

Determining the Fate of Confederate Monuments in New Orleans

Time Frame: 1-2 class periods, depending on how the lesson is set up

Author: Bonnie Laughlin-Schultz, Eastern Illinois University, blaughlinschul@eiu.edu

Proven Practices

- ✓ Instruction on government institutions
- ✓ Use of current & controversial issues
- ✓ Simulations of democratic practices
- ✓ Service Learning (ideas provided)

IL Social Studies Standards

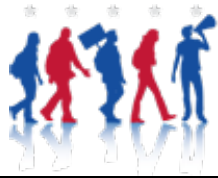
- **SS.IS.4.9-12.** Gather and evaluate information from multiple sources while considering the origin, credibility, point of view, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources.
- **SS.IS.5.9-12.** *Identify evidence* that draws information from multiple sources to revise or strengthen claims.
- **SS.IS.6.9-12.** Construct and evaluate explanations and arguments using multiple sources and relevant, verified information
- **SS.CV.1.9-12.** Distinguish the rights, roles, powers, and responsibilities of individuals and institutions in the political system.
- **SS.CV.7.9-12.** Describe the concepts and principles that are inherent to American Constitutional Democracy
- **SS.H.1.9-12.** Evaluate how historical developments were shaped by time and place as well as broader historical contexts.

CCSS/ELA/History/Social Studies Standards

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.6** Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.6** Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.7** Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

Overview: This lesson will use removal of Confederate monuments in New Orleans as a case study and means to examine the broader question of the fate of Confederate monuments, particularly as four monuments were removed in New Orleans, but their fate remains up in the air. In discussing this issue, students will reflect more broadly on the legacy of slavery and the Civil War in modern American political debate and life and will also engage in the practice of discussing a controversial issue with nuance, civility, and thoughtful engagement with multiple perspectives. This lesson was also shaped by my reading of Mitch Landrieu's memoir *In the Shadow of Statues: A White Southerner Confronts History* (Viking/Penguin Random House, 2018), and particularly his assertion that learning about the past shaped his beliefs about his actions in contemporary New Orleans.

Essential Question: How do we reckon with the past? (How does the past and our understanding of it influence the present? Why do we need to know history? or What good is history?)



Supporting Questions:

- What should Mayor Mitch Landrieu have done with the Confederate monuments in the city of New Orleans?
- Why were the monuments built in New Orleans, and what difference does that make?
- How has Civil War memory reflected both fact and opinion?
- How do we live with the memory and legacy of slavery and the Civil War in modern America?

Resources Required

NewsClippings

NBC Nightly News, April 24, 2017, <https://www.nbcnews.com/nightly-news/video/despite-threats-new-orleans-is-removing-confederate-monuments-928566339971>

NBC Nightly News, August 24, 2017, <https://www.nbcnews.com/nightly-news/video/more-confederate-monuments-removed-as-emotional-debate-continues-1027435587880>

PPT: [Determining the Fate of Confederate Monuments in New Orleans](#)

Graphic Organizer: [Determining the Fate of Confederate Monuments in New Orleans](#)

Reading Excerpts (all excerpts provided in Google Drive in one file marked [Confederate Monument Readings](#))

Jeff Adelson, "New Spots for Confederate Monuments? Two should stay in New Orleans, one go to Biloxi, committee says," *The New Orleans Advocate*, May 11, 2018

Mitch Landrieu, Speech on Removal of New Orleans Monuments, transcript from *New York Times*, May 23, 2017

Michael Signer, "I'm a progressive mayor. Here's why I voted no on removing my city's Confederate statue," *Washington Post*, May 24, 2017

Clint Smith, "The Young Black Activists Targeting New Orleans's Confederate Monuments," *The New Republic*, May 18, 2017

Recommended Procedures

Ideas for Opening Class

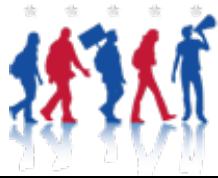
The teacher could open class by showing a news clipping about monument removal in New Orleans, or could instead show a clipping that broadens out to the wider debate such as this one from NBC Nightly News:

<https://www.nbcnews.com/nightly-news/video/more-confederate-monuments-removed-as-emotional-debate-continues-1027435587880>. Class could then move into a Barometer activity

(<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/barometer-taking-stand-controversial-issues>), where students posted their response (on a post-it note) along a line ranging from strong disagree to strongly agree (answering a question such as "Should the mayor of New Orleans have removed the city's monuments?").

