



Teacher:
Class: 2nd grade
Class: 1–2 class periods
Course Unit:
Lesson Title: Symbolic Flag Garland

LESSON OVERVIEW

A symbol is a visual representation of an idea, concept, tradition, belief, or feeling. In this lesson, students will discover the symbols represented on American flags. They will each create their own school flag, using elements and principles of art. The flags will be displayed in a collaborative garland.

STANDARDS

Tennessee State Standards
Visual Art—Grade 2
2.1 Identify, understand, and apply the elements of art.
2.2 Identify, understand, and apply the principles of art.
3.1 Choose developmentally appropriate symbols with teacher guidance.
3.3 Analyze subject matter, symbols, and ideas in others’ art.
5.1 Analyze the characteristics and merits of the student’s own work.

Social Studies—Grade 2
2.40 Analyze primary and secondary source maps, photographs, and artifacts for contradictions, supporting evidence, and historical details.

Common Core Connections for Integrated Subjects—Writing, Speaking & Listening, Social Studies
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.2 Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.3 Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to clarify comprehension, gather additional information or deepen understanding of a topic or issue.

OBJECTIVES

1. The student will learn how symbols communicate ideas, concepts, traditions, beliefs, or feelings by doing visual analysis.
2. The student will be able to identify the anatomy of a flag.
3. The student will be able to apply the elements and principles of art to the design of his or her own flag.
4. The student will be able to discuss the meaning of symbols found on American flags.

ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION

1. Students will draw their school flag designs and label all the parts of the flag.
2. In a class critique, students will share their school flag designs. Students may volunteer to explain what their flag communicates, and how.
3. In a written response, students will summarize the meaning of the American flag, using 3 supporting details.

MATERIALS

Per student:

- A journal or some paper (approximately 3 sheets) for writing and sketching
- 1 pencil
- 1 glue stick
- 1 pair of scissors
- One 3" x 5" index card
- 1 ruler

Per table:

- 1 bin of colored construction paper
- 1 hole punch

Per classroom:

- 1 skein of yarn

ACTIVATING STRATEGY

1. Define *symbol* as the visual representation of an idea, concept, tradition, belief, or feeling.
2. Ask students to think about some of the symbols they see every day. [Say:] Maybe you see them on your way to school, in the cafeteria, or on the playground. Let's think about this and discuss our answers together.
3. Lead the class in the discussion.
4. On the board, write 3 elements of art (line, shape, and color) and 4 principles of art (balance, unity, emphasis, and pattern), with examples. (Use the definitions provided at Project ARTiculate's "[Elements & Principles of Art](#)" webpage.)
5. Explain that symbols are created using these elements and principles: line, shape, color, balance, unity, emphasis, and pattern. Students will need to know these elements and principles to analyze the formal arrangements of flag designs.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Introduce the lesson and state the objectives. Students should have journals (or paper) and pencils with them.
2. Show the "[Discovering Symbols](#)" episode of [ArtQuest: Art Is All Around You](#).
3. Show the Flag Parts page from this lesson plan.
4. Point to each part and define it. Students should write down these definitions for future reference.
5. Direct students' attention to an image of the U.S. flag. Ask students what they see. [Say:] What draws our attention first? What are the colors represented on it? What shapes do we see?
6. Explain that the elements represented on the flag work together to create a symbol of America.
7. Explain that the U.S. flag is a symbol for America. It represents the nation's most important founding principles, such as liberty and freedom, independence, and the idea of one united nation.
8. Have students focus on the shapes they see. [Say:] How many stars can we see? What might they symbolize?
9. Explain that the 50 white stars represented on the canton of the flag symbolize the 50 states in the United States.

