**Monuments and Memories in the Atlantic Revolutions**

# – Module Lesson Plan

This module is part of the History for the 21st Century project (H/21). The primary mission of H/21 is to create resources that make the latest knowledge in world history topics accessible to a diverse student body at the introductory level and to support university and college teachers with best practices in inquiry-based learning. You can find out more about H/21 by visiting [www.history21.com](http://www.history21.com).

**Module Overview**

This module offers an introduction to three powerful, interconnected revolutions that changed the political trajectory of the world, and the ways they have been commemorated in monuments across time. Through two weeks of class, students will examine the events and legacies of the American, French, and Haitian Revolutions, consider their values and motivations, and reflect on their legacies. Equally important, they will consider how and why people have chosen commemorate the events, people, and ideas associated with them, and consider these key questions:

* What events/people are remembered? What parts of a story are told?
* What parts or people are forgotten?
* How do monuments convey messages to a public audience?
* Do monuments “work”? And what makes them effective?

The module begins by surveying the “monument landscape” in the United States and becoming acquainted with ways we can learn about and analyze monuments. Then, we will dive into the history of Atlantic revolutions, considering the relationship between how each is remembered versus its historical realities, and how the monuments explored connect to the core questions of the class. At the end, students will be given a chance to consider and apply what they have learned, by either creating a new monument, or more closely analyzing an existing one.

**Learning Goals**

By the end of this module students should have gained both content knowledge and skill-building practice. Prior to each class, students will engage with daily readings and primary sources, as well as complete preparatory discussion assignments to help them prepare for class activities. Through discussion assignments and class activities, students will not only learn about each revolution and its monuments, they will also employ skills of historical analysis and critical assessment to ask challenging questions about the ways monuments represent and misrepresent history, who created them, why they were created, and how effective they are at interpreting the meaning of each revolution:

Content goals:

* Learn about the major events and figures of the American, French, and Haitian Revolutions, comparing their similarities and differences.
* Consider the major philosophical principles of the three revolutions, including freedom, equality, and natural rights.
* Identify and assess monuments created to commemorate each revolution at various points in time.

Skills goals:

* Practice close and critical reading of both secondary and primary sources and taking effective notes.
* Analyzing and interpreting monuments as primary sources and considering the contexts in which they were created to identify their meaning.
* Assessing the efficacy and limitations of certain monuments and thinking creatively about how to convey messages to public audiences.

The module consists of five lessons, to be completed over two weeks. Included in each lesson of this module are brief introductory readings, a series of primary sources, suggested discussion topics, guides for leading discussions, slide decks with images, and some suggested assignments to accompany this module. Feel free to adapt the materials to suit your needs. If you want to share an adaptation you found particularly successful, or have a suggestion for a revision or update, feel free to contact the folks at *History for the 21st Century* so they can share it with others.

**Module Map**

**Lesson 1: Thinking about Monuments and Revolutions**

The first lesson of this module will begin by introducing students to the age of Atlantic revolutions. In addition, students will assess the current state of the “monument landscape” in the United States, explore different kinds of monuments, and consider various ways to “read” them.

**Lesson 2: American Revolution**

Lesson two begins to dive deeper into the history of the Atlantic revolutions. Students will focus on the American Revolution, considering the key events and legacies, as well as exploring the central values of the revolution through a close analysis of historical primary sources. The lesson also considers when monuments to the revolution were most often built, what they have commemorated (often individual figures), and how they have evolved over time.

**Lesson 3: French Revolution**

The next lesson focuses on the French Revolution. In their historical analysis, students will consider who was included in the revolution through their primary source analysis (men versus women), as well as the contested nature of the revolution. In addition, the lesson examines how that contested nature has been reflected through monuments (their removal, re-installation, and replacement) across time, and the challenges of commemorating abstract concepts like “rights.”

**Lesson 4: Haitian Revolution**

Lesson four turns to the Haitian Revolution, its causes, trajectory, and outcomes. Students will consider how the Haitian Revolution is similar and unique to the American and French Revolutions, through primary sources. In addition, they will learn about how the Haitian Revolution has been commemorated both in Haiti and beyond, and reflect on efforts to memorialize large, complex historical events like slavery and resistance.

**Lesson 5: Thinking about Monuments and Memory**

Lesson five will revisit the key ideas of the module and consider the various people and forms of commemoration explored across prior lessons. In addition, the lesson considers how people’s perspectives on monuments might change, as values and ideals shift across time. Students will also employ what they’ve learned to date, by either creating a new monument to one of the Atlantic Revolutions or closely analyzing an existing one.