

Symbols Here, Symbols There, Symbols Everywhere

Social Studies

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Grade Level	1st – Kindergarten Grade
Subject	Social Studies
Course	U.S. History

Essential Question

Why are symbols important?

Summary

In this lesson, students will learn about symbols that represent the United States, explain their importance, and demonstrate appropriate behavior when they recite the Pledge of Allegiance and when The Star-Spangled Banner is played.

Snapshot

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Grade 1)

1.1.3: Explain patriotic traditions including The Pledge of Allegiance, describe appropriate flag etiquette and proper behavior during the playing of The Star-Spangled Banner.
1.1.4: Identify important symbols of the United States including the Bald Eagle and the Liberty Bell,and explain their meanings.

Attachments

- Lesson-Slides-Symbols-Here-Symbols-There-Symbols-Everywhere.pptx
- Symbols-of-the-United-States-Symbols-Here-Symbols-There-Symbols-Everywhere.pdf

Materials

Lesson Snapshot

Engage

Students listen to The Star-Spangled Banner and reflect on what a symbol is.

Explore

Students participate in an interactive activity to explore various symbols of the United States.

Explain

Students learn the meaning of various U.S. symbols.

Extend

Students participate in a game of Vocabulary Charades and come up with movements to help them remember the meaning of each U.S. symbol.

Evaluate

Students create symbols for their own community based on what is most important to them.

Materials List

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Symbols of the United States handout (attached, one per student)
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- Sticky notes
- Popsicle sticks (five per student)
- Glue
- Chart paper

90 minutes

Engage

Teacher's Note: Lesson Prep

Prior to the lesson, set aside a sheet of chart paper that includes the lesson title and the definitions of *Symbol* and *U.S. Symbol*, which are provided in the Explain section.

Prepare labels and pictures for each of the following symbols to make the discussion in the Explain activity flow more smoothly.

- The Statue of Liberty
- The White House
- The Liberty Bell
- Bald eagle
- U.S. flag

Display **slide 2**. Define the word *symbol*. Explain to students that in this lesson they will learn about some important symbols related to the United States.

Display **slide 3** and share the lesson's essential question: Why are symbols important?

Display **slide 4** and share the lesson objectives.

Using chart paper, create a KWL Graphic Organizer. Have students volunteer what they know about symbols. Record their responses in the *K* column. Next, ask students what they want to know about symbols and record those responses in the *W* column.

Inform students that you will be revisiting the KWL Graphic Organizer at the end of the lesson. At that time, they will fill in the *L* column with information that they have learned.

Teacher's Note: Differentiation

If you prefer, students can fill out the graphic organizer independently or in small groups before discussing with the whole class.

For older or more advanced students, consider creating a KWHL Graphic Organizer. In the H column, list students' ideas of how they might find out the information they wanted to know about symbols.

Display **slide 5**. Play the U.S. national anthem, The Star-Spangled Banner, and then ask students about the song they just heard.

Embedded video
https://youtube.com/watch?v=_QTOZGP-rr0

- Do they know what the song symbolizes?
- Why is it important?
- How do people show respect when the Star-Spangled Banner is played?

45 minutes

Explore

Display **slide 7** and pass out copies of the **Symbols of the United States** handout and five popsicle sticks to each student. Make sure students also have access to glue and markers, crayons, or colored pencils. Have students color the images, cut them out, and then glue each one to a stick. Tell students that they will be using these images in the next activity.



Student Activity

Teacher's Note: Timing

Consider having students color, cut, and glue these symbols during a time earlier in the day to allow for a smoother transition into the next activity.

Once students have finished working, share the statements below with them one at a time. After each statement, ask them to hold up the symbol that they think is being described. Feel free to share other statements that you come up with as well.

- Cracked and no longer rings
- Strong bird
- Has 50 stars for the 50 states
- Has a lot of rooms
- Is in New York Harbor
- Rang when leaders made laws
- Stands for freedom
- The president lives here
- Picture on U.S. currency (money)
- Has 13 stripes for the 13 colonies

45 minutes

Explain

Display **slide 8**. Share the definition of a symbol: An object that represents something.

Have students repeat the definition aloud and then turn to the person sitting next to them. Ask pairs to take turns sharing the definition in their own words.

Teacher's Note: Repetition

Having students verbalize the definition to themselves and then explain it to a partner provides an opportunity for repetition. Repetition helps ensure that students remember the meaning later.

Display **slide 9**. Share the definition of a U.S. symbol: An object that represents the United States.

Have students repeat the definition aloud and then turn to the person sitting next to them. Ask pairs to take turns sharing the definition in their own words.

Create a class Anchor Chart using the symbols that you introduced in the Explore activity:

- The Statue of Liberty
- The White House
- The Liberty Bell
- Bald eagle
- U.S. flag

Ask students to share what they remember about U.S. symbols from the Explore activity, and then transition into the next activity, where students will learn more about each symbol.

