



# Vietnam Veterans Memorial Washington, D.C.

## Introduction and Instructions

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial was designed by Maya Lin, a 21-year old student from Yale University, whose entry beat out more than 1,400 other submissions in a design competition for the new memorial. At the time of its unveiling in 1982, the minimalist design generated a fierce backlash and negative reaction. Today, however, Lin's design is highly regarded and considered one of the finest examples of memorial architecture. In addition to any prior knowledge you may have, use your research skills and the resources provided here to answer the questions below.



Learn about who and what inspired the memorial.  
READ: <http://www.vvmf.org/the-memorial-history>



Learn more about the history of the memorial and read the stories of some of the veterans who are memorialized on its wall.  
READ: <http://www.vvmf.org/wall-facts>

### 1. What was the purpose of building the Vietnam Veterans memorial? What were some criteria it had to meet?

Answer: The purpose was to create a safe place to honor the Vietnam veterans who gave their lives in the war. It had to be reflective and not be political.

### 2. What information is listed on the memorial? What is the significance of the diamond or cross? When might these symbols change, and how?

Answer: The names of everyone who was killed in the war. If they were confirmed to be killed in action, the shape is a diamond. If they have a cross, they were missing in action. Circle designates that they were found alive.

### 3. When did construction of the memorial start and end?

Answer: It started on March 26, 1982 and was completed in 1984.

### 4. Name three facts about the Vietnam Veterans Memorial:

- a. Answers will vary.
- b. Answers will vary.
- c. Answers will vary.

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### **WHAT DO YOU THINK?** *This is your chance to share your opinions, make connections, and apply what you've learned!*

1. What kind of emotions do you think the Vietnam Veterans Memorial evokes? Why?

Answers will vary.

2. When we visit this memorial, why do you think we should be quiet and respectful?

Answers will vary.

3. Explain why it might be difficult for veterans of the Vietnam War to visit this memorial.

Answers will vary.