

Territoire et mémoire

How can places tell different stories about the past?

Ce que tu vas savoir faire

Relier un lieu à des mémoires ; distinguer récit historique et commémoration ; comparer des points de vue.

Axe 2 · Territory and memory · Tronc commun · LVB B1 / LVA B2

1 Le cours / Key ideas

Lieux et traces

A territory is shaped by movement, settlement and conflict. Buildings, place names and monuments can preserve traces of these processes. A place does not explain itself: signs, guides, archives and personal accounts influence the story visitors hear.

Histoire et mémoires

History examines evidence and questions explanations. Collective memory selects and transmits experiences that matter to a group. Different memories may coexist or conflict. A memorial expresses a choice about what to honour; it is not a complete account of the past.

Interpréter sans effacer la complexité

Debates about monuments can concern visibility, responsibility and belonging. Possible responses include keeping a monument, adding context, moving it to a museum or creating another memorial. Explain what each option achieves and what it leaves unresolved instead of assuming there is one answer for every site.

2 Repères et exemples culturels

Ellis Island, New York Harbor

Ellis Island served as an immigration station from 1892 to 1954. Its history connects individual journeys with state procedures. It can be studied as a place of arrival, inspection and sometimes detention, rather than only a symbol of opportunity.

Le lieu et le récit familial

A family account of arrival and an official inspection record answer different questions. Comparing them can reveal hopes as well as institutional constraints. One testimony cannot represent every migrant's experience.

Les outils pour comprendre et s'exprimer

Territory and memory

3 Vocabulaire utile / Useful vocabulary

heritage : le patrimoine
a memorial : un monument commémoratif
a testimony : un témoignage
an archive : des archives / un fonds
a border : une frontière
settlement : installation / peuplement
to commemorate : commémorer
to preserve : préserver
to acknowledge : reconnaître
a contested legacy : un héritage contesté

4 Raconter et mettre en perspective

Prétérit pour un événement daté terminé : The station opened in 1892.

Present perfect pour un bilan relié au présent sans date passée révolue : The place has become a symbol. Évite has opened in 1892.

Voix passive : be au temps voulu + participe passé : The monument was built; the stories are displayed.

Le piège à éviter

Memory peut désigner le souvenir ou la mémoire ; a memorial est un monument. Attention à history (histoire comme discipline) et a story (un récit).

5 Méthode et exemple rédigé

Comparer deux documents : formule leur point commun, puis explique une différence de perspective avec un indice pour chacun. Conclut sur ce que leur rapprochement permet de comprendre.

Exemple original à analyser, pas à apprendre par cœur.

Both documents connect a place with migration, but they do not tell the same story. The official record focuses on procedures, whereas the personal account describes uncertainty and hope. This difference is linked to their purposes: an administration records information, while a witness explains an experience. Read together, they prevent us from reducing the site to either a welcoming gateway or a barrier. However, one account cannot represent everyone who passed through it. We should therefore compare several voices and consider whose experiences are missing. A place becomes meaningful through the evidence we preserve and the questions we ask.

À toi de jouer / Practice

Territoire et mémoire

6 Comprendre un texte

Support original écrit pour cette fiche. Situation fictive ; ce n'est pas un article de presse ni un témoignage authentique.

Read the text

In a fictional coastal town, students prepare a walking tour of an old passenger terminal. A plaque celebrates the ships that once left the harbour. In the local archive, the students also find letters from families who waited for relatives to return. One guide suggests focusing only on successful journeys because visitors enjoy hopeful stories. Another student argues that uncertainty belongs to the town's history too. The group creates two stops: one about the port's economic role, another about separation and reunion. They explain where each account comes from and leave some questions open. Their tour does not replace historical research, but it shows that the same building can connect public events with personal memories.

Réponds en anglais en reformulant. Appuie tes réponses sur le texte.

1. What difference is there between the plaque and the letters?
2. Why does the group create two stops?
3. How does the group make its account more reliable?

7 S'entraîner à la langue

1. Choisis : The station opened / has opened in 1892.
2. Mets au passif : The students preserved the letters.
3. Complète avec le present perfect : The building ____ (become) a symbol of migration.

8 Écrire, parler et échanger

Writing. Write 120-150 words to a museum: explain why a display about migration should include personal testimonies as well as official records.

Speaking / interaction. Décris un lieu de mémoire étudié en classe : un fait établi, deux points de vue, une question. Ne transforme pas une interprétation en fait.

Deux niveaux pour progresser

LVB / B1 : vise des idées claires, des phrases reliées et un exemple précis.

LVA / B2 : ajoute une objection, une nuance et des structures variées. Les longueurs et durées proposées sont des entraînements, pas un format officiel d'épreuve.

Corrigés expliqués / Answer key

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9 Compréhension : éléments attendus

1. The plaque celebrates departures and ships; the letters convey families' uncertainty while waiting for relatives.
2. To include both economic history and the personal experience of separation and reunion.
3. It identifies the origin of each account and acknowledges unanswered questions rather than inventing certainty.

10 Langue : réponses et explications

1. The station opened in 1892. Date terminée : prétérit.
2. The letters were preserved by the students.
3. The building has become a symbol of migration.

11 Production écrite : une réponse possible

D'autres réponses sont valables si elles respectent le sujet et sont argumentées. Le modèle ci-dessous illustre un objectif B2.

Dear museum team, I would like to suggest including personal testimonies in your display about migration. Official records are essential because they provide evidence about dates, journeys and procedures. Yet they rarely explain what leaving home felt like. Letters or recorded memories could help visitors understand fear, hope and separation. These accounts should be presented with their context: one person's memory may be incomplete and cannot represent every journey. Comparing different voices with archival material would make the display both moving and informative. I would also explain why some experiences are difficult to document. The aim should not be to create a single heroic story, but to help visitors understand how public decisions affected individual lives. Yours faithfully, A student visitor.

Auto-évaluation avant de refermer la fiche

Je sais expliquer l'axe sans lire le cours ; citer un exemple contextualisé ; employer cinq mots nouveaux ; appliquer le point de langue ; répondre avec une idée, une preuve et une nuance. À l'oral, je parle intelligiblement et je peux réagir à une question.

Références : Programme officiel d'anglais, BO du 29 mai 2025, annexe 4 (application en terminale : rentrée 2026).

Repère culturel : National Park Service - History of Ellis Island. Vérification : 20 octobre 2026. Synthèses, supports et exercices originaux.