

## Symbols of Canada Lesson Plan

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### **Description:**

Several students understand that symbols represent things, and know that stars & stripes and the bald eagle represent the United States. Through this lesson, they'll learn symbols of Canada and the historical and cultural reasons those symbols have represented the nation. Symbols will include the maple leaf, beaver, and inuksuk. Supplementary information on each of these symbols is provided on pages 3-5 following this lesson. By the conclusion of the lesson, students will also have created a symbol of their own.

### **Grade Level(s):**

6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> (middle school)

### **Subject(s):**

Social Studies/Language Arts

### **Duration:**

60 minutes

### **Goal:**

The goal is to help students understand which symbols represent Canada and why those have remained throughout recent history

### **Objectives:**

The students will:

- Identify Canadian symbols
- Explain how each symbol represents Canada
- Create a symbol (with meaning) that represents themselves

### **Standards:**

This lesson meets Colorado State History Standard 5.1 [Students understand how democratic ideas and institutions have developed, changed, and/or been maintained (explain the importance of national celebrations, symbols, and ideas in their historical context)]

### **Background Information:**

Prior to this lesson, students ought to have a brief introduction to Canadian historical figures and events so they can read the informational cards on their own.

### **Materials:**

- Laminated cards explaining symbolism of maple leaf, beaver, and inuksuk (12 copies of each)
- Guided reading worksheet for each student to fill out as they read the symbol cards
- Colored pencils and/or markers
- Blank paper

**Procedures:**

1. Open class by showing various symbols students may be familiar with and ask them what these symbols represent. Show logos of popular products or teams and move into flags that they would know (state flag, nation’s flag). Conclude opening by showing Canadian flag. Point out the maple leaf and explain there is a reason it was chosen.
2. Put students into groups of 3-4. Assign each group a number 1-3. Assign each group number a specific symbol (ex: 1’s – maple leaf, 2’s – beaver, etc.) Pass out guided reading worksheet for them to fill out as they read the information cards. Also hand out the cards and have students read them as a group and fill out the worksheet.
3. Teacher can either rotate the sheets, or jigsaw and have students break into groups of a 1, a 2, and a 3 and share the information they got.
4. Review the worksheet with the students and point out any notes you think need emphasizing.
5. Pass out a blank sheet to each student and tell students that they have to design a symbol that represents themselves (noting that none of these symbols had writing). They will need to explain the symbol and the colors they chose.

**Evaluation/Assessment:**

- Worksheet (10 points) Will be graded on completion since it will be done in groups and reviewed as a class
- Symbol (20 points)

20	16	12	8	4
Symbol is done neatly and in color. A min. 5 sentence- paragraph is included on the back that explains how the symbol & colors represent the student.	Symbol is done neatly and in color. 3-4 sentences are included on the back that explain how the symbol & colors represent the student.	Symbol is done in color but lacks neatness. A min. 5 sentence- paragraph is included on the back that explains how the symbol & colors represent the student.	Symbol is done neatly but not colored. A min. 5-sentence paragraph is included on the back that explains how the symbol represents the student.	Symbol is done, but lacks color and neatness OR Explanation is two or fewer sentences.

## The Beaver



Religious and political reasons are usually given to explain why Europeans moved to North America, but natural resources were another major reason. These included whales, large schools of cod, and towering pines. But the resource that lured explorers across the continent was actually the beaver.

After the early European explorers realized that Canada was not Asia, the main attraction for merchants was the beaver. In the late 1600s and early 1700s, the fashion of the day demanded fur top-hats, which needed beaver pelts. As these hats became more popular, the demand for the pelts grew. Explorers were dispatched deep into the North American wilderness to trap and trade for furs with local natives.

King Henry IV of France saw the fur trade as an opportunity to gain much-needed money and to create his North American empire. Both English and French fur traders were soon selling beaver pelts in Europe at 20 times their original purchase price.

The first North American coat of arms to depict a beaver was created by Sir William Alexander, who was granted title in 1621 to the area now known as Nova Scotia .

The trade in beaver pelts was so good that the Hudson's Bay Company honored the beaver by putting it on the shield of its coat of arms in 1678, and reflects the importance of this animal to the company. A coin was created at that time to equal the value of one beaver pelt.

Hudson's Bay Company was no ordinary business. It was a business that acted like a nation. It played a major role in the exploration of Canada, even helped to set its borders. In 1678, Louis de Buade de Frontenac, then Governor of New France, suggested the beaver as a suitable emblem for the Colony, and proposed it be included in the armorial bearings of Quebec City. In 1690, the "Kebece Liberata Medal" was struck to commemorate France's successful defense of Quebec. The reverse depicts a seated woman, representing France, with a beaver at her feet, representing Canada.

