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Period 2

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Memorial Essay

Memorializing a person or event is an important thing that we do. It helps us not only to show appreciation to a person or event, but it helps us to remember it. One of the ways we do this is through monuments. A monument is a building or structure, carefully designed to symbolize or show meaning pertaining to a particular something a person did, or something that occurred. The main things that are taken into consideration in making a monument are location, size, material, and shape.

When making a monument, one of the things to consider is the location. You could put a memorial anywhere. In a nice park, on top of a mountain, in a swamp, but depending on where a monument is, it can totally change the meaning, and feeling you get from it. For example, the Christopher Columbus monument lies in Riverside Park in Easton, Pennsylvania. (Source B)

This park is next to a gorgeous river and is surrounded by grass, trees, and colorful flowers. This gives you a nice warm nature feeling when you are visiting it. It helps us to remember that he discovered this wonderful land we see. This monument would have a lot less meaning if it were place in the middle of the dirty street, unmaintained. A lot of memorials are placed right where the event happened. “The pioneers from the Santa Fe Trail would bring their dead along with them, preserved somehow, and bury them here” (Breusch in Source D) That gives not only the physical memorial the meaning, but the location in which it is placed. That is where the actual event took place, and that is why it is so meaningful. Location is something that is meaningful to everyone. When they were discussing ideas for the Holocaust Museum and publicized to build in on The Mall in D.C, both Jewish and non-Jewish communities argued to “Imagine a Holocaust museum in the town whose political sages refused to lift a finger to halt the Holocaust or open our shores to the few survivors! How offensive to any informed individual!” (Source E) Placing a monument in an incorrect, or even hypocritical location will do quite the opposite of bring happiness to visitors, it would indeed offend many individuals.

The size of a monument is the next piece of the monument to be determined. When designing the Holocaust, The Commission of Fine Arts refused their first design, stating that it was too massive. They felt that the massive building would “overcome The Mall and take away the main purpose of the museum, which was meant to be a place of remembrance and not to overpower The Mall or its visitors” (Source E) This just goes to show, bigger is not always better. You must give a proper size to what it is you are trying to remember, but that doesn’t always mean that a specific size will be more memorable.