

SYMBOLS OF FREEDOM

Grade Level: First Grade

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Length of Unit: 10 days

I. ABSTRACT

This unit introduces students to the symbols of the United States and teaches them the significance of each symbol—the Liberty Bell, the American flag and the bald eagle, as well as the current United States president. It utilizes the visual, auditory and kinesthetic activities to teach about each of the symbol's characteristics as well as to its significance in American history. Students will not only be able to recognize each symbol; they will learn how and why they are symbols of the United States.

II. OVERVIEW

1. Concept Objectives
 - a. Students will develop an awareness of patriotic symbols associated with the United States. (e.g., the flag, the bald eagle, and monuments)
 - b. Students will develop an awareness of the qualifications of a US president and the current president.
 - c. Students will learn the characteristics of each symbol and understand its significance to American history.
- B. Content from the *Core Knowledge Sequence*:
 1. Recognize and become familiar with the significance of the Liberty Bell, the current United States president, the American flag and the eagle (pg.29-30).
 2. Legend of Betsy Ross and the flag (pg. 30).
 3. Compare objects according to linear measure by measuring length in inches, feet, and centimeters (page 36).
- C. Skill Objectives
 1. Students will use estimation and addition to determine how many stars and how many stripes are on the flag.
 2. Student will increase their vocabulary by reading a variety of books about the American symbols.
 3. Students will describe the American symbols using grade-level vocabulary.
 4. Students will read, conduct research, write, and organize information on the American symbols.
 5. Students will compare objects according to linear measure by measuring length in inches, feet, and centimeters.

III. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

- A. For Teachers:
 1. U. S. History. *Betsy Ross and the flag*. Available URL, <http://www.ushistory.org/betsy/flagstar.html>.
 2. Miller, Natalie. *The Story of the Liberty Bell*. Chicago: Children's Press, 1965.
 3. Wilson, Jon. *The American Eagle*. The Children's World, Inc., 1999. 1-56766-545-4.
- B. For Students:
 1. Symbols and figures from the Kindergarten *Core Knowledge Sequence*
 2. The story from the American Revolution of how America went from separate colonies to an independent nation

IV. RESOURCES

- A. Brown, Marc. *Arthur Meets the President*. New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1991. 1-590-99441-7
- B. Fraden, Dennis B. *The Flag of the United States*. Chicago: Children's Press, 1988. 0-516-01158-8.
- C. Hirsch, Jr., E. D. *What Every First Grader Needs to Know*. New York: Doubleday, 1996. 0-385-31987-8.
- D. Johnson, Linda Carlson. *Our National Symbols*. Connecticut: Millbrook Press, 1992. 1-56294-108-9.
- E. Leeson, Tom & Leeson, Pat. *The American Eagle*. Oregon: Beyond Words Publishing, 1988. 0-941831-30-2.
- F. Miller, Natalie. *The Story of the Liberty Bell*. Chicago: Children's Press, 1965.
- G. Quiri, Patricia Ryon. *The American Flag*. New York: Children's Press, 1998. 0-516-20617-6.
- H. Spencer, Eve. *A Flag for Our Country*. Texas: Raintree Steck-Vaughn Publishers, 1993. 0-8114-8051-8.
- I. Swanson, June. *I Pledge Allegiance*. Minneapolis: Carolrhoda Books, 1990. 0-87614-393-1
- J. U. S. Flag. *American Bald Eagle*. Available URL: <http://www.icss.com/usflag/baldeagle.html>.
- K. U. S. History. *Betsy Ross and the flag*. Available URL: <http://www.ushistory.org/betsy/flagstar.html>.
- L. *United States Flag*. Pennsylvania: Schlessinger Video Production, 1996. (25 minutes).
- M. *United States Symbols*. California: 100% Educational Videos, 1998. 1-58541-064-0
- N. Wilson, Jon. *The American Eagle*. The Children's World, Inc., 1999. 1-56766-545-4.

