



EXPLORING EMBLEMS

SUBJECTS: Language Arts, Art, and Social Studies

GRADES: 4-5

KERA GOALS: Meets KERA goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6

ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS: Make sense of various messages to which they listen; organize information and use of classification rules and systems; write using appropriate forms, for different audiences and purposes; make sense of and communicate ideas with visual arts; observe, analyze, and interpret human behaviors, social groupings and institutions; understand, analyze, and interpret historical events; create works of art and make presentations; analyze their own and others' artistic products; show skills to become self-sufficient individuals; show abilities to become responsible members of a family, work group, or community; use creative thinking skills to develop ideas or products; connect knowledge and experiences from different subject areas; and use what they already know to acquire new knowledge, skills, or interpret experiences.

DURATION: One class period of 40 to 50 minutes

GROUP SIZE: One or two classes of 10-60 students

SETTING: Indoors or outside with clipboards

KEY VOCABULARY: emblem, symbol, represent, National Park Service

ANTICIPATORY SET: An emblem is something unique that identifies an organization or group of people. We have looked at the United States map and some of the National Parks found in different areas of our country (refer to Plotting Protected Places). Does anyone know the emblem that represents the National Park Service?

OBJECTIVES: The students will be able to: 1) identify what specific symbols were selected for the National Park Service arrowhead; 2) select symbols to create an emblem that best represents them.

MATERIALS:

- ◆ Overhead projector
- ◆ Emblem sheets transferred to overhead transparencies
- ◆ Small paper plates or another comparable shape
- ◆ Crayons
- ◆ Markers
- ◆ Pencils

BACKGROUND: The National Park Service emblem is found on the left sleeve of every park ranger and on many signs and buildings found in national parks. The arrowhead was authorized as the official National Park Service emblem by the Secretary of the Interior on July 20, 1951. The elements found on the patch symbolize the major facets of the National Park system, or as former director Connie Worth put it, "what the parks were all about." The sequoia tree and the bison represent vegetation and wildlife, the mountains and water represent scenic and recreational values, and the arrowhead represents historical and archeological values.

Emblems or symbols are selected because they represent something that is characteristic of a group. You may wish to research your school emblem and the reason it was selected. Many symbols include wildlife, because of the "message" animals depict. A "fierce" lion, a "wise" owl, or a "proud" eagle are ways we view some animals.



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PROCEDURE:

1. The class works with the teacher to identify the arrowhead as a symbol of the National Park Service. The teacher places the transparency of this symbol on the screen.
2. The class looks at the picture and names the symbols found on the arrowhead. The teacher reminds the students that these are symbols that have been selected to represent certain things in **all** National Park Service areas. The teacher asks the students what each symbol represents. The sequoia tree represents vegetation. Remember not all parks have trees, some have cactus, or prairie grasses. The bison represents wildlife, including bison, deer, rabbits, prairie dogs, gila monsters, turtles, big horn sheep, bears, and many more. The mountains and water represent scenic values (landforms, vistas, canyons, etc.) and recreational values for visitor enjoyment. The arrowhead represents historical and archeological values (people and our growth as a nation).
3. The class discusses why the bison was selected instead of a white-tail deer. Or why the sequoia was selected instead of an oak. The teacher can remind the students of **National** in National Park Service. Symbols that were impressive or significant to the nation were selected. Bison once roamed most of North America. It was a large animal that symbolized the wildness of the American west, thus it was selected to represent wilderness associated with National Parks. The sequoia was believed to be the oldest living thing until the mid-1950's. One tree, named the "General Sherman Tree" is over 270 feet high, 115 feet around, and over 3,000 years old. Because of their size and age these trees symbolize something that is unique and worth protecting.
4. The teacher passes out paper plates to each student and has them draw a symbol that represents them and the things that are important in their lives. The teacher asks the students **not** to put their name on the front of their emblem.

5. The students trade their emblems with classmates. One student presents another child's work. The others are asked if they can identify the emblem's owner.
6. The teacher asks students to think of the symbol or mascot that has been selected for their school. Why was it selected and how does it represent their school?

CLOSURE: Emblems are important to us because they represent things that we support or believe in. They are symbols that were specifically selected to represent us.

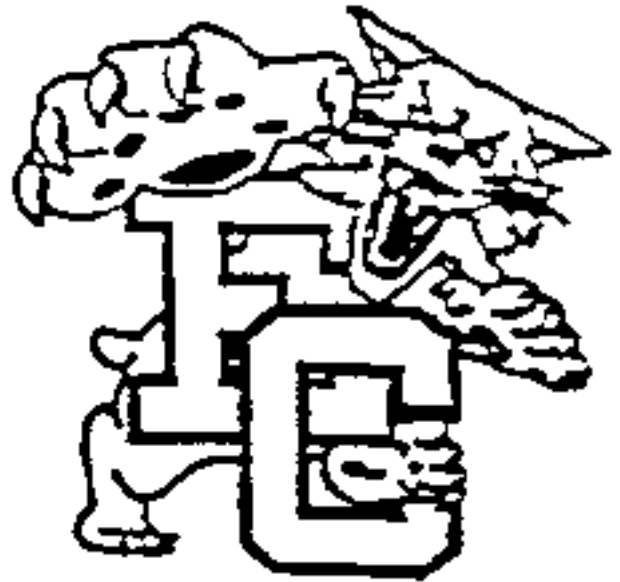
EVALUATION: The teacher is able to evaluate the students by reviewing their emblems and through class discussion.

EXTENSIONS:

1. The students could bring in Kentucky college emblems and mascots. This could lead to discussions of why various symbols were selected to represent that school.
2. The students could evaluate several state flags and discuss why the symbols were selected and what that means to the state. How many historical symbols or figures appear in these flags?
3. The students could evaluate the flags of other countries. They could then make a chart that included plants, animals, and objects. The students could graph how many times these appear in flags from around the world. This could also be done with colors.

*This lesson was adapted from a [Project Wild](#) activity.

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GATORS



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