Class Procedures

- (1) The teacher will then use a brief PowerPoint to provide the basic facts/background of the situation in New Orleans, and then the class will move into an examination of multiple accounts/opinions about the removal, including several from former Mayor Mitch Landrieu.
- (2) Four different readings from a variety of perspectives will be provided, and each student will read two different accounts. As students read, they will take notes on the graphic organizer provided, noting how their reading supports or does not support removal. They will also annotate the readings, identifying passages and phrases that were particularly compelling.
- (3) Students will then move into small group discussion. The teacher should divide the class into groups of 2-6 students, with students in each group having read different articles. Students will first share from their graphic organizer about their articles, with each student sharing their findings.



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- (4) Students will then discuss their viewpoints. Students should select a facilitator (or teacher should assign this role) and share, following guidelines modified from “Learn to Listen, Listen to Learn” from Facing History and Ourselves (<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/learn-listen-listen-learn>). During the discussion, each student can share his or her ideas without interruption. After all have shared the group can move into open discussion – one not about debate, but about listening thoughtfully and asking questions. From FHAO: “Students should also be reminded that not everyone will necessarily be in agreement, and that the goal is to better understand one’s own viewpoint and the perspectives of others.” After 10 or so minutes of discussion (whatever time teacher deems appropriate), groups should select a few key ideas to share with the whole class.
- (5) Small groups present their key ideas to the larger class. You can facilitate a whole-class discussion prompted by these ideas (or do a Four Corners or Socratic Seminar), or you can proceed directly to final reflections, the last part of the graphic organizer.

Closing

After discussion concludes, students should complete the final section of the graphic organizer, where they again free write about their opinion, this time identifying at least one piece of support from a reading or discussion today. Students may also reflect on how the class period itself (the acquisition of new information and/or exposure to new ideas) has shifted their ideas or positions. If a Barometer was used, students should make whatever necessary adjustments to their initial response. The teacher may also circle back to the essential question of how we reckon with the past.

Possible Assessments

The graphic organizer completion offers a means for formative assessment (as does small group discussion), and the final reflection could be expanded into a short essay where students are assessed with making and defending an argument with evidence and in considering multiple sources/perspectives (aligned to multiple standards listed above). Students could also be assessed with a more creative assignment, such as a letter to the editor of a local paper weighing in on monuments in their own city, or to a New Orleans paper or to research for a related service learning project.

Differentiation

The teacher could substitute video of Mitch Landrieu’s speech in New Orleans and use that as the basis for the lesson: Video: https://www.washingtonpost.com/video/national/full-speech-mitch-landrieu-addresses-removal-of-confederate-statues/2017/05/31/cbc3b3a2-4618-11e7-8de1-cec59a9bf4b1_video.html?utm_term=.b39a0655c885. Alternate strategies identified below might also better facilitate student learning and participation in discussion.

Alternate Ideas/Extensions

There are a variety of other teaching strategies that could be used with this lesson, including having a Big Paper (<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/big-paper-silent-conversation>), Jigsaw (<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/jigsaw-developing-community-and-disseminating-knowledge>), or Fishbowl (<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/fishbowl>) discussion. Additionally, the teacher might streamline the lesson by choosing only one of the readings and using a strategy such as Save the Last Word for Me (<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/save-last-word-me>).