V. LESSONS

Lesson One: The Liberty Bell

Day One and Day Two

- A. *Daily Objectives*
 - 1. Concept Objectives
 - a. Students will develop an awareness of patriotic symbols associated with the United States. (e.g., the flag, the bald eagle, and monuments)
 - b. Students will learn the characteristics of each symbol and understand its significance to American history.
 - 2. Lesson Content
 - a. Recognize and become familiar with the significance of the Liberty Bell.
 - 3. Skill Objectives
 - a. Students will increase their vocabulary by reading a variety of books about the American symbols.
 - b. Students will describe the American symbols using appropriate grade-level vocabulary.
 - c. Students will read, conduct research, write, and organize information on the American symbols.
- B. *Materials*
 - 1. *Our National Symbols* by Linda C. Johnson
 - 2. *The Story of the Liberty Bell* by Natalie Miller
 - 3. Pencils
 - 4. Writing paper
 - 5. Aluminum foil
 - 6. One pre-cut clear plastic cup for each student
 - 7. Glue
 - 8. Yellow or silver 12mm bell for each student
 - 9. Chenille stem for each student

C. *Key Vocabulary*

1. Freedom-free from the power of England
2. Liberty-release from the power of England

D. *Procedures/Activities*

DAY ONE

1. Read pages 7-10 of the book *Our National Symbols* to give a brief overview of our nation prior to the Liberty Bell becoming a U. S. symbol. Discuss briefly so that the students understand.
2. Read the book *The Story of the Liberty Bell*. Referring to page 25, the picture of the Liberty Bell, ask the students the meaning of liberty. Ask them what are some of the freedoms they enjoy. How would they feel if one or more of their liberties were taken away? Allow some of the students to share orally.
3. Students will write a three-sentence paragraph about one liberty that they enjoy. The first sentence will state the liberty that they enjoy. The second sentence will be about why they enjoy that particular freedom. The concluding sentence will state how they would feel if it was taken away. The students may want to share their paragraph with the other students.

DAY TWO

4. Review what the students know about the Liberty Bell and its significance to U. S. history.
5. Students will make their own Liberty Bell. Prior to class, cut a slit in each cup and a hole in the center of the bottom.
6. Pass out the cup, the bell, and the chenille stem. The students will follow directions as the teacher demonstrates. Place the stem through the bell. Slide the bell to the center of stem and place both ends through the hole in the bottom of the cup. Twist to secure and make a small loop so that it will hang. Give students a piece of foil large enough to wrap their cup. Glue to the cup. Leave the “crack” in the bell by folding the foil to the inside along the slit. The students may want to write “Proclaim Liberty” on their bell.

E. *Evaluation/Assessment*

1. The teacher will read the paragraphs and evaluate the sentence structure, capitalization, and punctuation and whether the student answers the questions.
2. Students will evaluate each other on their Liberty Bell and their understanding of liberty.

Lesson Two: The American Flag

Day Three, Four and Five

1. Concept Objectives
 - a. Students will develop an awareness of patriotic symbols associated with the United States. (e.g., the flag, the bald eagle, and monuments)
 - b. Students will learn the characteristics of each symbol and understand its significance to American history.
2. Lesson Content
 - a. Recognize and become familiar with the significance of the Liberty Bell, the current United States president, the American flag and the eagle (pg.29-30).
 - b. Legend of Betsy Ross and the flag (pg. 30).
3. Skill Objectives
 - a. Students will use estimation and addition to determine how many stars and how many stripes are on the flag.
 - b. Students will describe the American symbols using grade-level vocabulary.
 - c. Students will read, conduct research, write, and organize information on the American symbols.

