



Virtual Valentine Resources History at Home Student Lesson Plans

Monument Maker: What's Missing from Richmond, Virginia's Monumental Landscape?

Grade: 6-9

Overview: Explore stories of fellow Virginians who contributed to Richmond's story. Consider the city of Richmond's existing monumental landscape and craft your own proposal for which of these History Makers should be honored with the next monument!

Essential Questions:

- How do monuments get their meaning?
- How does that meaning change over time?
- What is missing from Richmond, Virginia's current monumental landscape?

Virginia SOL Alignment:

VS.1, VS.9, USII.1, CE.1, CE.4, VUS.1, GOVT.1a,b,d, f, g; English 6.6, 6.7,7.6, 7.7, 8.6 and 8.7

Materials

- "Monument Maker Biographical Profile" (PDFs) of Gilbert Hunt, Elizabeth Van Lew, John Mitchell, Jr., Mildred and Richard Loving, and Oliver Hill



Vocabulary

Monument: Accepted forms generally include statues, obelisks, landmark objects or art works like sculptures or fountains that are there to honor an ideal, a person or an event. They demonstrate a community's honoring of events and people for qualities they symbolically represent, and that the community deems indispensable to its identity (though not always agreed upon by all community members). (Ex: Martin Luther King, Jr. monuments created to honor the person and his commitment to fostering equality.)

Memorial: Memorials ritualize remembrance; specifically, they primarily focus on tragic death, loss or violence. They are meant to ensure that certain events and people will never be forgotten, while we may, in many cases, feel ambivalent about some aspects of the events. (Ex-Vietnam Veteran's Memorial in Washington, DC, honors the sacrifice of the service members who are individually named, not the war itself.)

In short, monuments can be memorials; memorials can be monuments. But they are not always the same thing.

For more on this way of differentiating these terms, see Gary Shapiro, "The Meaning of Our Confederate Monuments," May 15, 2017, New York Times.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/15/opinion/the-meaning-of-our-confederate-monuments.html>

Private v. Public memory: Private memory is personal and usually mourns the loss of a particular person. Public memory is often institutional/political focusing on how a community chooses to remember and memorialize its past.

Program Outline:

1. Introduction
2. Virginia History Maker biographical profile review
3. Monument proposal elevator pitch
4. Recap & discover further

1. Introduction – Discuss with your students:

- As a community, we use monuments to bring focus to ideas and people that we believe symbolically represent us. Each monument speaks to what was important to a city during the particular time period when it was created.
- Recently, many cities, including Richmond, are talking about how the meaning of monuments can change over time, and questioning how communities can make sure that these monuments still represent our current ideals.
- One of the ways we make sure that our city represents us all is to add to the monumental landscape.
- For instance, the Voices from the Garden women’s monument went up in 2019 on Capitol Square to highlight women who have contributed to Virginia in the last 400 years.



Voices from the Garden celebrating Virginia women, 2019.

2. Virginia History Maker biographical sketch review

- Ask your students to read the biographical sketches of **Gilbert Hunt, Elizabeth Van Lew, John Mitchell, Jr., Mildred and Richard Loving, and Oliver Hill**.
- Have them chose one person/couple that they believe deserves to be honored with the next monument in the city.

3. Monument proposal elevator pitch

Review the directions below with your students, asking them to that there is a one million dollar budget to develop a new monument in Richmond. Each student should write a 1-minute “elevator pitch” to persuade a potential decision maker to select their chosen History Maker for the monument. The pitch should include who the person/couple is, how they contributed to our story and what their story represents, how does their story represent our city even today?

Student directions:

You are in charge of making sure the person you choose gets a monument. You will have to convince the decision makers that your person is worth the honor of a million dollar monument. Write an elevator pitch. Remember, you are only in that elevator with this decision maker for a very short time and this may be your only chance to persuade them!

1. Read the profile sheet about each person from Virginia history. Choose either Gilbert Hunt, Elizabeth Van Lew, John Mitchell, Jr., Mildred and Richard Loving, or Oliver Hill to be your choice for the next monument.
2. Write down three reasons why this person is important:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
3. Write a 5-6 sentence pitch (persuasive paragraph) about why we should choose your person for the newest monument. Be sure to include your three reasons why. Be convincing!

4. Recap & Discover Further

Ask your students to read their elevator pitch to you or classmates.

Discover Further:

- Investigate the origins of other monuments in our city.
 - For example, the [Washington Equestrian statue at the Virginia State Capitol](#), the Arthur Ashe statue on the corner of Roseneath Avenue and Monument Avenue in Richmond, Virginia or the latest statue, [Rumors of War, at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts \(VMFA\)](#).
- Have the students create a mock design for their proposed monument.
 - What symbols and words would they include to tell the story of the person/couple?
- Ask yourself what is missing from Richmond’s monumental landscape?