



### About the Book

Text Type: Nonfiction/Informational Page Count: 12 Word Count: 157

#### Book Summary

*American Symbols* describes symbols central to the identity and character of the United States, from the American flag to the bald eagle. Each section of easily managed text is accompanied by large, attractive photographs. Use this book to teach students about the many kinds of symbols associated with the United States, as well as to focus attention on determining an author's purpose for writing and using prepositions.

### About the Lesson

#### Targeted Reading Strategy

- Connect to prior knowledge

#### Objectives

- Connect to prior knowledge to understand text
- Determine author's purpose
- Manipulate medial sounds
- Identify vowel digraph ea
- Identify and use prepositions
- Explain and create metaphors

#### Materials

Green text indicates resources are available on the website.

- Book—*American Symbols* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry-erase board
- Quarter
- Poster paper
- Index cards
- [Author's purpose, vowel digraph ea, prepositions worksheets](#)
- [Discussion cards](#)



Indicates an opportunity for students to mark in the book. (All activities may be demonstrated by projecting the book on an interactive whiteboard or completed with paper and pencil if the books are reused.)

#### Vocabulary

\*Bold vocabulary words also appear in a pre-made lesson for this title on [VocabularyA-Z.com](#).

- High-frequency words: *has, many, the*
- Content words:  
Story critical: *American (adj.), flag (n.), freedom (n.), ideas (n.), liberty (n.), symbols (n.)*

### Before Reading

#### Build Background

- Ask students to point to the American flag in the room. Have them discuss with a partner what the flag stands for, and invite volunteers to share their thoughts with the rest of the class. Lead them in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Hold up a quarter and ask students to identify it. Discuss the meaning of the pictures on either side of the coin.

- Explain to students that countries have many items that are unique and special to them, such as flags and money. Discuss with students other objects that are especially connected with the United States. Record a list of these symbols on the board.

### Book Walk

#### Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of the book. Guide them to the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers. Encourage them to offer ideas as to what type of book it is (genre, text type, and so on) and what it might be about.
- Show students the title page. Discuss the information on the page (title of book, author's name).
- Preview the table of contents on page 3. Remind students that the table of contents provides an overview of the book. Ask students what they expect to read about in the book, on the basis of what they see in the table of contents. (Accept all answers that students can justify.)

#### Introduce the Reading Strategy: **Connect to prior knowledge**

- Explain to students that engaged readers make connections between what they are reading and what they already know or have read. Remind students that connecting their prior knowledge about a topic to what they are reading will help them to remember and understand the book.
- Model using the cover and title as a way to make connections with prior knowledge.  
*Think-aloud: I see on the cover pictures of the American flag, the Statue of Liberty, and a bald eagle. I have seen that flag many times, in classrooms and parks, and outside stores and houses. Although I have never been to the Statue of Liberty, I have seen pictures of it, and know it is in New York City and that it represents freedom. I have seen bald eagles before. They are special birds that stand for our country. My prior knowledge of these objects leads me to think they all represent the United States of America in different ways. The title of the book is American Symbols. I'm not sure what a symbol is, but connecting my prior knowledge to what I already know about the pictures on the cover, I believe symbols might be objects that stand for something else. As I read, I will continue to connect what I already know with what I am reading.*
- Review the list made earlier during the Build Background portion of the lesson. Point out that this information describes prior knowledge the class has about the topic of American symbols. Ask students to keep in mind the prior knowledge presented in the list on the board as they read the book and seek to make connections.
- Have students preview the rest of the book, looking at the pictures and cover. Ask them to share any connections they make with a partner. Invite volunteers to share connections with the rest of the class.
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

#### Introduce the Comprehension Skill: **Author's purpose**

- Explain to students that authors have a purpose for writing a book, a reason for choosing the subject and how they write about it. Write the words *inform*, *entertain*, and *persuade* on the board and have students read them aloud with you. Explain to students that to *inform* means to give the reader information about a topic, to *entertain* means to amuse the reader, and to *persuade* means to convince the reader to feel or act in a certain way.
- Encourage students to consider how they, as the reader, feel while reading the book. Are they entertained, or do they feel the author is trying to convince them of anything? Point out that thinking about how the details affect the reader will help them determine the author's purpose for writing.
- Model determining author's purpose using a familiar tale, such as *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*.  
*Think-aloud: In the story The Very Hungry Caterpillar, a caterpillar eats through a huge amount of food, before wrapping up in its cocoon and emerging as a butterfly. What was the author's purpose for writing this story? To figure that out, I think about the effect the story has on me. The story amuses me with the cute caterpillar and the strange food he eats. The story*