B. *Materials*

1. *U. S. Flag* video
2. Teacher made cotton ball flag on bulletin board
3. Post-it notes
4. White paper 8 1/2" x 10"
5. Red and white tissue paper cut into approximately 1" squares
6. New #2 pencil for each student
7. Glue
8. Crayons
9. Drawing of a flag about 7" x 10"
10. Directions from <http://ushistory.org/betsy/flagstar.html>

C. *Key Vocabulary*

1. Continental colors-red, white, and blue
2. Stars & Stripes-the flag of the United States having 13 alternate red and white horizontal and a blue union with white stars representing the states
3. Old Glory-the flag of the United States
4. Flag-rectangular piece of fabric of distinctive design used as a symbol (as of a nation)
5. Estimation-opinion of the value
6. Independence-no longer under the control of England

D. *Procedures/Activities*

DAY THREE

1. Show the *U. S. Flag* video. Discuss why we have the flag as a symbol other than we pledge our allegiance to it during the morning announcements.
2. Count together the number of red stripes, the number of white stripes and the number of stars. Ask the students what they think each of them represent.
3. Using the cotton ball flag, direct the students to estimate how many balls are on this representation of our flag. Place each person's guess on a post-it note and place on bulletin board. Count cotton balls together to find winner. Give a prize for the winner.

DAY FOUR

4. Read *A Flag for Our Country* by Eve Spencer. Review facts about our flag. Using directions from <http://ushistory.org/betsy/flagstar.html>, guide the students to cut a 5-pointed star like the one Betsy Ross cut for George Washington. You may want to make a bulletin board flag using these stars.

DAY FIVE

5. Students will make their own representation of the American flag using tissue paper.
6. Direct the students to cut out the flag and color the field behind the stars with a blue crayon.
7. Placing the eraser end of a new pencil in the center of a tissue paper square, twist around the eraser. Placing a dot of glue on the spot along each stripe of their flag. They will cover all the red stripes with red paper squares and the white stripes with white. These can be displayed with the title "You're a Grand Old Flag".

E. *Evaluation/Assessment*

1. Students will have the correct number of red stripes and white stripes and in the correct order on their tissue paper flag.

Lesson Three: The Bald Eagle

Day Six and Day Seven

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objectives
 - a. Students will develop an awareness of patriotic symbols associated with the United States. (e.g., the flag, the bald eagle, and monuments)

- b. Students will learn the characteristics of each symbol and understand its significance to American history.
- 2. Content from the *Core Knowledge Sequence*:
 - a. Recognize and become familiar with the significance of the Liberty Bell, the current United States Compare objects according to linear measure by measuring length in inches, feet, and centimeters (page 36).
- 3. Skill Objectives
 - a. Student will increase their vocabulary by reading a variety of books about the American symbols.
 - b. Students will describe the American symbols using grade level vocabulary.
 - c. Students will compare objects according to linear measure by measuring length in inches, feet, and centimeters.
- B. *Materials*
 - 1. Yardsticks or measuring tapes
 - 2. Masking tape
 - 3. White, yellow and brown construction paper
 - 4. Appendix A (the teacher may prefer to cut patterns from oak tag prior to this activity)
 - 5. *The American Eagle* by Jon Wilson
 - 6. *The American Eagle* by Tom and Pat Leeson
 - 7. Scissors
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
 - 1. Bald-having no hair or the appearance of having no hair
- D. *Procedures/Activities*

DAY SIX AND SEVEN

- 1. Read the book *The American Eagle* by Jon Wilson to the class. Show some of the pictures in the book *The American Eagle* by Tom and Pat Leeson. Ask them to tell the similarities and differences in eagles and other birds. Ask them to make predictions about things that they think might weigh as much as the eagle's parts mentioned in the book. Procedure numbers 2 and 3 can be centers. Half the class does #2 while the other half of the class does #3.
- 2. (Prior to this activity, the teacher should have marked with masking tape on the floor, the measurement of the male head to tail, his wingspan, the female wingspan, and the eagle's nest). Using their measuring tools, the students will measure and record the measurement of the head, wingspan and nest size.
- 3. The students will make an eagle. Pass out the patterns for the eagle and the correct colors of paper so that the students can trace around their patterns. Direct them to cut out the pieces. Fold the small squares of brown to make triangles. Beginning at the bottom of the triangle, start gluing the small brown triangles onto the large one with the points down. Place one on the first row, place three on the next row up, then five, etc. Glue on the feathers, head, feet, and beak. The students will have made their own bald eagle.
- E. *Evaluation/Assessment*
 - 1. The students will record their measurements of the head, wingspan and the nest size of the bald eagle.
 - 2. Students will complete their eagle as instructed.

