teach the objectives in a different order or alongside each other.
- **Literacy:** As well as looking at common features of war memorial design, pupils can also examine the words and phrases that are often used on war memorials. Some inscriptions lend themselves well to the study of poetry while others can be very moving and provide a starting point for discussion of community feeling which led to the war memorial's creation. Pupils could write their own epitaphs for their memorial using the activity sheet in the Youth Groups section of www.learnaboutwarmemorials.org.
- **History/Art and design:** Older or more able pupils in particular could investigate how memorial designs have changed over time and some of the reasons for these changes. There is some more information about this on our 'Types of war memorial' primary helpsheet.
- **History/Art and design:** Pupils could find out about some of the well known war memorial designers of the 20th century and the famous examples of their work.

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