*also teaches me information about a caterpillar's life cycle. Since the book amuses the reader, I know one of the author's purposes is to entertain. However, the book also gives the reader information on a topic, so the author had another purpose, to inform readers about caterpillars. The author's purpose, then, is to entertain and inform.*

- Point out that sometimes an author will have more than one purpose, but sometimes the author only has one purpose.
- Review several books the class has read previously. Choose books that feature different purposes. Have students work in groups to discuss and determine the author's purpose for writing each book. Have groups share their thoughts on the author's purpose with the rest of the class. Guide students to a class consensus on the author's purpose for each book.

### Introduce the Vocabulary

- While previewing the book, reinforce the vocabulary words students will encounter. For example, while looking at the picture on page 5, you might say: *What colors are on the flag? That's right; red, white, and blue. What does the flag stand for? Point to the word flag on this page.*
- Remind students to use the picture and the letters with which a word begins to decode a difficult word. For example, point to the word *liberty* on page 9 and say: *This long word is difficult for me to decode. I will look at the picture and the beginning letters to help me figure it out. The word begins with the /l/ sound, and the sentence informs me this is a statue of something. Looking at the picture, I see the Statue of Liberty holding her torch high. The word liberty begins with the /l/ sound, and it makes sense with the picture and the sentence. The word must be liberty.*
- Write each vocabulary word on the top of a sheet of poster paper, and draw a picture beside the word. Place posters around the room. Break students into groups, and assign each group to a poster. Have groups discuss their word. Ask groups to record a definition for the word on the poster, using key words and pictures. Rotate groups until every group has had a chance to work on all the posters.
- Review the posters with the class. Guide students to create a definition for each word, on the basis of accurate information from the posters.
- Write the words and their definitions on the board. Have students work with a partner to use the words in oral sentences. Invite students to share a sentence with the rest of the class, and have other students give a thumbs-up signal if the sentence uses the word accurately.

### Set the Purpose

- Have students read to find out more about American symbols. Remind them to consider what they already know about the topic and make new connections to information they read, while thinking about the author's purpose for writing this book.

## During Reading

### Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Have students read from page 4 to the end of page 6. Encourage those who finish early to go back and reread.
- **Model making connections to prior knowledge.**  
**Think-aloud:** *In the second section of the book, I read about the American flag, with its red and white stripes and fifty stars. The book informed me that the fifty stars represent the fifty states, which I had learned before. It was easy for me to remember this information since it connected with my prior knowledge. I also learned earlier in the book that a symbol is something that stands for something else. Once I read it, the information became prior knowledge for me. Connecting that prior knowledge with the details about the flag, I understood that the stars were symbols that stand for our fifty states.*
- Draw on the board a picture that presents the connections described in the think-aloud.

- Have students think about how they connected information from these pages with their own prior knowledge, and then draw a picture to represent one of those connections. Have them share their picture with a partner and describe the connection it portrays.
- Review with students the three reasons authors write books: to inform, entertain, and persuade. Discuss with students the subject of the book (American symbols). Invite volunteers to share a detail from the book. Record details on the board using key words and pictures.
- Have students consider the effect these details have on them. Are they entertained or informed? Do the details persuade them? Ask students to discuss with a partner their ideas on the author's purpose for the book. Encourage them to keep considering this purpose as they read.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students read to the end of page 9. Have students share with a partner some of the connections they made with the text as they read. Ask students to draw a picture that represents one connection they made.
- Discuss with students new details they read and record them on the board using key words and pictures. Remind students of the three purposes written on the board. Have students point to the word on the board that best represents the author's purpose for this book. Invite volunteers to share their choice with the rest of the class, and have them justify their answer.
- Have students read the remainder of the book. Remind them to think about what they know about the topic and how it connects with what they are reading and to continue thinking about the author's purpose for writing.



Have students make a small question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. These can be addressed in the discussion that follows.