Lesson Four: The United States President

Day Eight and Day Nine

- A. *Daily Objectives*
 - 1. Concept Objectives
 - a. Students will develop an awareness of the qualifications of a US president and

- the current president.
- 2. Content from the *Core Knowledge Sequence*:
 - a. Recognize and become familiar with the significance of the Liberty Bell, the current United States president, the American flag and the eagle (pg.29-30).
- 3. Skill Objectives
 - a. Student will increase their vocabulary by reading a variety of books about the American symbols.
 - b. Students will read, conduct research, write, and organize information on the American symbols.
- B. *Materials*
 - 1. United States map
 - 2. Pencils
 - 3. Writing paper
 - 4. Crayons
 - 5. *Arthur Meets the President* by Marc Brown
 - 6. List of qualifications for the United States President
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
 - 1. Qualifications-skills that fit a person for an official office
 - 2. President- a person elected to a four year term to be the head of the country
- D. *Procedures/Activities*

DAY EIGHT AND NINE

 - 1. Read *Arthur Meets the President* by Marc Brown. Ask the students if they know whom our current U. S. President's name and where he lives. Write the president's name on the chalkboard and display a picture of him if available. Locate Washington, D.C. on a United States map. Ask the students to draw a picture of the United States president. Ask the children to write his name under his picture. If mats are not available, it is possible to cut construction paper to resemble a mat.
 - 2. Ask the students what qualifications a person must have in order to be elected to be the president of the United States. Read the qualifications for a person to become president of the United States. Discuss.
 - 3. Ask them to brainstorm what they would do to change our country if they were president. What would they have to do in order to accomplish these changes? Have the students use lined paper and pencil to write a letter to the president of the United States. They may want to just say hello, or they may want to suggest to him some of the changes they would like to see. Collect the letters and mail them to the president of the United States.
- E. *Evaluation/Assessment*
 - 1. Ask each student to state the name of the current United States President and what the qualifications for president are.

VI. CULMINATING ACTIVITY

- A. Using magazines and newspapers, students will cut out pictures of the symbols of the United States and words and numbers that describe the symbols that they have learned. The students may wish to make individual collages showing what they have learned or they may wish to make a class collage.
- B. Using Appendix B, students will complete the American Symbols Word Search.

