

Lesson Plan 2: Applying the Historical Process to YOUR World

Duration: 5 – 7 days

This lesson plan connects to the “Historical Process,” webinar by Dr. Edward Gonzalez-Tennant in the *A Bundle of Silences* professional development series.

Overview

Dr. Gonzalez-Tennant discusses how historical monuments are established and factors to consider in understanding the accurate and inclusive intent and message of the monument. In this activity, students can create a monument or plaque that is relevant to their community, applying the lessons learned from Gonzalez-Tennant.

New Jersey Student Learning Standards

Grades 6-8

6.1.8.HistorySE.3.b: Analyze a variety of sources to make evidence-based inferences about how prominent individuals and other nations contributed to the causes, execution, and outcomes of the American Revolution.

6.1.8.CivicsPI.3.c: Distinguish the powers and responsibilities of citizens, political parties, interest groups, and the media in a variety of governmental and nongovernmental contexts.

6.3.8.CivicsPI.3: Use a variety of sources from multiple perspectives to examine the role of individuals, political parties, interest groups, and the media in a local or global issue and share this information with a governmental or nongovernmental organization as a way to gain support for addressing the issue.

Grades 9-12

6.1.12.CivicsPD.1.a: Use multiple sources to analyze the factors that led to an increase in the political rights and participation in government.

6.1.12.HistoryUP.2.a: Using primary sources, describe the perspectives of African Americans, Native Americans, and women during the American Revolution and assess the contributions of each group on the outcome of the war.

6.1.12.HistoryCA.2.a: Research multiple perspectives to explain the struggle to create an American identity.

9.4.12.CI.1: Demonstrate the ability to reflect, analyze, and use creative skills and ideas.

Vocabulary

Bias: Prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or groups; a strong inclination of the mind or a preconceived opinion about something or someone.

Covert: Not openly acknowledged or displayed.

Overt: Done or shown openly; plainly or readily apparent, not secret or hidden.

Accurate: Correct in details, precise, exact.

Inclusive: Not excluding any of the parties of groups involved in something.

Essential Understandings

Bias, overt and covert, is inherent in all sources. Careful questioning can expand understanding of the history of the event being commemorated and the history of the commemoration itself.

Lesson Objectives

Students will use the questions to ask of any source, as provided by Gonzalez-Tennant to create a hypothetical commemorative plaque or monument relevant to their community.

- Who wrote the document (or produced the monument)?
- What is the mission or purpose of the document (monument)?
- Where was the document written (monument produced)?
- When was the document written (monument produced)?
- Why was the document written (monument produced)? For what audience? With what intention(s)?

Essential Questions

- How does having a range of resources support being able to find “accurate and inclusive understanding?”
- How does critical thinking support being able to find “accurate and inclusive understanding?”

Anticipatory Set/Modeling: Day 1 – (follow with homework, see Step 1)

Example 1

The teacher will show an image of the [“Rosie the Riveter” statue located in Wood-Ridge, NJ](#) (and attached) (other examples of monuments you might show students can be found in *Lies Across America* by James Loewen or you can show a local monument).

Description to read to the class:

“Rosie the Riveter” is an icon for the strong, working women who achieve their goals and get things done. This name represents the women who worked at factories during WWII. In 2012, artist John Giannotti (GiannottiStudios.com) sculpted this color bronze rendition of Rosie wearing a polka-dot bandana and wielding an industrial rivet gun, with a bronze lunch pail and coke bottle sitting on a granite block with text about and photos of female war industry contributions. The statue is located at Wesmont rail station, near the Curtiss-Wright Aeronautical plant, which built aircraft engines throughout the war years.

Using the five questions, guide students through the facts gathered in advance that address who, where, when the statue was erected. Once students review those questions, ask the students to think about why (for whom), the “Rosie the Riveter,” statue was created.

Example 2

The teacher will show an image of the [9/11 Teardrop Memorial](#) (and attached) (other examples of monuments you might show students can be found in *Lies Across America* by James Loewen or you can show a local monument).

