



## Not Just Stone and Metal: Memory and Monuments Today

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U.S. History (Grades 9-12)

### Introduction:

In this lesson, students will learn about Confederate War monuments and the recent push to remove them, as has recently taken place in neighboring New Orleans. Students will develop their own point of view about the issue while exploring the points of view of others. They will then (working in groups) design a monument to replace the Confederate monuments that have been taken down or to memorialize a significant person or event in history.

### Prior Knowledge Needed:

Students should have studied the Civil War and Reconstruction prior to this lesson.

### Learning Objectives:

- Students will understand what Confederate Monuments are and why some people (particularly community leaders) want them removed.
- Students will explore the reasons why some are opposed to the removal of these monuments.
- Students will design their own monuments to replace the Confederate monuments that were removed.

### Guiding Questions:

- What are Confederate monuments?
- Why do some people want these monuments removed?
- Who is fighting to keep them up and why?
- What can Confederate monuments be replaced with to satisfy all parties involved?

### Common Core standard:

Reading, Speaking and Listening, Language

### Materials:

- Mayor Mitch Landrieu's Speech on Moment Removal
- Class copies, opposing quotes handout
- Class copies, "New Orleans mayor: Why I'm taking down my city's Confederate monuments," The Washington Post, May 11, 2017.  
[\(https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2017/05/11/new-orleansmayor-why-im-taking-down-my-citys-confederate-monuments/\)](https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2017/05/11/new-orleansmayor-why-im-taking-down-my-citys-confederate-monuments/)

- Art supplies (drawing paper, colored pencils/markers)

### **Procedures:**

Read or explain to students:

*More than 150 years after the Civil War, there is a new drive to remove Confederate monuments. In April and May 2017, the New Orleans City Council voted to remove four Confederate monuments from the city. This decision came not too long after other cities such as Austin, TX, and Louisville, KY, also voted to remove their statues; additional cities are also considering removing them. New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu championed the effort to take down the four Confederate monuments, stating, “It is self-evident that these men did not fight for the United States of America; they fought against it. These monuments purposefully celebrate a fictional, sanitized Confederacy; ignoring the death, ignoring the enslavement, and the terror that it actually stood for.”*

*The national push for the removal of Confederate monuments and names began in 2015 after Dylann Roof, who idolized the Confederate flag, killed nine African-American worshippers at Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, SC. Racial justice activists have been working for decades on the removal of Confederate monuments and other related symbols. Taking down these monuments has come with significant opposition including pushback, threats against work crews and in some cases, protests and demonstrations.*

Students should then view Mayor Landrieu’s Speech on Monument removal.

Teacher will open discussion with students asking the following questions:

- What surprises you about this information?
- What did you learn that you didn’t know before?
- Why is this issue controversial?

### **Once the class has discussed the topic, give them a handout with the following two opposing opinions:**

“These statues are not just stone and metal. They are not just innocent remembrances of a benign history. These monuments purposefully celebrate a fictional, sanitized Confederacy; ignoring the death, ignoring the enslavement, and the terror that it actually stood for. After the Civil War, these statues were a part of that terrorism as much as a burning cross on someone’s lawn; they were erected purposefully to send a strong message to all who walked in their shadows about who was still in charge in this city.”  
— Mitch Landrieu, Mayor of New Orleans, LA

“I understand the impulse to remove Confederate monuments, which embody some of the most repulsive aspects of the American past. But if we hide them away in a museum, it becomes easier to evade their implications. Let the statues to white supremacy stand, alongside monuments to the brave Americans who challenged it. Anything less lets all of us off the hook.”

— Jonathan Zimmerman, professor of education and history at University of Pennsylvania  
(From *The New York Times Letters to the Editor: What Should We Do with Confederate Monuments?*, May 14, 2017)

**Explain that these quotes represent two different points of view about whether to take Confederate monuments down or keep them up.**

- Continue class discussion using the following questions:
  - o Is it easy or difficult to decide where you stand on this issue?
  - o Do you feel you have enough information to decide where to stand on this issue? Why or why not?
  - o What more do you want to know about this issue?

**Assessment:**

In groups, have students start to work on their monuments using the following as guiding questions:

- What person or event will be honored/remembered by the monument?
- What will the structure look like?
- How big will the structure be?
- What will the monument be made of (clay, stone, other materials)?
- Where will the monument be located and what is the significance of that place?
- What other resources and background information are needed?

After discussing the questions, distribute drawing paper and markers/colored pencils and have students draw a model of the monument. Allow fifteen minutes for this process.

**References:**

Anti-Defamation League (<https://www.adl.org/blog/how-should-we-talk-with-young-people-about-charlottesville>)

Landrieu, Mayor Mitch, Monument Speech, May 19, 2017.  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t0jQTHis3f4>)



## Opposing Viewpoints

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