

5. Designing a memorial



Background: This lesson plan focuses on pupils applying what they have learned in previous lessons about the nature and purpose of war memorials by designing one appropriate to a chosen purpose. This could be designing a war memorial to people involved in conflicts, a memorial to commemorate the First World War centenary, or you could expand the topic to include memorials that are not associated with war. The nature of the memorial your pupils design may depend on local or individual circumstances. Pupils will have the opportunity to choose appropriate designs using the knowledge acquired in previous lessons and use suitable art, design and ICT techniques to create it.

The activities in this plan are suggestions only and teachers will need to adapt them to the needs of their class. Suggestions for alternative directions for the lesson, including creating an online memorial and establishing a committee to oversee the design and development of a new memorial, are explored in the 'Suggestions for differentiation and further work' section. Care should be taken when selecting the type and purpose of memorial for pupils to design, especially if this brings up potentially sensitive issues. You are likely to need more than one lesson to fit in the suggested activities.

Suitable for: Key Stages 3 and 4

Learning objectives: Pupils will learn:

- To design and create a suitable memorial to a specific person or event, including selecting appropriate features and materials
- To use a variety of methods and techniques, including using ICT, to create and share their memorial

Learning outcomes: Pupils will be able to:

- Create a suitable design for a memorial to a specific person or event and explain the reasons for their choices
- Choose and use appropriate materials and techniques to produce their design

Resources: The exact resources will depend on the nature of the activities chosen, but are likely to include a range of materials suitable for making a memorial, design equipment such as sketch books, 'Types of war memorial' secondary helpsheet, 'Designing a memorial' secondary PowerPoint and photographs of existing war memorials (available from the Gallery section of www.learnaboutwarmemorials.org). Computer access may be required.

Introduction

- Slide 4: Pupils will need to know the purpose of war memorials and when, why and by whom they were created. Therefore:

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- If pupils have been taught using War Memorials Trust's 'What are war memorials?' secondary lesson plan, recap the main points focusing particularly on the fact that war memorials vary because they are created by communities with a connection to the fallen, and therefore reflect their personal choices.
- If this lesson is being used as a standalone Art and Design lesson, then give a brief summary of and discuss the main points from War Memorials Trust's 'Teachers' information about war memorials' secondary helpsheet. More able pupils could be given this to read prior to the lesson. This should give pupils the required essential knowledge for them to complete the task in this lesson.
- Introduce the purpose for creating a memorial, making links with previous work and local circumstances as appropriate. You may wish to include a discussion at this point of memorials that are not war memorials; why they have been created and who by; if you are going to follow this idea in the lesson.

Suggested teaching points and activities

- Slides 5 to 13: To encourage a broad range of designs and to inspire pupils to think creatively, get them to examine a range of war memorial photographs using the PowerPoint and examples from the Gallery section of www.learnaboutwarmemorials.org.
- Include memorials that have unusual designs as well as more traditional types, to reinforce the fact that memorials vary widely. Use the PowerPoint to emphasise that certain features, inscriptions and images, as well as a memorial's location, are also an important part of the memorial's design and showing what it stands for. Further information about the different types of war memorial that can be found in the UK is given in War Memorials Trust's 'Types of war memorial' secondary helpsheet.
- Select some designs and discuss the reasons why communities may have chosen them, e.g. symbols or elements significant to the people or place affected. You could use the pictures and notes included on the PowerPoint for this lesson to guide this discussion.
- Pupils should evaluate the different designs to help them decide what they consider to be effective for their chosen purpose.
- Slide 14: Pupils develop their own memorial design bearing in mind the brief you have given them about the memorial's purpose. They should consider what/who their memorial commemorates, where it will be located, what it will look like (including features and inscriptions they plan to include on it) and what materials it should be made from (these should be appropriate to the location they choose).
- If time and the pupils' designs allow, pupils could be given the opportunity to make their memorial (or, if this is not possible, produce detailed sketches or models of what it would be like and its setting). You may want pupils to work individually or in groups for this.

Conclusion

- Look at the different designs and finished products and evaluate them against the specification that was originally given, allowing pupils to suggest improvements and what has been successful about the design.
- Depending on the previous work your pupils have done you may wish to use this as an opportunity to conclude the wider topic of war memorials and draw together what pupils have learnt.

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Suggestions for differentiation and further work

The activities in this lesson plan are suggestions only and teachers will need to adapt the lesson to take account of the needs of their class and extend it with further work if necessary.

- Give pupils a more detailed specification for their design. This could work well for less able pupils who may need some additional help coming up with a design, by giving them a list of 'must haves' that they need to include. A different kind of specific brief could also provide an extra challenge for more able pupils. For example, a key issue that has affected war memorials in recent years has been vandalism and theft of metal elements (see our 'Current issues affecting war memorials' secondary helpsheet). More able pupils could be tasked with designing a memorial that takes account of these risks and incorporates preventative measures into their design (for example suitable materials).
- Pupils could investigate the designs of some famous architects and designers from the post-First World War period, and either use this to inform their own work or produce additional work about what they have learned. Further information about some of these can be found in our 'Teachers' information about war memorials,' secondary helpsheet. This can provide an additional piece of work for pupils who require their learning to be extended, but is also a useful alternative task for any pupils less suited to the creative nature of this lesson.
- While the main part of this lesson focuses on using art and design skills to design and create a memorial, the same objectives can be achieved using ICT. Pupils could use ICT to complete the design aspect of the lesson, before creating their memorial using other materials. Alternatively, pupils could work collaboratively to create an 'online memorial,' especially if pupils have previously carried out research into the names on a local war memorial. This could take the form of pages on the school's website or pupils may be able to develop their own simple webpage. Having an online memorial means that other work pupils have done and information about who the memorial is to can be shown as well as the commemorative element of the memorial.
- A further activity incorporates citizenship and community studies. Historically, war memorials have been created by local communities – friends, relatives and colleagues of the fallen – making them unique and often very personal in nature. Usually a war memorial committee would be established to decide on key questions like who should be commemorated, how names should be recorded and what form the war memorial should take. Sometimes minutes from the meetings of this committee are available in local records. Pupils could form their own version of such a committee and work together to plan for its creation and future maintenance. This would involve them participating in group discussions, seeking the opinions of other interested parties and incorporating a range of ideas. Further information about doing this can be found in our 'Setting up a local group to look after your war memorial' helpsheet available at www.warmemorials.org/a-z. This is designed to give advice to people setting up a group to form a memorial but the basic principles of the advice may give useful guidance to pupils.

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