

## TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY PROJECT

### *American Symbols from Heather Fitzgerald*

Grade – 6th

Length of class period – 50 minutes

Inquiry – (What essential question are students answering, what problem are they solving, or what decision are they making?)

How have the symbols that stand for America changed during times of war and times of peace?  
Is this a deliberate way to convey a message to other countries about the way that we wish to be perceived?

Objectives (What content and skills do you expect students to learn from this lesson?)

- Identify different symbols that America has used in flags and pictures over the course of history to convey itself.
- Discuss how American Symbols have changed during times of war and times of Peace (e.g. the symbol of the Snake during the revolutionary war, the symbol of the Bald Eagle)
- Discuss and analyze how these symbols may have been used to convey a message to other countries or our perceived enemies.
- To analyze symbols cooperatively in small groups using a Symbols Analysis Worksheet.

Materials (What primary sources or local resources are the basis for this lesson?) – (please attach)

- Revolutionary Flag Images (attached)
- Images of American Symbols (attached)
- Symbols Analysis Worksheet (attached)

Activities (What will you and your students do during the lesson to promote learning?)

1. The launching section of the lesson will start by an open discussion about the types of symbols that we think of when we think of the United States. Some students might mention the Bald Eagle, apple pie, baseball, etc.
2. After we have generated a class list of symbols, we will view overheads of the Revolutionary Flag Images, and images of the American Symbols
3. We will break into small groups and discuss how the symbols vary (from Snakes to Eagles) and answer questions using our Symbol Analysis Worksheet.
4. The class will end with a discussion of their findings

5. For an extension activity students will be asked to find a United States symbol not discussed in class for homework using the Symbol Analysis Worksheet.
6. For an extended extension activity students will be asked to find a United States symbol used during our War with Iraq. Students will be directed to look at Recruitment posters and military commercials. How do those symbols vary from the symbols that we have already discussed? How does the United States wish to be perceived by the world since September 11?

How will you assess what student learned during this lesson?

Students will be assessed through class discussions, small group participation, and Symbol Analysis worksheet. They will also be assessed on their extension activity homework assignments.

Connecticut Framework Performance Standards –

- formulate historical questions based on primary and secondary sources, including documents, eyewitness accounts, letters and diaries, artifacts, real or simulated historical sites, charts, graphs, diagrams and written texts;
- interpret data in historical maps, photographs, art works and other artifacts;
- analyze data in order to see persons and events in their historical context, understand causal factors, and appreciate change over time;
  
- demonstrate an in-depth understanding of selected events representing major trends of world history (e.g. emergence of new centers of agrarian society in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> millennia BCE, the Black Death, the Columbian voyages, the French Revolution, World War II):