

# 1. Great artists and war memorials



**Background:** This lesson forms part of a series of six art lessons looking at the work of great artists who designed war memorials to commemorate the fallen during the wave of memorialisation which followed World War I. It has been created to increase pupils' awareness of different kinds of design and the work of great artists including the architects Baker, Blomfield, Lorimer and Lutyens and the sculptor Toft. Teachers may choose to focus on one of these artists throughout the series of lessons particularly if they designed a war memorial nearby. Equally a selection of work from several of the artists may be used. Pupils will learn about the war memorials designed by architects and artists which commemorate the fallen of World War I whose bodies were not repatriated. While it is possible that some pupils may have prior knowledge of World War I and its impact, this is not assumed and teachers may wish to adapt the lesson to include more challenging material for more able pupils.

Another artist known for their war memorials is Eric Gill. However, we have not included his work in this material as his life is controversial and, as such, could cause a distraction from what this work is seeking to achieve.

**Suitable for:** Key stage 2

**Learning objective:** Pupils will learn:

- To explore and develop an understanding of the work of artists (such as Baker, Blomfield, Lorimer, Lutyens, and Toft) who designed war memorials

**Learning outcomes:** Pupils will be able to:

- Identify some of the memorials designed by great artists (Baker, Blomfield, Lorimer, Lutyens, Toft)
- Express likes and dislikes about the war memorial designs
- Compare and contrast the shape and features of war memorial designs

**Resources:**

- [‘War memorial architects and sculptors’](#) Primary helpsheet
- Primary helpsheets for each of the artists: [Sir Herbert Baker](#), [Sir Reginald Blomfield](#), [Sir Robert Lorimer](#), [Sir Edwin Lutyens](#) and [Albert Toft](#)
- [‘War Memorials Online links for memorials designed by Baker, Blomfield, Lorimer, Lutyens and Toft’](#) Resource sheet
- Printed images of war memorials designed by the architect(s) and/or sculptor
- [‘Teachers’ information on war memorials’](#) Primary helpsheet
- Sticky notes or strips of paper
- Paper or art books and materials for sketching (e.g. pencils, view finders)

**War Memorials Trust 14 Buckingham Palace Road London SW1W 0QP**

**Telephone:** 020 7834 0200 / 0300 123 0764

**Email:** [info@warmemorials.org](mailto:info@warmemorials.org) **Website:** [www.learnaboutwarmemorials.org](http://www.learnaboutwarmemorials.org)

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## Introduction:

- Ask pupils what they think a war memorial is. It may be useful to have a selection of images which show the variety of forms war memorials take to aid pupils' discussions. Pupils could create a simple definition or note down key words and ideas on sticky notes or mini whiteboards
- Pupils should understand that a war memorial can be any object which commemorates those who fought, died or were otherwise affected by war and that there were never any rules about what each memorial had to look like. Each one reflects the community feeling at the time and the way friends and family chose to remember loved ones
- Using the [number cards](#) ask pupils to guess how many war memorials there are in the UK. Reveal the correct estimated answer (100,000). Explain that the majority of these were created during the wave of memorialisation which followed the end of World War I
  - Depending on pupils knowledge of World War I it may be helpful to explain why this was the case. Reasons include: first truly global conflict; affected everyone in the country (men from all walks of life went to fight, women took on some of the jobs men traditionally did at home); the dead were not repatriated but buried in cemeteries abroad
- Alternatively, prior to teaching this art unit on Great artists and war memorials, you may wish to teach War Memorials Trust's 'What are war memorials primary lesson plan', [www.learnaboutwarmemorials.org/primary/pri-lessons/what-are-war-memorials](http://www.learnaboutwarmemorials.org/primary/pri-lessons/what-are-war-memorials) and then recap the key information during the introduction of this lesson