Description to read to the class:

Dedicated on 9/11/2006, The “Teardrop Monument,” as it is commonly known, is in Bayonne, New Jersey. Its actual title is “Memorial to the Struggle Against World Terrorism,” and it was designed by Russian artist Zurab Tsereteli who noted the tears he saw on television after the twin towers fell on 9/11 and immediately set to working on a monument featuring a teardrop.

This monument is 10-stories tall. Above the base rests a 100-foot steel tower coated in bronze. In the center of the tower is a jagged vertical opening which might represent the damage done to the various buildings by terrorists. Suspended from the top of the fissure is a 40-foot-high stainless-steel

teardrop. The monument is aligned with the missing Twin Towers and in direct view of the Statue of Liberty. Nine separate pathways lead to the structure. Its base has eleven sides on which granite name plates are etched with names of those who died on 9/11 and in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. The numbers of pathways and base sides may also represent the date of the attack on American soil: 9/11.

Using the five questions, guide students through the facts gathered in advance that address who, where, when the statue was erected. Once students review those questions, ask the students to think about why there is controversy about this monument and the artist who created it (read [“Bayonne’s Controversial Teardrop Monument,”](#) to learn more).

Example 3

The teacher will show an image of the [Wars of America](#) (and attached) (other examples of monuments you might show students can be found in *Lies Across America* by James Loewen or you can show a local monument).

Description to read to the class:

The “Wars of America,” sculpture, located in Newark, New Jersey, was dedicated in 1926. It was created by American sculpture Gutzon Borglum, who is most famous for his work on Mount Rushmore. Installed eight years after the end of WWI, this monument was intended to honor all of America’s war dead. “Wars of America,” memorializes all the major conflicts in which Americans participated up to and including the First World War. The sculpture is bronze and features forty-two soldiers representing those who fought in the American Revolution, the War of 1812, the Indian Wars, the Mexican War, the Civil War, the Spanish-American War and World War 1. The location of the monument is in Military Park, which served as a training ground and drill field for soldiers since 1667.

Using the five questions, guide students through the facts gathered in advance that address who, where, when the statue was erected. Ask students to consider the significance of the location of the monument and what message they think the sculpture wanted to deliver to the soldiers who viewed the monument once it was installed. Ask students to consider how this monument might change to reflect the wars that the U.S. has participated in since the monument was dedicated in 1926. Does the intended message of the monument change in the context of U.S. history that we know today?

Lesson Plan

Step 1: Research (Homework and class time for sharing and discussion) - 2 days

All students will do research on people, events, issues in their community in order to find a subject for their proposed monument.

Research can be conducted by:

- Having conversations with members of your family or neighborhood
- Finding “hidden data,” like a historical census, map, or photographs of your town or region.
- Using secondary sources written about your community.

Step 2: Application of research - 2 days

- Working as a class (or in small groups), have students share the information they gathered from their research about potential subjects for a monument.
- Discuss and decide on which subject or subjects to hypothetically commemorate
- What person, event, or issue would you want to commemorate?
- What type of monument would you want to see (mural, statue, artwork, book, digital project, etc.)?

Step 3: Create the prototype monument - 2 days

Creative process is wide ranging - graphic, digital, physical models or written word

Step 4: Create the marker/plaque - 1 day

- Consider how to acknowledge multiple peoples and perspectives on the marker.
- Using writing skills, outline, draft, review, and finalize what the plaque/marker should say.

Step 5: Reflection* - End of last day

- What are some facts you learned about your town from each of these sources?
- What, if anything, was lacking in the sources found?
- Did this activity provide any surprises or provide a new perspective? In what way?

* Written piece or whole class discussion.

Materials, Resources & Technology

- Local historical society materials and local library: scrapbooks, websites, archived newspapers, classroom speaker (for local stories and history)
- Newspapers from the Library of Congress - [Chronicling America](https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/).

Interdisciplinary

- Reading/Language Arts - middle school: reading newspapers – news, opinion sections
- Writing a concise statement - how to say a lot in 500 words or less

Modifications/Accommodations

- Class time for use of internet
- Reading support as needed

Formative Assessment

- Research materials used
- Potential subjects found and shared
- Engagement with creating the prototype





