

#9441

UNCLE SAM

FILM IDEAS, INC.

2002

Grade Levels: 3-8

13 minutes



DESCRIPTION

What is a symbol? How did Uncle Sam develop as a symbol? Was Uncle Sam a real person? Answers these questions and examines the background of Uncle Sam and its many uses in United States history. Uncle Sam represents both our country and its citizens.

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 review what *symbols* are and what Uncle Sam represents.
2. To present the history of Uncle Sam.
3. To introduce how Uncle Sam received its name.
4. To illustrate the important people and events involved with the origins and creation of Uncle Sam, the symbol.
5. To observe the many different forms/images associated with Uncle Sam and how they were used in the past and even today.

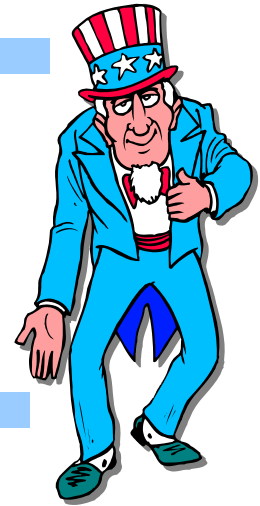


BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Learn how symbols originated and their effect on American history and culture. Today, visual communication is an essential part of the American lifestyle. Computer video games, the internet, movies and TV, all influence the way students view the world. Symbolism is a large part of today's mass media and throughout history symbols like Uncle Sam continue to profoundly articulate ideas. From its humble beginnings, to its changing past, to its present form, students will enjoy and appreciate the interesting story about Uncle Sam's origins and historic relevance. Students will be amazed to learn how Uncle Sam, our national symbol, derived from a real man named Samuel Wilson—and how this unique image helped recruit soldiers during both World War I and II. By understanding the power of symbols like Uncle Sam, students will appreciate their value and gain insight into their purpose and powerful message.

VOCABULARY

1. James Montgomery Flagg
2. John Bull
3. Paul Revere
4. Samuel Wilson
5. symbol
6. Uncle Sam
7. Yankee Doodle



AFTER SHOWING

Discussion Items and Questions

1. Uncle Sam comes from what initials?
2. During what war did the symbol Uncle Sam begin to come to life? What country were the American colonists fighting during this war?
3. Who is the real man Uncle Sam?
4. James Montgomery Flagg created a famous poster featuring Uncle Sam. What was the purpose of this poster?
5. What popular song written by George Cohen was inspired by Uncle Sam?
6. Where is the largest Uncle Sam statue?
7. Name some of the American ideals which are represented by the image of Uncle Sam.

Applications and Activities

1. Symbols communicate ideas. Have students draw or cut out different symbols from publications and present them to their fellow classmates. As the symbols are presented, have the students describe what they think each symbol represents.
2. Have students tour the school or community and document the symbols they see. After writing them down on a piece of paper, have them research the symbol using resources to describe what each symbol represents. During their research, perhaps have them write a short historical perspective on the origins of the symbol.

3. Symbols communicate ideas. Have students discuss a problem in the school or community. For example, is there confusion in the lunchroom cafeteria as to how the students should line up and be served food and beverages; or is there miscommunication about where certain school supplies should be stored; are certain rooms and schoolyard areas properly marked for student safety; etc. After discussing the problem, evaluate whether the problem may possibly be solved by students creating posters which effectively communicate ideas through symbols.

RELATED RESOURCES



Captioned Media Program

- American Bald Eagle #9436
- Images of Liberty #9437
- Old Glory #3277
- A Pledge Is a Promise #3397
- The Story of the National Anthem #3413
- The U.S. Flag #9438
- What Is a Flag? #3419
- What Is an American? #3420
- 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.

• I WANT YOU

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/today/jun18.html>

View the poster of Uncle Sam wanting you for the U.S. Army, what its creator Flagg looked like, and what the real Uncle Sam was like. Presents a brief account of the War of 1812 as well.

• PAUL REVERE BIOGRAPHY

<http://www.paulreverehouse.org/paul.html>

Discover his life and times from 1734 to 1818, his famous "Midnight Ride," and read the FAQs.

• UNCLE SAM

<http://web.mit.edu/invent/www/inventorsr-z/unclesam.html>

Gives a brief background on how Uncle Sam came about.

