

# Culture

## Animals as national symbols

### Learning objectives

- The students learn about how and why animals are used as national symbols.
- In the project stage, students give a presentation about a national animal to the class.

### Warmer

Challenge the students, in small groups, to name an animal for every letter of the alphabet. The names need to be in English with the correct spelling. Set a time limit and award points for every correct answer.

- Ask the students to work in pairs to name the animals and encourage them to spell the animals before they check their answers.
- Ask the students to read the Animal facts box and ask *Why do we say that someone is as blind as a bat?* (Because people think that bats can't see, although in fact this isn't true.) Next, ask them to look at the pictures again and try to guess the qualities of each animal.  
  
Then ask the students to complete the comparisons, leaving a blank if they don't understand the adjective. Finally, read out the answers and encourage the students to guess the meaning of the adjectives by thinking about the animal.

### Answers

1 an elephant 2 a lion 3 a bee 4 a lamb 5 a wolf  
6 a peacock 7 a mouse 8 a giraffe

- Pre-teach *eagle* by drawing or showing the students a picture of an eagle. Ask: *When you see an eagle, which country or countries do you think of? Why?* Next, ask: *Does your country use an animal as a national symbol? What other countries use animals on their flags, stamps or coins?*  
  
In pairs, ask the students to discuss the questions. Encourage them to think about the eagle and about why the USA chose this animal as their symbol. The students then check their ideas in exercise 4.
- Ask the students to read the first paragraph and check their answer to the first question in exercise 3. Next, ask them to read the rest of the text quickly and locate the names of the animals. Then ask them to check their answers to the second question in exercise 3. Finally, encourage them to discuss which animals surprised them in pairs.

### Answers

- Because they want an image of something that is typical of their country's animals and/or because they believe that the people of their country share qualities with the animal.
- The following animals from the list in exercise 3 are national symbols:  
giraffe – it lives in Africa  
lion – chosen because it is strong, proud, honest and brave  
elephant – it is considered honest and hard-working  
wolf – in Italy, because it is believed that the men who started Rome were brought up by a wolf  
mouse – the writer can't explain why this is a national symbol

### Mixed ability

Ask the weaker students to read the text and complete this table instead of answering the questions. This will also help them with exercise 5.

Animal	Country/Countries	Qualities
giraffe	Tanzania	no information
lion		
elephant		
wolf		
mouse		

### Fast finishers

In pairs, they try to answer the question at the end of the text; i.e. how do you explain the national animal of Monaco – the mouse?

- Encourage the students to write the animal before reading the text again. Then ask them to check their answers with the text.

### Answers


1 wolf 2 elephant 3 lion 4 eagle

- Ask the students, in pairs, to try to correct the statements before they read the text again. Then ask them to read it again and check their ideas.

### Answers

- National animals usually come from the countries whose symbol they are. (*they usually choose an animal that comes from their country*)
- Lions don't originally come from Europe. (*lions don't come from these countries*)
- The main reason why birds are often national animals is because they are free. (*A lot of birds are national symbols, partly because they show the idea of freedom.*)

- 4 The wolf is seen as a cruel creature but there are other opinions of it too. (*But don't we see the wolf as a cruel hunter that exists alone? True, but there are many other opinions of the wolf too.*)
- 5 Wolves are not closely related to ordinary dogs. (*Also, the wolf is a distant cousin of the dog*)


- 7  1.28 Ask the students to read the questions first and try to guess where Sonia is from by looking at the name in question 4. Play the recording twice if necessary.

### Answers

- 1 bald eagle, USA    2 over 200 years / since 1782  
3 golden eagle    4 because they are birds of bad character  
5 She thinks it's a magnificent bird and a great symbol.

### Audioscript

**Sonia:** Hello, everyone. It's my turn today to give a presentation of my project, which is called 'The bald eagle, symbol of the free and the brave.'  
Obviously my project is about the bald eagle, the symbol of the United States, our country, but I'm going to talk about the symbol rather than the bird itself. This is a bald eagle, on the screen now.  
The bald eagle has been the symbol of our country for over 200 years. It was chosen in 1782 because it's known for its long life and for being a strong animal, and of course it looks so beautiful. Perhaps more than this, though, it is a symbol of freedom, of a free country, in the way that it can fly away into the air from the tops of mountains, as you can see here. Of course, in the 18th century, the bald eagle was very common and could often be seen in the sky. It isn't as common now, but at least it isn't in danger any more.  
So, where can you see images of the bald eagle? It appears on several of our coins, on postage stamps and also on some old flags. Look carefully, though – there have been mistakes on some coins, in particular ten-dollar coins, and they have actually got pictures of golden eagles on them – a totally different bird! You could see if you have any coins with the wrong bird in your pocket.  
Although we welcome the bald eagle as our national symbol now, it was not a totally popular choice when it was made. Benjamin Franklin, in particular, one of the fathers of our country, hated the idea of the bald eagle becoming our national animal, because, in his opinion, bald eagles are birds of bad character, who don't get their living (I think that means their food) honestly – they're too lazy to catch fish for themselves, so they wait until other birds have caught fish and then they go steal it from them.  
Well, whatever Franklin thought, I think the bald eagle is a magnificent bird, and a great symbol of our country.  
Thank you.

- 8  1.28 Ask the students to read the topics first and put a tick next to the ones that Sonia talked about. Then play the recording again for them to check their answers.

### Answers

Students should tick:  
her country's national animal  
when it became the national animal  
why it was chosen  
where the symbol appears  
how people felt about the choice  
how she feels about the choice

- 9 Encourage the students to discuss these questions in pairs. If necessary, play the relevant section of the recording again.

### Answer

She asks her classmates to look at the coins in their pockets to see if they have the wrong eagle on them. She does this to illustrate her point that some of the coins have the wrong eagle on them.

### Fast finishers

Ask the students to write down their favourite animal and three qualities they like about this animal. Next, tell them that they have just done a psychology test and the three qualities are how they would like other people to see them, e.g. horse – fast, strong, beautiful – i.e. this student would like others to see him/her as fast, strong and beautiful. Invite a class discussion on whether this is true.

### Project

Tell the students they are now going prepare their own presentation about their national animal. First, ask them to read the instructions. Next ask them to rewrite the points in exercise 8 as questions e.g. *What's the national animal? When did it become the national animal?* etc. and then to use these questions to find their information. Point out they can make their presentation more interesting if they can include one or two unusual/little-known facts, e.g. Sonia talks about the wrong eagle.

Encourage the students to produce a slideshow presentation with pictures. They then give their presentation to the class or to students in another English class.