### After Reading

- Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

### Reflect on the Reading Strategy

- Have students think about any final connections they made between their prior knowledge and the book, and ask them to draw one more picture to represent a new connection they made. Have students review and discuss the drawings they made with a partner. Invite volunteers to share a picture with the rest of the class and explain the connection it portrays.
- **Think-aloud:** *As I read the book, I thought about the many symbols for my country that I already knew or had seen. I thought about our flag, the images on our money, and pictures of Uncle Sam. I thought about the White House. When I see these symbols, they make me think about my country. They help me to identify with my country and to think about what is good and important in my home. My prior knowledge of symbols helped me to understand and remember the new symbols I read about in the book and enabled me to understand what the author meant when he wrote that these symbols stand for ideas that are important to the people of the United States.*
- Have students discuss with a partner how making connections between their prior knowledge and the book helped them to understand and remember what they read.

### Reflect on the Comprehension Skill

- **Discussion:** Review author's purpose by going over the words on the board: *inform*, *entertain*, and *persuade*. Have students work in groups to discuss their thoughts on the author's purpose for the book. Remind them they should be able to explain their choice.
- Call on random students to share a detail they learned in the book. Ask the other students to classify the detail as informative, entertaining, or persuasive. Record all the details under the word *inform* on the board. Point out that all the details in the book are informative. Have students call out the author's purpose for the book.

- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the **author's purpose worksheet**. If time allows, discuss their answers aloud.
- **Enduring understanding:** In this book, you learned about several important American symbols. What do they teach you about our country?

### Build Skills

#### Phonological Awareness: **Manipulate medial sounds**

- Ask students to listen carefully to the middle sound as you say the word *team* aloud. Say *team* aloud and emphasize the medial long /e/ sound. Have students say the medial sound aloud.
- Explain to students that if the vowel sound in the middle of a word is changed, the whole sound and meaning of the word changes. Say the word *cat* aloud and have students repeat. Ask students to listen to how the word changes when you change the medial sound, and say the word *cut* aloud, emphasizing the short /u/ sound. Have students discuss with a partner the difference in the words.
- Ask students what the word would sound like if you changed the short /u/ sound to the long /o/ sound. Guide students in creating the new word, *coat*, and have students say *coat* aloud.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students work with a partner to replace the middle sounds of the following words with the long /e/ sound: *drum*, *ban*, *fed*, *fall*, and *bed*.

#### Phonics: **Vowel digraph ea**

- Write the word *each* on the board and read it aloud with students.
- Have students say the long /e/ sound aloud. Then, run your finger under the letters in the word as students say the whole word aloud. Ask students to identify which letters represent the long /e/ sound in the word *idea*.
- Circle the letters *ea* and explain to students that in some words, two vowels together make one sound. Ask students to identify the sound the letters *ea* create in the word *idea*. Explain to students that the vowel digraph *ea* often makes the long /e/ sound.
- Write the word *head* on the board and read it aloud with students. Invite a volunteer to come to the board and circle the vowel digraph *ea*. Ask students if the digraph creates the long /e/ sound. Explain to students that in some words, the digraph *ea* creates the short /e/ sound.
- Have students search the book with a partner to find and circle all the words that contain the vowel digraph *ea*. Remind students that not all words using the vowel digraph *ea* have the long /e/ sound, and have students read the words aloud to hear the sound the vowel digraph makes. Invite volunteers to share a word they found with the rest of the class, and record them on the board. Have students discuss with a partner whether the vowel digraphs in the words create the long /e/ sound or the short /e/ sound.
- **Check for understanding:** Write the following words on the board: *leaf*, *dead*, *teach*, *mean*, *bread*, *lead*, and *speak*. Have students discuss with a partner whether the words have a short /e/ sound or a long /e/ sound. Call on random students to come to the board and sort the words, writing words with the long /e/ sound under the word *each*, and the words with the short /e/ sound under the word *head*.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the **vowel digraph ea worksheet**. If time allows, discuss their answers.

#### Grammar and Mechanics: **Prepositions**

- Write the following sentence on the board: *Each star stands for one state*. Read the sentence aloud with students. Ask students to point to the word *for*.
- Explain to students that *prepositions* are connecting words that provide information about *where*, *when*, *how*, and *for what* something happens. Point out that prepositions are words that show a relationship between parts of a sentence. Circle the word *for* in the sentence on the board and reinforce that *for* is a preposition.



