Memory in Place

How a memorial honors lives and teaches new generations

OKH.C.8.5.C "Examine the purpose of the Oklahoma City National Memorial and how it continues to fulfill its mission of remembrance and education."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the Memorial's stated purpose, circle two outdoor features that serve it, and number two ways the museum teaches people about the bombing and its effects.

What the Memorial Keeps Alive

1. At 9:02 a.m. on April 19, 1995, a bomb destroyed the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. It killed 168 people and injured hundreds more. The Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum was created not only to preserve the story of that day, but also to honor those killed, those who survived, and people whose lives changed forever. Its mission asks visitors to recognize the impact of violence and to find comfort, strength, peace, and hope. A place of remembrance can help people grieve; a place of education can also help them consider the choices and consequences behind the event.

2. At the Outdoor Symbolic Memorial, two tall gates frame a reflecting pool. One bears 9:01, the last minute before the bombing; the other bears 9:03, the first minute after it. The empty space between them marks 9:02, when the explosion changed countless lives. Nearby, 168 empty chairs stand for those killed, with each chair carrying a person's name. The Survivor Tree, an American elm that lived through the blast, offers a different image: life continuing after harm. Together, these features make loss visible while leaving room for survivors and families to seek healing.

3. The Memorial Museum extends that work beyond the outdoor space. Through objects recovered from the bombing, recorded accounts from people affected, and exhibits about the rescue effort and investigation, it shows what happened and how people responded. Visitors can connect a named chair outside to a human story inside, rather than seeing 168 as only a number. The museum also offers educational programs for students and teachers, allowing new generations to study the effects of violent actions and the choices people make afterward. As visitors return and students learn, the Memorial's purpose continues beyond the generation that experienced the bombing.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do the two gates and the space between them turn a time into an act of remembrance?

2. Why do the named chairs communicate the Memorial's purpose differently from the number 168 alone?

3. How does the Survivor Tree support a part of the mission that the chairs do not emphasize?

4. How do the museum's exhibits and programs help the Memorial fulfill its purpose for people who did not experience the bombing?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Plan a new, respectful activity for visiting students that uses one outdoor feature and one museum resource named in the passage. In 4 to 5 sentences, explain what students would do and how the activity would advance both remembrance and education.

ANSWER KEY

Memory in Place

HIGH SCHOOL · OKH.C.8.5.C

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the Memorial's stated purpose, circle two outdoor features that serve it, and number two ways the museum teaches people about the bombing and its effects. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do the two gates and the space between them turn a time into an act of remembrance?	**The gates mark the minutes before and after the bombing. The space between them represents 9:02, inviting visitors to remember when lives changed.**
2	Why do the named chairs communicate the Memorial's purpose differently from the number 168 alone?	**Each chair names a person who was killed, helping visitors remember individuals rather than only a death toll.**
3	How does the Survivor Tree support a part of the mission that the chairs do not emphasize?	**The tree survived the blast, so it represents continuing life and the possibility of healing; the chairs focus on those who were killed.**
4	How do the museum's exhibits and programs help the Memorial fulfill its purpose for people who did not experience the bombing?	**The exhibits show what happened and how people responded, while educational programs help later generations study the effects of violence and the choices made afterward.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Students would stand near the Survivor Tree and write one question about what survival can mean after violence. Inside the museum, they would listen to a recorded account from a person affected and note one detail they learned. Back outside, each student would write a private reflection connecting that person's experience with the tree's survival. The activity respects people whose lives changed and teaches students that the bombing's effects continued beyond April 19.

Accept other supported explanations of how each feature or resource serves remembrance or education. For Part 3, the proposed activity must use a named outdoor feature and museum resource, and explain both purposes.