Inquire & Investigate

Language evolves with every generation. Some words widely used 150 years ago to describe races and ethnicities are now considered inaccurate, inappropriate, and even offensive. For example, if you read primary sources from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, you'll find lots of references to "colored people." But that phrase does nothing to indicate race. The term "Negro" is another one that has fallen out of use as we've accepted it was used by white people to indicate the inferiority of Black people. Other terms are too offensive to even use in this book. Today, the preferred term is "Black people." We also use "African Americans" when referring to Black Americans of African descent. As we learn more, we can do better with our language.

A MONUMENTAL HISTORY

Monuments designed to honor places, events, or people stand in public places across the United States. Some, such as the Lincoln Memorial and the Statue of Liberty, are classic icons. Others, such as the 2,000-pound African Killer Bee located in Hidalgo, Texas, are less than traditional.

Monuments are often controversial. What is honorable to one person may be offensive to another. Also, the meanings of monuments change as the culture around them evolves. What do monuments reveal about the history, culture, and values of your community?

- **Ask adults, such as parents, teachers, and librarians, to help you make a list of all the historical monuments in your community.** Choose one monument to investigate.
- **Develop a list of questions you want answered about this monument.** Consider the following ideas.
  - When, why, and by whom was this monument erected?
  - What was going in U.S. history when the monument was dedicated?
  - Who owns the land on which the monument sits?
  - Who maintains the structure?
  - What do people today think about this monument?

Check out more titles and other great activities at **nomadpress.net**.

Inquire & Investigate

- **Investigate the monument's origins and present use.** The internet is a handy place to start, but you can also interview your local historical society, librarian, or chamber of commerce.
- **Based on the answers to your questions, what does this monument reveal about the historical beliefs and values of your community?** Have those values and beliefs changed over time? What evidence do you have of this change?
- **What is your opinion of this monument?** Should it remain in your community, be removed, or be expanded or altered in some way to reflect deeper historical insights about the era in which it was erected? What might the consequences be for each action?
- **Design a pamphlet that reflects your opinion about the monument.** The purpose of the pamphlet will depend on your opinion. If you think the monument should remain as is, you might design an advertisement to encourage people to visit. If you think the monument should be removed, your pamphlet might be a petition to the city government. Share your pamphlet with peers and see how their opinions compare with yours.

To investigate more, design and distribute a survey to assess community opinion about the monument. Analyze the results of the survey. Do the majority of people agree with your view of the monument? If not, how could you redesign your pamphlet to reflect popular opinion about the future of this public structure?

VOCAB LAB

Write down what you think each word means. What root words can you find to help you? What does the context of the word tell you?

amendment, **discrimination**, **emancipate**, **heritage**, **racism**, **Reconstruction**, and **white supremacy**

Compare your definitions with those of your friends or classmates. Did you all come up with the same meanings? Turn to the text and glossary if you need help.

Check out more titles and other great activities at **nomadpress.net**.