- Ask students to discuss with a partner what information the word *for* gives in the sentence (it explains *for what* the stars stand).
- Brainstorm with students to generate a list of other prepositions. Guide students with pointed questions, such as the following: What words tell me where an object is? What prepositions give information on when an event happened? Record a list of prepositions on the board, such as the following: *for, on, under, above, beside, before, after, near, with, and through*.
- Have students locate and underline the prepositions in their book. Invite volunteers to share with the rest of the class a preposition they found and the page number where they found it. Ensure each word is a preposition, and discuss with students what information the preposition gives.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students work with a partner to choose six prepositions and use them in oral sentences. Call on random students to share a sentence with the rest of the class. Have other students give a thumbs-up signal if they agree the sentence uses a preposition properly.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [prepositions worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers aloud.

### Word Work: Metaphors

- Ask students to share with a partner the definition of a symbol as found in the book. Remind students that a symbol is something that stands for something else.
- Explain to students that in books, there are certain figures of speech that work in a way similar to symbols. Write the following sentence on the board: *The statue is a beacon of light for people coming to the United States*. Read the sentence aloud with students, and discuss with students the meaning of the sentence.
- Ask students if a statue is a beacon of light. Have students work in groups to discuss why the sentence would call the statue that. Point out that a light guides people to new places, and things seem brighter. Discuss with students how this sentence helps the reader to see the statue in a different way.
- Write the word *metaphor* on the board and read it aloud to students. Explain to students that metaphors are phrases where one thing is used to mean something else. Reinforce with students that the beacon of light is used to show that the statue offers hope and guidance to people, like a light.
- Write the following sentence on the board: *That runner is a cheetah!* Discuss with students what a runner and a cheetah might have in common. Have students discuss with a partner how this metaphor explains how fast the runner is.
- **Check for understanding:** Assign students to groups. For each group, provide a set of index cards, with half labeled *A* and half labeled *B*. Write the following words on the *A* cards: *heart, man, and blanket*. Write the following words on the *B* cards: *snow, stone, and giant*. Have groups match a card from group *A* with a card from group *B* that makes the most sense to them. Remind students to think about two nouns that might have something in common. Invite students to share how they matched the cards. Guide students in creating simple metaphors with the cards. For example, they could create a blanket of snow, that man is a giant, and a heart of stone.

### Build Fluency

#### Independent Reading

- Allow students to read their book independently. Additionally, partners can take turns reading parts of the book to each other.

#### Home Connection

- Give students their book to take home to read with parents, caregivers, siblings, or friends. Have them discuss the connections they made to the book with someone at home.

### Extend the Reading

#### Informational Writing Connection

Write the following sentence starters on the board: \_\_\_\_\_ *is a symbol. It stands for* \_\_\_\_\_. Write a list of symbols on the board. For example, you may include the following in the list: the national anthem, the recycle sign, the peace sign, your state flag, your state bird, the plus sign, the minus sign, a big yellow M (McDonalds), an apple with a bite out of it (Apple computers), and so on. Review the list with students, and ask them to choose a symbol with which they are familiar. Ask students to draw a picture of their symbol. Then, have students complete the sentence starters from the board with their symbol's name and what it stands for. Finally, have students write two more sentences that further describe their symbol.

Visit [WritingA-Z.com](http://WritingA-Z.com) for a lesson and leveled materials on informational writing.

#### Social Studies Connection

Read excerpts of books or articles that deal with the history behind the American flag, the Statue of Liberty, and the bald eagle. Discuss with students how these objects became symbols for different aspects of the United States. Have students make a poster that depicts all three symbols and what they mean to them.

#### Skill Review

**Discussion cards** covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided as an extension activity. The following is a list of some ways these cards can be used with students:

- Use as discussion starters for literature circles.
- Have students choose one or more cards and write a response, either as an essay or as a journal entry.
- Distribute before reading the book and have students use one of the questions as a purpose for reading.
- Cut apart and use the cards as game cards with a board game.
- Conduct a class discussion as a review before the book quiz.

### Assessment

#### Monitor students to determine if they can:

- consistently use the strategy of connecting to prior knowledge to understand text during discussion
- accurately determine the author's purpose for a book during discussion and on a worksheet
- accurately manipulate medial sounds sound during discussion
- correctly write the letter symbols that represent the vowel digraph ea during discussion and on a worksheet
- accurately use prepositions during discussion and on a worksheet
- properly explain and create metaphors during discussion

#### Comprehension Checks

- [Book Quiz](#)
- [Retelling Rubric](#)