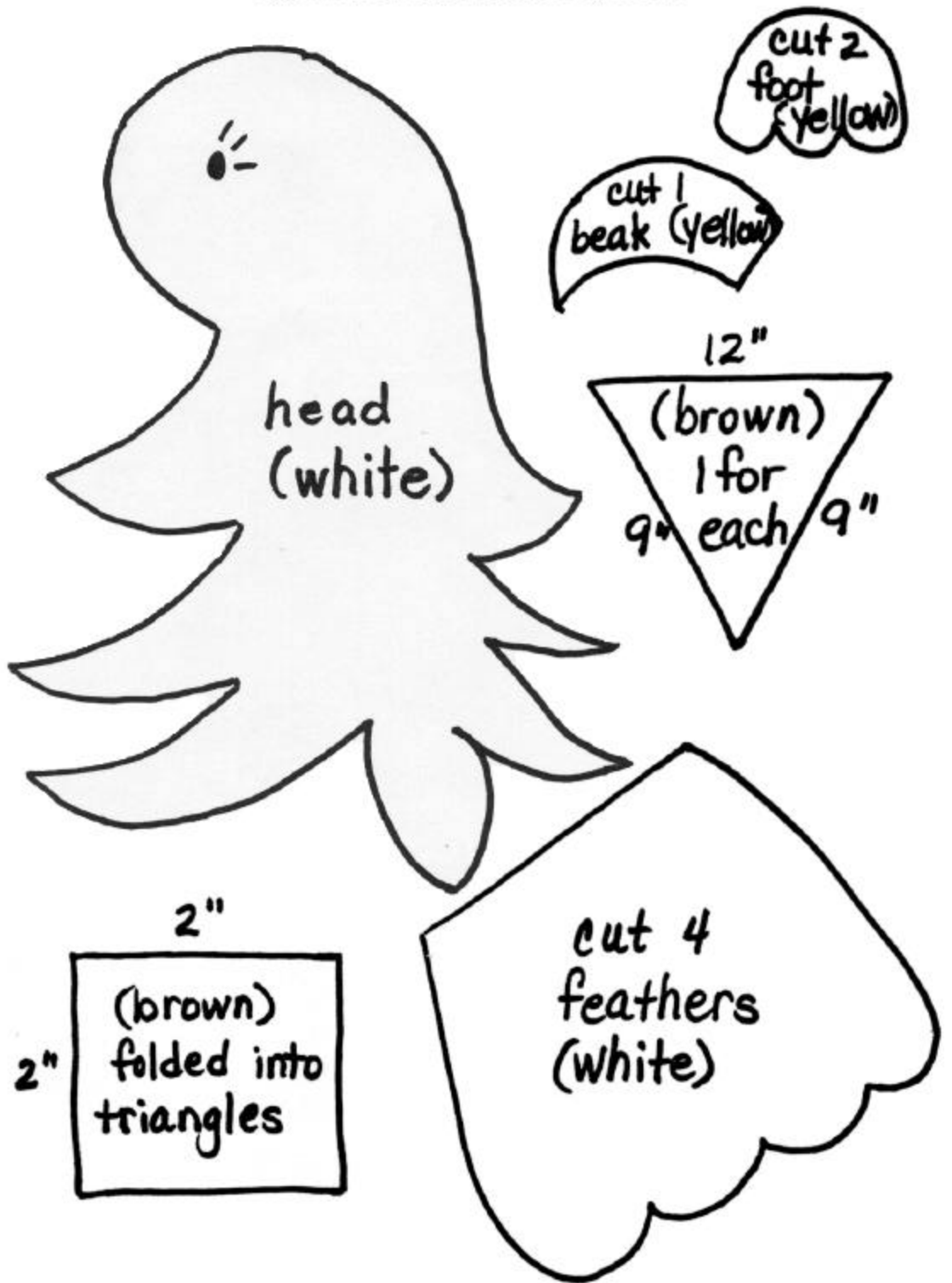
VII. HANDOUTS/STUDENT WORKSHEETS

- A. Symbols of Freedom Eagle Pattern
- B. Symbols of Freedom Word Search

VIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- A. Brown, Marc. *Arthur Meets the President*. New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1991. 0-590-99441-7.
- B. Fraden, Dennis B. *The Flag of the United States*. Chicago: Children's Press, 1988. 0-516-01158-8.
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- L. *United States Flag*. Pennsylvania: Schlessinger Video Production, 1996. (25 minutes).
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- N. Wilson, Jon. *The American Eagle*. The Children's World, Inc., 1999. 1-56766-545-4.

Appendix A-Symbols of Freedom Eagle Pattern



Appendix B-Symbols of Freedom Word Search

SYMBOLS OF FREEDOM

B L I B R E S I D T
H G N L L A Z P J N
O U D U Q W H I T E
F R E E D O M S G D
M E P R E A G T E I
S S E O R U T A L S
T I N B H S J R C E
R O D K E F S S V R
I E E Q U L X B Q P
P T N M W A L F G K
E T C A V G Q K H Y
S L E A G L E F Y O

U. S. FLAG STARS EAGLE RED BELL
INDEPENDENCE STRIPES BLUE
WHITE FREEDOM PRESIDENT