10. Have students focus on the stripes. [Say:] How many stripes can we see? What are the colors? Are the stripes vertical or horizontal?
11. Explain that there are 7 red and 6 white horizontal stripes for a total of 13 stripes. The stripes are represented on the field (or ground) and symbolize the 13 original colonies
12. Explain that the colors of the flag have meaning as well. [Say:] Red symbolizes hardiness and valor, white symbolizes purity and innocence, and blue represents vigilance, perseverance, and justice.
13. Introduce the concept of a state flag. [Say:] In America, each state has a flag that is a symbol for its regional and local history, and its values. Let's take a look at the Tennessee state flag. (*If you are not in Tennessee, you may substitute your own state flag for this portion of the lesson.)
14. Help students analyze the Tennessee state flag, using the information provided in this lesson plan. Discuss its arrangement and symbolism.
15. Have students think about designs for a school flag and what symbols might represent the school. [Say:] Think about your school colors or mascot, and choose at least one element of art and one principle of design to incorporate into the flag. Write these down.
16. Have students review the flag terminology and then draw their school flag designs in their journals or on sheets of paper. Students should think about the orientation of the flag, and how they will use selected elements and principles. [Say:] Consider the parts of a flag, including the canton, field or ground, and charge. Will you incorporate one or more of these parts in your design? What shapes will you use? Where will you place them, and why?
17. Hand out a ruler, a pair of scissors, a glue stick, and an index card to each student. Direct them to proceed as follows:
 - a. Select a piece of colored construction paper. Cut out a field color and glue it to the index card.
 - b. Select a piece of construction paper in another color and cut various shapes out of it. Arrange them in a meaningful way on the index card and glue them down.
 - c. Punch 2 holes along the hoist of the flag, at the top and bottom.
18. Reserve the last 10 minutes of class for clean-up and closure. Direct students to place materials in the appropriate bins and then return to their seats.

ALTERNATE/EXTRA ACTIVITIES

- Students could use markers and stencils to draw patterns on their flags.
- Students could construct their flags from cloth or felt materials.
- Students could create a personal flag that uses symbols to represent things about their own lives.
- For students with special needs, construction paper shapes could be pre-cut.
- For students with special needs, provide adaptive scissors, glue sticks, and other tools if available.

CLOSURE

1. Ask students to share their flag designs and explain the symbols they used to represent their school. After the students finish presenting their flags, gather the cards into a garland by threading yarn through the holes.
2. Tell students to label the elements, principles, and parts of their school flag designs on their sketches.
3. Tell students to summarize the meaning of the American flag and provide 3 supporting details in a written response.

CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

- Social Studies
- Speaking and Listening
- Writing

EXTENDED LEARNING

Activities:

- Tabitha Jacques and Allison Wickens, [Design It! Student Stamps for America: A Curriculum Guide for Teachers](#), Smithsonian National Postal Museum, postalmuseum.si.edu
- Library of Congress, [Symbols of the United States](#) (teacher's guide and primary source set), loc.gov
- Mollie Thompson, "[Egyptian Symbols](#)" lesson plan, Walters Art Museum, thewalters.org
- PBS, "[The American Flag](#)" lesson plan, *America Responds*, pbs.org

Books:

- Lynne Cheney, *America: A Patriotic Primer* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002)
- Lynne Cheney, *Our 50 States* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006)
- Robert Sabuda, *America the Beautiful: A Pop-Up Book* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004)

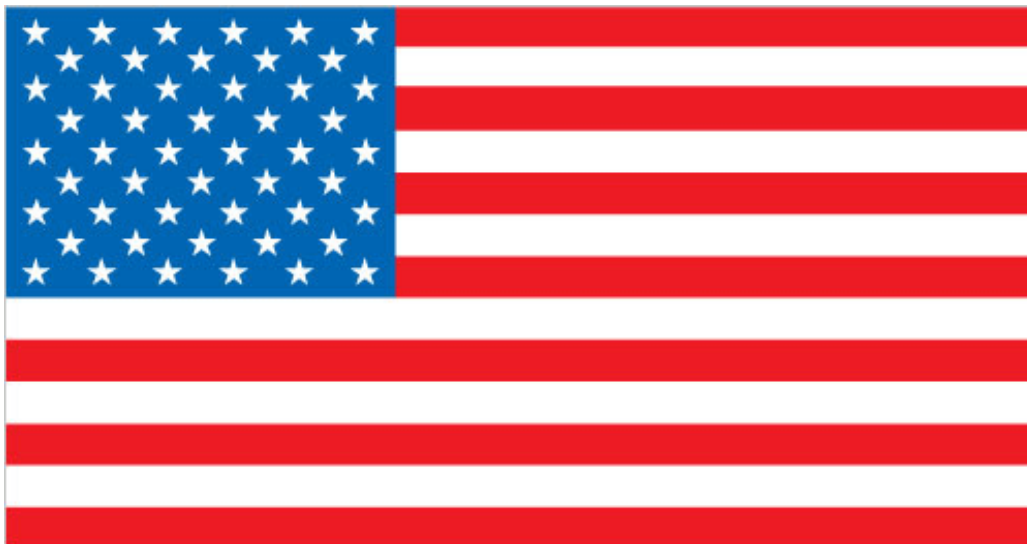
Videos:

- Frist Center for the Visual Arts, "[Discovering Symbols](#)," [ArtQuest: Art Is All Around You](#) (2014; available at fristkids.org)

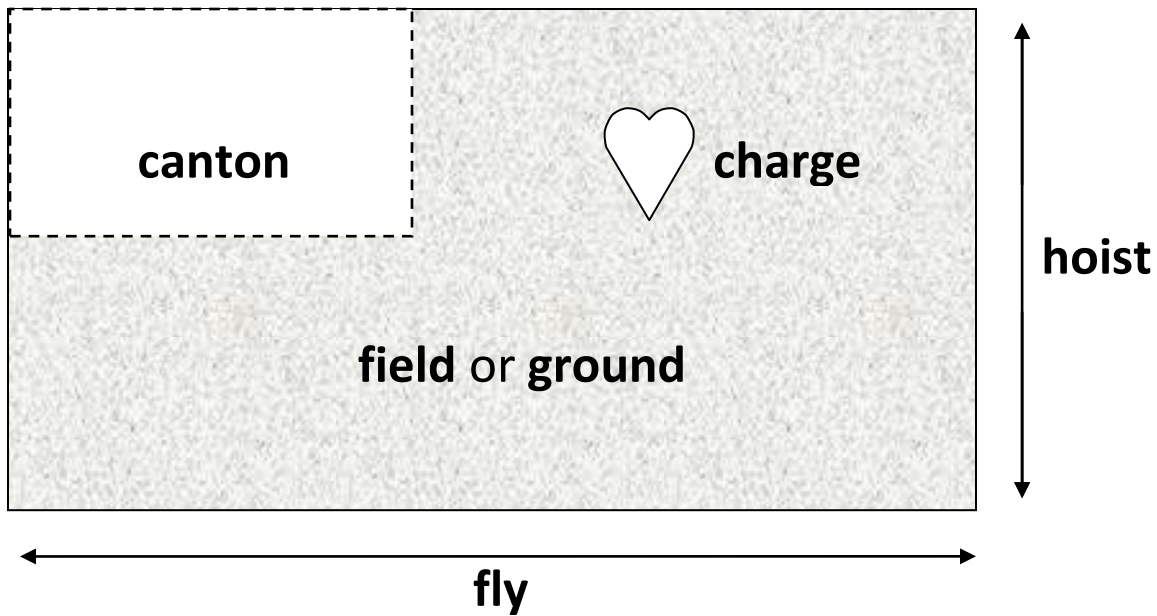
Websites:

- J. Paul Getty Museum, "[Principles of Design](#)," getty.edu
- NetState, "[The Parts of a Flag](#)," netstate.com
- Project ARTiculate, "[Elements & Principles of Art](#)," projectarticulate.org
- Duane Streufert, [The Flag of the United States of America](#), usflag.org
- U.S. Government Publishing Office, [Ben's Guide](#), bensguide.gpo.gov

For additional lesson plans and activities, visit us at fristkids.org. This lesson plan was created by an art education student in the Frist Center for the Visual Arts' Teaching Assistant Program under the guidance of education department staff and/or a mentor teacher. The Teaching Assistant Program is designed to introduce participants to museum education by providing unique teaching experiences in an informal learning environment. For more information about this program or other educational opportunities offered by the Frist Center, please visit fristcenter.org.



Flag Parts



Vocabulary

canton: the top inner corner of a flag

charge: the emblem or design on the flag

field: the section of the flag between the hoist and the fly ends. It is sometimes called the *ground*. It does not include the canton.

fly: the width or length of an extended flag

hoist: the height of the flag while it is flying

The Tennessee State Flag



What do you see? What shapes are represented? What colors are represented?

Officially adopted on April 17, 1905, the Tennessee state flag was designed by Colonel LeRoy Reeves. The three white stars represent the three grand divisions of the state: East, Middle, and West. The blue circle around the stars represents the unity of the grand divisions of the state. This central emblem or design is called a *charge*. The large field is crimson red. The blue bar is merely a decorative element.

Elements of art represented:

- lines: a thick white line borders a blue circle and reinforces the unity of the grand divisions.
- shapes: the three stars represent Tennessee's three state divisions and the circle represents their unity.
- colors: red, white, and blue.

Principles of art represented:

- balance: this flag is asymmetrical because blue and white vertical lines are found on the right hoist of the flag, but not on the left.
- unity: this flag is unified by the red, white, and blue colors.
- emphasis: the emphasis of this work is on the charge or emblem.