The beaver was included in the armorial bearings of the City of Montréal when it was incorporated as a city in 1833. Sir Sandford Fleming assured the beaver a position as a true National Symbol when he featured it on the first Canadian postage stamp - the "Three Penny Beaver" of 1851.

Even though it was a national symbol, the beaver was close to extinction by the mid-19th century. There were an estimated six million beavers in Canada before the start of the fur trade. During its peak, 100,000 pelts were being shipped to Europe each year, and the Canadian beaver was in danger of being wiped out. Luckily, about the mid-19th century, Europeans took a liking to silk top-hats, and the demand for beaver pelts all but disappeared, and the beaver population recovered.

On March 24, 1975, the beaver became an official emblem of Canada when an "act to provide for the recognition of the beaver as a symbol of the independence of Canada" received Royal approval. Today, thanks to conservation and silk hats, the beaver - the largest rodent in Canada - is alive and well all over this great country.

Adapted from: <<http://members.shaw.ca/kcic1/beaver.html>>

## The Maple Leaf



Well before the coming of the first European settlers, Canada's aboriginal peoples had discovered the food properties of maple sap, which they gathered every spring. According to many historians, the maple leaf began to serve as a Canadian symbol as early as 1700.

In 1834, the St. Jean Baptiste Society made the maple leaf its emblem.

In 1836, *Le Canadien*, a newspaper published in Lower Canada, referred to it as a suitable emblem for Canada.

In 1848, the Toronto literary annual *The Maple Leaf* referred to it as the chosen emblem of Canada.

By 1860, the maple leaf was incorporated into the badge of the 100<sup>th</sup> Regiment (Royal Canadians) and was used extensively in decorations for the visit of the Prince of Wales that year.

Alexander Muir wrote *The Maple Leaf Forever* as Canada's confederation song in 1867; it was regarded as the national song for several decades. The coats of arms created the next year for Ontario and Quebec both included the maple leaf.

The maple leaf today appears on the penny. However, between 1876 and 1901, it appeared on all Canadian coins. The modern one-cent piece has two maple leaves on a common twig, a design that has gone almost unchanged since 1937.

During the First World War, the maple leaf was included in the badge of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. Since 1921, the Royal Arms of Canada have included three maple leaves as a distinctive Canadian emblem. With the proclamation of Canada's new flag in 1965, the maple leaf has become the most-prominent Canadian symbol.

In 1939, at the time of World War II, many Canadian troops used the maple leaf as a distinctive sign, displaying it on regimental badges and Canadian army and naval equipment.

In 1957, the colour of the maple leaves on the arms of Canada was changed from green to red, one of Canada's official colours.

On February 15, 1965, the red maple leaf flag was inaugurated as the National Flag of Canada.

From: <[http://www.pch.gc.ca/PROGS/CPSC-CCSP/sc-cs/o3\\_e.cfm](http://www.pch.gc.ca/PROGS/CPSC-CCSP/sc-cs/o3_e.cfm)>

## The Inuksuk



The Inuksuk is a well known symbol in the Arctic. Each Inuksuk is unique - built from the stones at hand.

In Inuktitut, one of the languages of the Inuit, the word Inuksuk means "likeness of a person". While travelling in some parts of Nunavut and Northern Quebec, you can see piles of rock slabs and stones which are usually built to resemble the shape of a person with arms stretching out. The word Inuksuk now refers to all forms of piled stones.

Traditionally an Inuksuk would be used in many different ways. For example, Nuluq showed travelers and hunters the way home, Nalunaikutauk to warn of dangerous places, Egunasii showed where food was stored, and some were even used to help hunt caribou herds. Inuit placed the Inuksuk in such a way as to frighten the caribou and guide them toward the waiting hunters who would be hiding behind a boulder. In this way, the Inuksuk did the work of humans. Inuit and their ancestors have lived in the Arctic for over 4,000 years.

In the winter, many Inuit lived on the sea ice where much of the season was spent comfortably within a snow house. During this dark time of the year, the stars in the night sky were important. Their position was used to tell time and to predict the return of the spring sun. Some Inuksuit were built to point toward the North Star, the star which does not move.

Today, the Inuksuk is much more than just a stone marker. It has become a symbol of the North and of leadership, cooperation and the human spirit.

As traditional ways are blending with contemporary ways, Inuit and non-Inuit sometimes build Inuksuit simply to mark their presence both in the Arctic and across this country.

From <[http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ks/inukstrn\\_e.html](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ks/inukstrn_e.html)>