

#9436

AMERICAN BALD EAGLE

FILM IDEAS, INC.

2002

Grade Levels: 3-8

13 minutes



DESCRIPTION

The American bald eagle, representing freedom, strength, clear vision, and determination, was selected as the national bird of the newly formed United States after six years of debate. Explains the symbols on the Great Seal of the United States and notes the eagle's appearance on much U.S. currency.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Subject Area: Civics

- Standard: Understands the importance of Americans sharing and supporting certain values, beliefs, and principles of American constitutional democracy
 - Benchmark: Knows how various symbols are used to depict Americans' shared values, principles, and beliefs and explain their meaning (e.g., the flag, Statue of Liberty, Statue of Justice, Uncle Sam, great seal, national anthem, oaths of office, mottoes such as E Pluribus Unum)

Subject Area: Historical Understanding

- Standard: Understands the historical perspective
 - Benchmark: Understands that specific individuals had a great impact on history
 - Benchmark: Understands that specific ideas had an impact on history

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To discuss what *symbols* are and what the American bald eagle represents.
2. To review the history of the American bald eagle.
3. To observe how the American bald eagle was chosen to become America's official national seal.
4. To compare forms/images associated with the American bald eagle and how they are used.

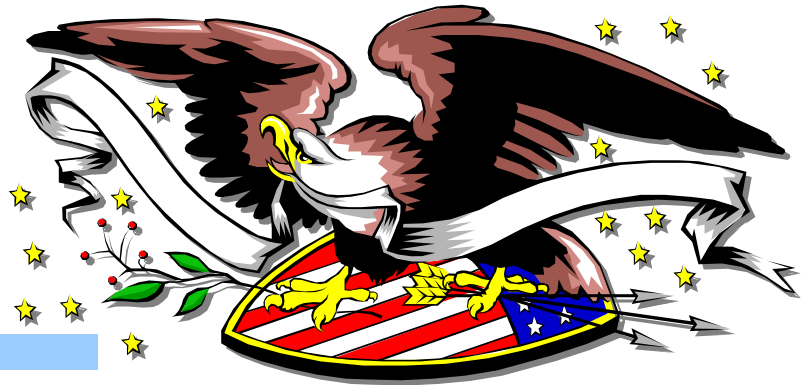
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Spreading its wings and soaring high above the skies with majesty and strength, representing freedom and liberty, is the United States' national seal—the American bald eagle. View the history and the importance of its symbolic representation. On July 4, 1776, the

Continental Congress assigned Ben Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and John Adams to create a national seal. After six years of formidable debate, the American bald eagle was finally chosen on June 20, 1782, as our official national seal. Like a fledgling, America as a newly born nation was now ready to fly and find its way in history. Selected because of its strength, majesty and grace, the American bald eagle proudly represents the great ideals of American freedom and liberty. As the national seal and badge of authority, learn about the many ways this American symbol is used. From its mark on official documents and treaties, to the image of presidential seal, to the final print on American currency, the American bald eagle is a symbol worth learning about.

VOCABULARY

1. American bald eagle
2. Charles Thomson
3. currency
4. Declaration of Independence
5. E Pluribus Unum
6. fledgling
7. national seal
8. symbol



AFTER SHOWING

Discussion Items and Questions

1. What do the 13 arrows clutched in the eagle's right claw represent?
2. What does the olive branch with 13 leaves clutched in the eagle's left claw represent?
3. What do the Latin words "E Pluribus Unum" mean? Where are these words found?

Applications and Activities

1. The bald eagle has many unique characteristics which is why America chose it to be its national seal. Instruct the students to write a brief description of this bird's biological profile and how it qualifies to be America's national seal.
2. Tour the school or community and document the symbols they see. After writing them down on a piece of paper, have the students research the symbol to describe what each symbol represents. Have them write a short historical perspective on the origins of the symbol.
3. On the same day that the Declaration of Independence was signed--July 1776--the Continental Congress assigned Ben Franklin, Thomas Jefferson and John Adams to create a national seal for the new country. Like America's founding fathers, assemble the students into small groups and have them create a seal for your school or community. Then have the groups explain their created seal to the rest of the class.
4. On July 4, 1776, three men were assigned by the Continental Congress to create a new national seal. Name these three men.
5. What does the number 13 represent in the American bald eagle?
6. What is on the reverse side of America's great national seal?
7. Name some of the different ways the image of the American bald eagle is used.

RELATED RESOURCES



Captioned Media Program

- Images of Liberty #9437
- Uncle Sam #9441
- The U.S. Flag #9438
- The White House #9439



World Wide Web

The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and "kid safe" sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

- **AMERICAN BALD EAGLE INFORMATION**

<http://www.baldeagleinfo.com/>

Provides a plethora of information on the U.S. national bird, such as description of the eagle, its history, feathers, eye sight, American emblem, and more!

- **THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE**

<http://www.ushistory.org/declaration/>

Find out the signers of the Declaration, its history, and read an online version. Also, read about Thomas Jefferson's accounts that talk about the days leading up to the signing.

- **THE GREAT SEAL AND THE NATIONAL MOTTOS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

<http://www.usscouts.org/flag/sealmotto.html>

Explains the physical characteristics of the Great Seal and its meaning.

