The Wall of Names

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Question of the Week
Why is freedom of expression important?

High Frequency Words
law          young
land         student
plans        simple

Concept Words
Vietnam      judges
memorial     design
veterans     ceremony

Learning Goals
• Many soldiers have died to defend our freedoms.
• The Vietnam Veterans Memorial honors soldiers.
• Maya Lin designed the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.
From 1965 to 1975, the United States was in a war. The war was in Vietnam. Vietnam is a country in Asia. Many soldiers from both countries died.

When the war ended, people wanted to build a memorial. A memorial is something that remembers people or events. Veterans, people who were soldiers, started to make a plan.

On July 1, 1980, President Jimmy Carter made a law. The law gave land for a memorial.

What would they build? Veterans had a contest. Many people sent designs for the memorial. Designs are plans that show how to build something. The memorial was called the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.
People sent more than 1,400 designs. Some designs came from famous people. Other designs were from students.

The judges looked at the designs. Each design had a number. The judges did not know who made the designs.

The judges picked a winner. They picked design number 1,026.

Design number 1,026

The winner was a student. She was 21 years old. Her name was Maya Lin.

Maya’s design was simple. It was a long, black wall. The names of the soldiers would be on the wall.
On November 13, 1982, the memorial was open.

When the Vietnam Veterans Memorial opened, many people came to see it. There were 150,000 people at the ceremony. A ceremony is a special event. Many veterans came to see the wall.

At the ceremony, people were quiet. They moved close to the wall. They touched the names on the wall.

The memorial was shiny. The wall was like a mirror. People saw their faces. They saw trees and the sky too.

People visit the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.
Flags and photos at the wall

Millions of people visit the memorial every year. They are quiet too. Some people leave gifts there.

The memorial is a place to think. It is a place to remember. It is a place to say thank you. Here, we remember the soldiers who fought in Vietnam.

**Talk About It**

1. Why did we build the Vietnam Veterans Memorial?
2. Why were people surprised when Maya Lin won the contest?

**Write About It**

3. How do you think Maya Lin felt when she won? On a separate sheet of paper, write some words that would tell her feelings.

**Extend Language**

The suffix –ful means “full of.” For example, hopeful means “full of hope.” Add the suffix to the words joy, power, thank, and peace. Use one of the words in a sentence.