

CONFEDERATE MONUMENTS: LESSON 5: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Discussion Questions

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1. Based on what you just read, what do you think about the Lost Cause Myth?
 - a. Have you ever heard of it before?
 - b. Were you surprised by it?
 - i. Why or why not?
2. Considering Southerners felt terribly defeated after the war, is it okay that they made the “Lost Cause Myth” to help them feel better about the war?
 - a. Why or why not?
3. Considering the reasons for the Civil War and the personal histories of the men being honored, how do you think Black people felt/feel when they see these monuments in different communities?
4. These three men have the most number of confederate monuments between the three of them:
 - a. Considering who they were and what they stood for, is it fair that they have such a high number of monuments?
5. Many monuments were put up during times of racial unrest.
 - a. Why do you think Southern states and the White communities who wanted the statues chose to erect the statues during these times?
 - i. What messages do you think they were trying to send to people who lived in their state?
 - ii. What message do you think they were trying to send to Black people who may have lived in or near their state?
6. Many people suggested that the South committed treason when starting the Civil War.
 - a. Do you agree with this? Why or why not?
 - b. If you *do* think it was treason, do you think people who commit treason against their country should be honored?
 - i. Why or why not?

7. Some people argue that the people the monuments honor are a part of history and we cannot ignore them or make them disappear. Do you agree with this argument?
 - a. Why or why not?
8. Many Southerners argue that confederate monuments represent a state's honor and not slavery.
 - a. What would you say to them given the information you have learned so far?

Writing Prompt

There are currently many debates around what should be done with the existing Confederate monuments around the country. The state of Virginia has an incredibly high number of Confederate monuments. Considering what you have learned so far, write a letter to the Virginia Governor, Ralph Northam, which provides a solution on what should be done with the existing monuments. Should they be taken down? Should they be put in a museum? Should something different be built in their place?

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This solution should take into consideration the different perspectives of people affected positively and/or negatively by the monuments. Make sure to discuss the history of the monuments themselves as well as how your decision would make various groups of people feel.