



# Fairfield Museum

EXPLORE *the past*, IMAGINE *the future*

370 Beach Road, Fairfield, CT | 203-259-1598

[www.fairfieldhistory.org](http://www.fairfieldhistory.org)

## **3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Lesson Plan: Monuments All Around Us**

### Historical Background

We pass by them every day and most often don't even notice. What does that huge statue mean? Is that bench or park significant in some way? Why? If you start to observe the places in your town, you may find special objects, sculptures, memorials, plaques, houses, statues, and murals. What do these places and objects symbolize? What are they trying to tell us? The most obvious example of a memorial is a cemetery, but monuments and other memorials give us clues about what was important in the past.

### Potential Compelling Questions

How does our town/city contribute to Connecticut's history?

### Potential Supporting Questions

Why were specific individuals or events in your community honored through monuments or memorials, and how did they affect the history of your town, state, and country?  
What historical events occurred in our town/city?

### Tool Kit of Resources

Images of Monuments - PDF

### Background Information – Mile Markers

Parts of the Post Road were originally known as King's Highway, established in 1660. "Post Riders" transported letters, small goods, and bags, covering a distance of 250 miles in two weeks. In 1753, Benjamin Franklin became the deputy postmaster of the English colonies. In order to establish standard rates for mail, Franklin and his assistants surveyed parts of the post route and placed stone markers at each mile point. In 1761, the General Assembly ordered towns to place stone markers along the Post Road indicating the distance to the next county seat. Many of these markers still remain to this day. The Post Road is also known as Route 1

### Inquiry Activity

Before discussion: Look up the year that your town was founded and any influence that may have contributed to its name (see website resources below).

Ask the students the general question: what is a memorial or monument? List some famous examples: Mount Rushmore, Statue of Liberty, etc.

Ask the students if they've noticed any statues or monuments in your town. Monuments may include statues, murals, plaques, sculptures, houses, etc. List an example, such as a cemetery or statue.

Where have the students seen monuments? What are they about? Do the students know why they are there? Monuments can serve a variety of purposes. Project a photo of a monument in your town as an example, or use the samples from Fairfield below.

Who created these monuments? When were they created? Why?  
What is unique about this monument?  
Who is the audience? What is the message?

How does this monument make you feel? Is it positive or negative? Does it have an opinion?  
Is there any group or people left out of this message?

Does the monument reflect a larger event in American history?  
What does this show about how we remember the past?

Controversy: Some monuments can cause controversy because their message is too subjective.

### Communicating Conclusions

What kind of memorial or monument is missing in your town or in Connecticut?

In groups, have students design a new monument for your town or Connecticut. This should include a drawing, a written proposal, and a proposed location.

Where is your monument located? Why?  
What does this monument symbolize? What would you like people to know, understand, or feel in the future?  
What materials, colors, textures, and shapes would you use? What size is it?  
Write a short message on your monument.

Teacher's choice, you can also assign different groups to the students to vary the perspectives of the monuments; African Americans, Native Americans, women, different ethnic groups, different age groups, etc. Have the students share their work with the class. What are the similarities and differences of their proposals?

Student groups may also present their idea to the class. Have each group judge the other proposals. Either by hidden ballot or by show of hands, have students (or their groups) vote on which monument should be approved.

Students may also be asked to find monuments in their town and report back to class.

### Suggested Books

Ashabranner, Brent K. *No better hope : what the Lincoln Memorial means to America*.  
Brookfield, Conn.: Twenty-First Century Books, c2001.

Like no other national memorial, The Lincoln Memorial has taken a special place in the hearts and minds of Americans. No Better Hope describes the history, planning, and creation of the Memorial and profiles important people involved. In addition, this book discusses Lincoln's place in American history, discusses why he is America's

most loved president, and relates some of the important events and celebrations that have taken place at the Memorial, including the 1963 March on Washington.

Ashabranner, Brent K. *The Washington Monument : a beacon for America*. Brookfield, CT : Twenty-First Century Books, c2002.

Chronicles the history of the monument that honors our first president, discussing its design, financing, long period of construction, controversies, completion, dedication, and symbolism.

Burrows, Jennifer. *Vietnam War Memorial*. Vero Beach, FL : Rourke, c2010.