## Suggested teaching points and activities:

### Who designed war memorials after World War I?

- Discuss with pupils who may have been asked to design and create war memorials following the end of World War I
  - It may be necessary to discuss what the job of an architect or sculptor involves
- Pupils should understand that the demand experienced by architects and sculptors for the work they had previously been doing decreased following World War I mainly due to financial reasons as Britain had had to borrow a lot of money during the conflict. After the war when communities wanted to remember those who had served these architects and sculptors found that there was a great demand for them to design war memorials
- You may choose to name architects such as Sir Herbert Baker, Sir Reginald Blomfield, Sir Robert Lorimer and Sir Edwin Lutyens at this point as well as sculptors like Albert Toft, William Reid Dick and Sir George Frampton. It is also interesting to note war memorial commissions provided an opportunity for younger architects and sculptors to come to the fore including Lionel Budden, Walter Marsden, Gilbert Ledward, Herbert Tyson Smith and C S Jagger as they laid foundations for successful post war careers (brief information about each of these artists can be found in the ['War memorial architects and sculptors'](#) Primary helpsheet)

### What did these war memorials look like?

- Reinforce that war memorials can take any design or form as there were never any rules to say what they had to look like. Provide pupils with the opportunity to look at a wide range of war memorials designed by one or more of the above mentioned architects and sculptors
  - This could be done using a table top gallery. A selection of war memorials designed by the chosen artist(s) should be printed onto large pieces of paper (at least A5 size). These are laid on tables around the room or pinned to the walls. Pupils walk around the 'gallery' to view the selected images
  - If displaying war memorials by more than one artist, you may wish to group the pictures according to designer and make pupils aware of this

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- Pupils should be encouraged to express opinions about the pieces of work pictured. Their likes, dislikes and overall impressions. You may feel this discussion will take place naturally as the pupils view the pictures or it may be necessary to stop them and ask them to tell someone nearby something about the memorial they are looking at

### **What similarities are there between the war memorials?**

- There are some similarities between war memorial designs, particularly if designed by the same person
- One way of highlighting this to pupils is with the 'sticky note linking activity'
  - Pupils, in small groups, will need a selection of war memorial images by one or more of the focus artists and some sticky notes (or similar)
  - Pupils should look carefully at their selection of war memorial images and try to identify similarities between them war e.g. have statues, made of stone, in the shape of a cross, has a carved or sculpted wreath, location, designer
  - Similarities identified should be written on a sticky note and used to link the images

### **Which parts of the war memorial design are the key features?**

- While looking for similarities, pupils should have identified some of the key design features of the war memorials they were looking at (crosses, wreathes, shapes, figures, Crusader ships)
- As a class discuss the key features the pupils have identified
- Pupils should then have the opportunity to make small, simple and quick sketches of these features either in sketch books or on pieces of paper. It may be helpful for pupils to have a viewfinder so that they can focus on one part of the memorial when sketching
  - These can be used in lesson 2 of this unit of work as part if desired

### **Conclusion:**

- Recap the key points from the session including why war memorials were created, who designed them and some of the key design features which have been noted
  - You may choose to do this through whole class discussion; group discussion followed by a single sentence report back to the class; key questions e.g. who, why, what on the board which pupils respond to verbally or on sticky notes

### **Support/extension:**

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.

### **Ideas for further work:**

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

- Visit to a local war memorial: if one of the war memorials used in this lesson is local to the school, you may wish to visit it. Guidance on this is covered in War Memorials Trust's 'Visiting a war memorial lesson, [www.learnaboutwarmemorials.org/primary/pri-lessons/visiting-war-memorial](http://www.learnaboutwarmemorials.org/primary/pri-lessons/visiting-war-memorial)
- War memorial materials: if pupils identify similarities between war memorials based on the materials they are made from you may wish to use War Memorials Trust's 'What are war memorials made from? lesson, [www.learnaboutwarmemorials.org/primary/pri-lessons/what-are-war-memorials-made-from](http://www.learnaboutwarmemorials.org/primary/pri-lessons/what-are-war-memorials-made-from)

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