



Maggie's Civics Corner

Memorial Day 2020

Memorial Day is a United States holiday that honors the men and women who have died while serving in the military. On this Memorial Day 2020, we have many heroes who have fought a different kind of war, a war nonetheless, that has been fought to keep all Americans safe and healthy. As you read through the lesson, think about our heroes of past wars and our heroes who are fighting the war against the coronavirus.

Read or *listen to the book *The Wall* by Eve Bunting. (*Check out YOUTUBE for a read aloud of *The Wall*.) Then read and think about the questions below.

1. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial is located in Washington, D.C. It was designed and built to honor the soldiers who died or were missing in action during that War. There are over 58,000 names on the Memorial. The Memorial receives many, many visitors every year.

In the book *The Wall*, a father and his young son visit the Vietnam Veterans Memorial to search for the name of the boy's grandfather who he never knew. Both father and son take great pride in finding his name on The Wall. They also feel sadness that he could not be there to share their lives today.

The Memorial is described as black and shiny as a mirror. It is shiny enough that visitors can see themselves in the walls. When the Memorial was being built, there was a great deal of discussion about how it should look. Some felt it should be filled with bright colors. Others wanted a dark surface on which all the names would be written. If you were designing a memorial to honor soldiers who sacrificed for our country, what would it look like and why?

2. In the book, a teacher brings her class to the Memorial. She tells her students, "The names are the names of the dead. But The Wall is for all of us." What do you think she meant by that? Be prepared to share your answer with a classmate via social media, or with someone in your house.

3. Try to find the name of someone in your neighborhood or beyond who was a soldier in the Vietnam War. Maybe you could ask a community leader if they know a Vietnam Veteran. Make a list of questions you would like to ask a person who went to war to protect our country. Make your list if you can find someone or not. If you cannot identify a Vietnam Veteran while you are home, save your questions until you return to your classroom.

4. The boy's father in *The Wall* obviously saw his father as a hero. Today, in these remarkably challenging times, we see many people who are heroes. Do you know anyone who is one of those special heroes who are helping to protect us? Think about that person or persons and how you might thank them. Also, think about what a memorial will look like to honor all of those heroes – doctors, nurses, teachers, bus drivers, grocery store workers, policemen, and many more – who have been there for us through the pandemic. If you can, share your vision with others.

One last thought: Each of you who are staying home, practicing social distancing, and wearing a mask when you go out, are heroes who are helping to protect all of us. We thank you!