

Washington Monument Washington, D.C.

Introduction and Instructions

Despite its construction being halted due to war and its structure damaged by natural forces, the Washington Monument has stood the test of time as a testament to our nation's first commander in chief and president. Did you know that it was the tallest structure in the world when it was completed in 1884? In addition to any prior knowledge you may have, use your research skills and the resources provided here to answer the questions below.



Learn more about the history and significance, as well as interesting facts about the monument.
READ: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Washington-Monument-Washington-DC>



See what the monument looked like during construction and learn about the challenges that had to be overcome.
WATCH: <https://www.pbs.org/video/national-mall-americas-front-yard-washington-monument>

1. What event brought about a renewed interest in a monument for Washington?

Answer: The centenary of Washington's birth (100th anniversary of his birthday) in 1832-1833.

2. How did the original plans for the monument and the present monument differ?

Answer: The original plans designed by Pierre L'Enfant included a large, columned base, which were not included in the final re-designs by Robert Mills.

3. Why did construction of the monument stop? When did it begin again, and what physical feature on the monument signifies the delay?

Answer: The construction of the monument stopped due to lack of funds and the start of the Civil War in 1861. Construction resumed in 1879. The upper two thirds of the monument were built using marble from a different source, and thus, a different color.

4. How many years elapsed from the start of construction to the finish? How many years after completion was it opened to the public?

Answer: 36 years; 5 years

5. The monument has been closed a few times. Why and when has the monument been closed and reopened since 1990?

Answer: Major restorations in the 1990s closed the monument until 2001. The monument was closed again from 2011 to 2014 after suffering damage from an earthquake in central Virginia.

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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. Of Washington's many accomplishments, which one do you think was his greatest? Why do you think so?

Answers will vary.

2. Washington is, of course, already honored with a famous monument. But imagine that you had the opportunity to design a new memorial to George Washington. What would it look like? Explain the symbolism of your design choices.

Answers will vary.

3. George Washington is often called the "Father of our country." How do you think the Washington Monument reflects this sentiment?

Answers will vary.