



### Memorialising abolitionists – teachers' notes

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#### SLIDE 3:

The point to emphasise here is that the Grave of the Unknown Warrior is just ONE person's grave but it represents millions of people who have been killed in war. For the millions of people who lost loved ones in war, it is important to have a place where they can come and remember their loved one. No one knows this man's identity and that is the point, there is a tiny chance he could be the relation or friend of anyone who lost a loved one in the First World War. A lot of thought and planning went into the scheme of having an 'Unknown Warrior'. King George V had to be persuaded that it was a good idea. You could discuss in class how students feel about this collective memorial.

Students should know that every year on Remembrance Sunday, people gather here to pay their respects to those who have died in conflicts and to pray for peace.

#### SLIDE 4:

The task here could be set as a homework prior to the lesson- students could find a local memorial and bring in an image and some information about it. Are there are collective memorials in the local area or are they all of individuals? Let's find out who Ignatius Sancho really was.

#### SLIDE 6:

The **stained glass window** shows the Virgin and Child standing on a crescent moon and St Luke, (who was a doctor) standing on a rainbow. At the base is a figure of a kneeling nurse with badges and coats of arms of all the countries from which the nurses came. The window is located in The Nurses' memorial chapel at Westminster Abbey, set up in 1950 **to remember all those in the nursing professions from the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth who died during the 1939-1945 war**. The chapel was recently re-dedicated to Florence Nightingale. Students may want to discuss whether the images chosen for the window actually reflect the people represented here.

#### SLIDE 7:

The **stone statue** depicts **Martin Luther King Junior** and a child. The statue was unveiled in 1998 and stands high up above the royal entrance to the Abbey. It is one of ten statues of 'Modern Martyrs' adorning the west front of the Abbey and visible to all.

#### SLIDE 8:



The **memorial stone** for scientist Stephen Hawking marks the spot where his ashes were buried in 2018. The memorial stone depicts a series of rings, surrounding a darker central ellipse. The ten characters of Hawking's equation express his idea that black holes in the universe are not entirely black but emit a glow, that would become known as Hawking radiation. In this equation the T stands for temperature; the h for Planck's constant which is used to understand parts of quantum mechanics; c stands for the speed of light;  $8\pi$  helps us to grasp its spherical nature; G is Newton's constant to understand gravity; M stands for the mass of the black hole and k stand for Boltzmann's constant, which is the energy of gas particles.

SLIDE 9:

Westminster Abbey has become a place of national memory. People are chosen from different fields to celebrate their important work; scientists, writers, political leaders as well as abolitionists are memorialised at the Abbey. In the same way that it would be impossible to memorialise every single soldier from the First World War, it is impossible to memorialise every single abolitionist. Millions of people have fought against abolition over the past two centuries and we may never know the names of every abolitionist. The space inside the Abbey is limited, so it is important to weigh up who gets a memorial and why. In the past, the memorials chosen tended to be of white, wealthy, males. In modern times this trend is being challenged as for example memorials to women and to people of GEM are being installed. It is important to try to tell the whole story not just a narrow narrative, but there is a long way to go yet. It is also worth noting that many abolitionists would have been people working behind the scenes, those whose work was invaluable but did not bring them to public attention.

SLIDE 11:

The medallion provides a good discussion point about how images and words, however carefully chosen, will still reflect a particular time and culture, and may not be seen as appropriate today. Students could discuss how appropriate they think the image chosen for the anti-slavery medallion would be today.

SLIDE 14:

A further discussion could be around 'What can an individual do in any situation they disagree with?' - link to Citizenship. Students may be interested to read about the planned memorial for Benjamin Zephaniah. ['Major' Benjamin Zephaniah mural to be unveiled at Birmingham park - Birmingham Live \(birminghammail.co.uk\)](https://www.birminghammail.co.uk)

SLIDE 15:

Design a collective memorial for all abolitionists, past and present. Discuss where this memorial would be best located. Sometimes symbols can work better than a depiction of a person in this sort of collective memorial. What symbols can you think of that might suggest the idea of abolition?