

Learning Objectives

- 1) Understand that a symbol is anything that stands for something else. A symbol can represent things that are too large to carry around, like a highway, or a symbol can represent things that are abstract.
- 2) Realize that nations have symbols that represent their beliefs, values, and ideas.
- 3) Know and understand four of the symbols that represent the United States.
 - a) The “Stars and Stripes,” is the official flag of the United States. The flag symbolizes that the republic is one nation composed of many states. It also symbolizes the people and the government of the country. The flag contains thirteen stripes and fifty stars. Each stripe represents one of the original thirteen colonies, which became the nation’s first states. Every star represents a state; since fifty states exist, there are fifty stars present on the flag. The colors on the flag also have an important meaning. The red on the flag represents valor and the white symbolizes cleanliness of living and proper conduct.
 - b) The liberty bell is an important symbol that represents the nation’s independence from England and freedom of the country’s people. It was originally ordered for the city of Philadelphia to celebrate the colonist’s religious freedom. In fact, inscribed on the bell are the words, “Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof.” The bell was rung on July 8, 1776 to summon those in Philadelphia to hear the first reading of the Declaration of Independence. From then on, the liberty bell was rung to proclaim that citizens of the United States were free. When the bell was cast, it developed a crack; as time went on, the crack became larger. Today, it is not safe to ring the

bell, but it is still an important symbol to the people of the United States.

- c) The Statue of Liberty symbolizes many important ideas and values. It is a symbol of friendship because France gave the statue to the United States as a gift of friendship to celebrate the 100-year anniversary of the founding of our nation. It is a symbol of hope, because it was one of the first things immigrants, who were looking for a better life, saw when they arrived in the United States. The statue is also a symbol of liberty for the people of America. The statue is truly awe-inspiring; it is 305 feet tall and towers over New York harbor.
- d) The bald eagle has been a very important symbol of the United States for over 200 years. The bald eagle is a representation of strength and freedom; it can survive through adversity, and it flies without restriction in parts of North America. The symbol of a bald eagle connotes that the United States is a powerful country that protects the freedoms of its citizens.

Suggested Activities

- 1) Before viewing the video
 - a) Have a discussion with the class about symbols. Brainstorm symbols that the class can identify (e.g. railroad crossing signs, logos, etc.). Show students examples of actual U.S. symbols (flag, eagle, Statue of Liberty, and Liberty Bell). Have students hypothesize why these symbols are important to the nation.
- 2) After viewing the video
 - a) As a whole group, discuss what was learned about each symbol from the video. Record on chart paper for future reference.

- b) Randomly divide students into four groups—one for each symbol. Have the students discuss important facts about their symbol. Have one student in each group record their ideas. Each group must decide how to creatively present their symbol to the class (e.g. skit, song, poster, poem, etc.). Allow the class time to prepare and then to present the symbols.
- c) Give each student a piece of paper to fold into quarters. Cut on the folds to make four pieces of paper. On each paper, draw one of the symbols and write a fact about that symbol. Create a cover using a half sheet of construction paper. Be sure to include a title and author.
- d) Display books on a bulletin board or have students store books in their book boxes for future reading.

Vocabulary

Liberty — The condition of being free and independent

Republic — A form of government in which the people vote for others to represent them

Symbol — Something that stands for something else.

Valor — personal bravery