Go through the symbols on **slides 10-14** one at a time. For each symbol, share information from a book of your choosing from your school library, or read the passage from Ben's Guide to the U.S. Government linked in the list below. Depending on the preferences and reading level of students in your class, you might read aloud to the whole class or have students read in small groups. After reading the passage, ask students to volunteer any information they might have about the symbol.

Teacher's Note: Timing

We recommend that you choose one symbol to focus on each day for five days.

1. Display **slide 10** and discuss the Statue of Liberty. Share the Statue of Liberty reading from Ben's Guide to the U.S. Government or another reading of your choice. After students have shared any information they know about the Statue of Liberty, share some of its history. The statue is made of copper and was presented to the people of the United States by France in 1886 as a symbol of freedom to millions of people around the world.
2. Display **slide 11** and discuss the White House. Share the White House reading from Ben's Guide to the U.S. Government or another reading of your choice. Once students have shared any information they know about the White House, explain its importance. The White House is the official home of the president of the United States. It symbolizes democracy and human rights.
3. Display **slide 12** and discuss the Liberty Bell. Share the Liberty Bell page from Ben's Guide to the U.S. Government or another reading of your choice. Once students have shared any information they know about the Liberty Bell, share with them its history. The Liberty Bell was made in 1752 and remains in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania near Independence Hall. It symbolizes independence.
4. Display **slide 13** and discuss the bald eagle. Share the Bald Eagle page from Ben's Guide to the U.S. Government or another reading of your choice. Once students have shared any information they know about the bald eagle, share with them its symbolic importance. The eagle is a bird of prey found in North America. It represents freedom and all that freedom stands for. The eagle also represents honor, respect, and dignity.
5. Display **slide 14** and discuss the U.S. flag. Share the American Flag page from Ben's Guide to the U.S. Government or another reading of your choice. Once students have shared any information they know about the flag, share with them its symbolic importance. Explain the meaning of its colors and symbols. White symbolizes purity and innocence, red symbolizes hardiness and bravery, and blue symbolizes vigilance, perseverance, and justice. Explain that the flag's stars and stripes represent the 50 states and the 13 original colonies.

45 minutes

Extend

Display **slide 15**. Divide the class into groups of three for a game of Vocabulary Charades. Go over the two steps to follow for the Charades performances. The first step is to talk about the meaning of the symbol. The second is to create actions or movements that illustrate the symbol.

Display **slide 16** to share the first symbol. Give students a few minutes to work together to prepare before having each group share their charade with the whole class. Point students to the Anchor Chart as they brainstorm to help them think about the most important information and narrow their scope. Once all groups have shared, ask someone from each group to explain how they came up with their movement. Repeat this process with the remaining symbols on **slides 17-20**.

Teacher's Note: Differentiation

If time is limited or if you would like classmates to guess each other's charades, assign each group one of the five different symbols or have groups choose their favorite.

After completing the charades presentations, direct students' attention to the KWL Graphic Organizer that you created earlier. Ask students to explain the importance of each symbol and any new knowledge they have gained as a note in the *L* column.

Teacher's Note: Differentiation

Based on students' independent writing skill level, instead of having them share their responses verbally, consider asking them to write their responses on sticky notes and apply them to the chart. You could also provide them with a sentence frame that they can fill in, such as, "The _____ is important to the United States because____."

45 minutes

Evaluate

Teacher's Note: Revisiting the Popsicle Symbols

To prepare for the Evaluate activity, add some of the symbol descriptions that students generated during the lesson to the list of statements below.

Display **slide 21**. Have students retrieve their popsicle symbols. Using new information gained through the lesson's readings and the Anchor Chart, students will respond to the original statements from the Explore activity, as well as the new statements you have added. Read the statements below one at a time and ask students hold up the correct symbol for each one.

- Cracked and no longer rings
- Strong bird
- Has 50 stars for the 50 states
- Has a lot of rooms
- Is in New York Harbor
- Rang when leaders made laws
- Stands for freedom
- The president lives here
- Picture on U.S. currency (money)
- Has 13 stripes for the 13 colonies

To wrap up the lesson, display **slide 22** and say, *"Remember at the beginning when we watched The Star-Spangled Banner? Let's wrap up with the Pledge of Allegiance!"* Consider sharing the Pledge of Allegiance page from Ben's Guide to the US Government. Discuss etiquette for saying the Pledge (standing, hand over heart, etc.) and end with a whole-class recitation.

Resources

- Government Publishing Office. (n.d.). Ben's guide to the U.S. government. https://bensguide.gpo.gov/
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Anchor chart. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/64f2b35101a470dda36d44421900af08
- K20 Center. (n.d.). KWHL chart. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f505dd47
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Vocabulary charades. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/b30762a7557ba0b391f207f4c600f1f0
- Musicplay. (2010, September 27) Star Spangled Banner with lyrics, vocals, and beautiful photos [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vPKp29Luryc