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Other Considerations

Teachers might consult the Facing History and Ourselves guidelines about contracting (see <https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/contracting>) if they want ideas about ways to set up a class climate for respectful discussion of controversial issues. For more on creating a reflective classroom, see Doc Miller, 8 Components of a Reflective Classroom, August 5, 2015, Facing Today: A Facing History Blog, <http://facingtoday.facinghistory.org/8-components-of-a-reflective-classroom>; and Fostering a Reflective Classroom, Facing History and Ourselves, Mockingbird, <https://www.facinghistory.org/mockingbird/fostering-reflective-classroom>. Teaching Tolerance, too, has useful ideas about engaging in discussions of race and racism. (*Let's Talk! Discussing Race, Racism and Other Difficult Topics with Students*, Teaching Tolerance, <https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/publications/lets-talk>, with more resources listed at http://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/general/Lets_Talk_Resources.pdf)

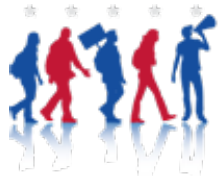
Possible Service Learning Extensions

Students could host a forum for the community (or others in the school) to engage in discussion of this subject, using the model of civil discourse provided in their course. Students could also engage with discussion of commemoration and monuments within their own community. This work is aligned well with the research and advocacy components of service learning.

Additional Resources (all but Landrieu book available via provided URLs)

Further Background Readings

- CBS This Morning: New Orleans Mayor on Confederate Monuments Battle, Institutional Racism, March 20, 2018, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/mitch-landrieu-book-in-the-shadow-of-statues/>
- Jelani Cobb, "The Battle over Confederate Monuments in New Orleans," *The New Yorker*, May 12, 2017, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/the-battle-over-confederate-monuments-in-new-orleans>
- David von Drehle, "150 Years after Fort Sumter, Why We're Still Fighting the Civil War," *Time Magazine*, April 7, 2011, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2063869,00.html>
- Mitch Landrieu, *In the Shadow of Statues: A White Southerner Confronts History* (Viking/Penguin Random House, 2018)
- Kevin Litten, "A Year after New Orleans Confederate Monuments Came Down, Questions Linger," *The Times-Picayune*, April 23, 2018, <http://www.nola.com/expo/erry-2018/04/476a19f1324154/new-orleans-confederate-monume.html>
- Gary Shapiro, "The Meaning of Our Confederate 'Monuments,'" *New York Times*, May 15, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/15/opinion/the-meaning-of-our-confederate-monuments.html?mcubz=1>
- Southern Poverty Law Center, Whose Heritage? Public Symbols of the Confederacy, <https://www.splcenter.org/20160421/whose-heritage-public-symbols-confederacy>
- Jennifer Speights-Binet and Rebecca Sheehan, "Confederate Monument Controversy in New Orleans," American Association of Geographers Newsletter, January 1, 2018, <http://news.aag.org/2018/01/confederate-monument-controversy-in-new-orleans/>
- Tegan Wendland, "With Lee's Statute's Removal, Another Battle of New Orleans Comes to a Close," NPR, May 20, 2017, <https://www.npr.org/2017/05/20/529232823/with-lee-statues-removal-another-battle-of-new-orleans-comes-to-a-close>



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Lessons and Teaching Ideas

“After Charlottesville: Contested History and the Fight against Bigotry,” Facing History and Ourselves, <https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/after-charlottesville-contested-history-and-fight-against-bigotry>

“Analyzing and Creating Memorials,” from *Holocaust and Human Behavior Unit*, Facing History and Ourselves, <https://www.facinghistory.org/holocaust-and-human-behavior/analyzing-and-creating-memorials>

Wayde Grinstead, 3 Angles to the Confederate Monument Controversy, *Facing Today: A Facing History Blog*, June 5, 2017, <http://facingtoday.facinghistory.org/3-angles-to-the-confederate-monument-controversy>

Brigid Rowlings, “How I Faced My Identity When Teaching the Reconstruction Era,” *Facing Today: A Facing History Blog*, Feb. 11, 2016, <http://facingtoday.facinghistory.org/how-i-faced-my-identity-when-teaching-the-reconstruction-era>

Video: “A Contested History,” *Reconstruction and the Fragility of Democracy Unit*, Facing History and Ourselves, <https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/video/introduction-contested-history>

W. E. B. Du Bois, “The Purpose of History,” *Reconstruction and the Fragility of Democracy Unit*, Facing History and Ourselves, <https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/web-dubois-reflects-purpose-history>