Memorial Day History

Use this key to check answers and read the explanations.

1. Whom does U.S. Memorial Day honor?
   - A. People who died while serving in the U.S. military
   - B. Past presidents of the United States
   - C. New members of the U.S. military
   - D. Americans inducted into a national sports hall of fame

   Correct answer: A. People who died while serving in the U.S. military
   Memorial Day commemorates the people who died in U.S. military service.

2. When is U.S. Memorial Day observed each year?
   - A. The last Friday in May
   - B. The first Monday in May
   - C. The last Monday in May
   - D. The first Monday in June

   Correct answer: C. The last Monday in May
   The federal holiday falls on the last Monday in May, so its calendar date varies each year.

3. What earlier name for Memorial Day referred to placing flowers on graves?
   - A. Flag Day
   - B. Decoration Day
   - C. Founders Day
   - D. Arbor Day

   Correct answer: B. Decoration Day
   Decoration Day took its name from the practice of decorating graves in remembrance.

4. Which flower did the Veterans of Foreign Wars adopt as its official memorial flower?
   - A. The marigold
   - B. The daffodil
   - C. The iris
   - D. The poppy

   Correct answer: D. The poppy
   The VFW began its national poppy distribution in 1922 and adopted the poppy as its memorial flower.

5. Which cemetery holds Memorial Day ceremonies at its Memorial Amphitheater?

A. Gettysburg National Cemetery
B. Arlington National Cemetery
C. Dayton National Cemetery
D. Fort Logan National Cemetery

Correct answer: B. Arlington National Cemetery
The Memorial Amphitheater at Arlington National Cemetery hosts a national ceremony each Memorial Day.

6. According to the U.S. Flag Code, when should an American flag flown at half-staff on Memorial Day be raised to the top?

A. At noon
B. At 9 a.m.
C. At 3 p.m.
D. At sunset

Correct answer: A. At noon
The Flag Code calls for half-staff until noon, followed by full staff for the rest of the day.

7. When does the National Moment of Remembrance begin on Memorial Day?

A. Sunrise in Washington, D.C.
B. Noon Eastern time
C. 6 p.m. local time
D. 3 p.m. local time

Correct answer: D. 3 p.m. local time
The National Moment of Remembrance Act designates the minute beginning at 3 p.m. in each time zone.

8. Which veterans' organization issued General Orders No. 11 for the 1868 observance?

A. The Veterans of Foreign Wars
B. The American Legion
C. The Grand Army of the Republic
D. The Disabled American Veterans

Correct answer: C. The Grand Army of the Republic
The Grand Army of the Republic, an organization of Union veterans, issued the order in 1868.

9. What date did the 1868 order designate for Decoration Day that year?

A. May 30
B. May 5
C. April 26
D. June 14

Correct answer: A. May 30
The order was issued on May 5 and called for the observance on May 30.

10. The national Decoration Day order followed the end of which war by about three years?

A. World War I
B. The War of 1812
C. The Spanish-American War
D. The U.S. Civil War

Correct answer: D. The U.S. Civil War
The Civil War ended in 1865. The national Decoration Day order followed in 1868.

11. Which town received federal recognition as the birthplace of Memorial Day in 1966?

A. Lexington, Massachusetts
B. Richmond, Virginia
C. Waterloo, New York
D. Baltimore, Maryland

Correct answer: C. Waterloo, New York
Congress recognized the Memorial Day tradition in Waterloo, New York, and President Lyndon B. Johnson issued a proclamation.

12. Who issued the 1868 Decoration Day order as commander of the Union veterans' organization?

A. Ulysses S. Grant
B. John A. Logan
C. William T. Sherman
D. Philip Sheridan

Correct answer: B. John A. Logan
John A. Logan was the national commander of the Grand Army of the Republic when he issued the May 5 order.

13. Which poet wrote an ode for Memorial Day in 1896 and was the son of a U.S. Colored Troops veteran?

A. Robert Frost
B. Walt Whitman
C. Edgar Allan Poe
D. Paul Laurence Dunbar

Correct answer: D. Paul Laurence Dunbar
Paul Laurence Dunbar wrote the ode in 1896. His father Joshua served in the U.S. Colored Troops during the Civil War.

14. The 1968 federal law moving Memorial Day to the last Monday of May took effect in what year?

A. 1971
B. 1966
C. 1969
D. 1976

Correct answer: A. 1971
Congress enacted the Uniform Monday Holiday Act in 1968. Its changes took effect in 1971.

15. Which sequence puts these Memorial Day milestones in chronological order?

A. Federal recognition of Waterloo, national Decoration Day order, Arlington Memorial Amphitheater dedication
B. Arlington Memorial Amphitheater dedication, national Decoration Day order, federal recognition of Waterloo
C. National Decoration Day order, Arlington Memorial Amphitheater dedication, federal recognition of Waterloo
D. National Decoration Day order, federal recognition of Waterloo, Arlington Memorial Amphitheater dedication

Correct answer: C. National Decoration Day order, Arlington Memorial Amphitheater dedication, federal recognition of Waterloo
The order was issued in 1868, the amphitheater was dedicated in 1920, and Waterloo received federal recognition in 1966.