

Centennial: Symbols of Utah

Summary

by Sheri Sohm. Symbolism brings to mind facts, feelings, emotions, and events.

Materials

Packet A: Symbols

Packet B: 'Utah Symbolism' brochure

Utah state flag, (teacher provided)

The Program, 'Intrigues of the Past,' has a lesson called, 'Rock Art One, Two, and Three' that can be used as an extension.

Background for Teachers

People have always used symbolism to communicate information. A symbolic picture, word, or act reminds people of things that the community feels are important. Utah uses symbolism to promote the positive characteristics of our state.

Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will understand how symbolism is used to aid understanding and to help promote ideas.

Students will design a new flag that represents contemporary Utah, and one that will project the image of Utah into the future.

Instructional Procedures

See preface material for the Utah Centennial Lesson Plans book.

Write SYMBOL on the board. Ask students to describe what the word means to them.

Show students pictures of various symbols. Ask them to identify what the symbols represent.

(Examples of easily recognizable symbols are: stop sign shape, men and women symbol for restrooms, handicap parking symbol). Ask students to think of other symbols that everyone will recognize.

Use the booklet, 'Symbolism in Utah' to explain the major symbols of the state. Discuss why the particular images were used.

Are there any unfamiliar symbols you don't understand?

Explain that logos are symbols used for companies or businesses. Ask students to collect logos that they find in magazines or newspapers. Share them with the class. Ask how logos are symbolic?

(They visually represent something that is associated with the company. The designers hope that when you see a logo you will have instant recognition.)

Discuss why people use symbols or logos instead of just using words to communicate an idea? Why is symbolism more powerful?

Define the characteristics of an effective symbol. (A symbol must be simple, it must be immediately recognizable, it must be neat and well drawn, it must contain an image that creates thoughts about the important idea.)

People are interested in promoting Utah. Several years ago a campaign presented Utah as a 'Pretty, Great State.' This saying is used on posters and in advertising. It became a controversial symbol.

Why? (The originators thought that people would think of Utah as PRETTY, and also GREAT. In reading the sentence, it came across that Utah was not REALLY great, but just pretty great. The theme seemed weak.) What would be a better catch phrase? Are all areas of Utah interested in promoting tourism? Why might some areas discourage visitors and new arrivals?

Explain that symbols and themes should not be confusing, but should try for a clear and strong

message.

Brainstorm the things we can proudly promote in Utah. Think of industry, business, education, recreation, clean and safe cities, rich history, and anything else that would seem attractive about our state. Create as complete a list as possible.

Extensions

POSSIBLE STUDENT PRODUCTS: Create symbols to represent contemporary Utah activities and strengths. Use these symbols to create a Utah Centennial Flag showing how Utah connects to its past while moving into the future. Create a promotional brochure that could be used for tourists. Send copies to the Utah State Office of Education.

Volunteer to create a 1090 for the school or for the classroom. Consider a mural design that would represent the school as it proceeds into the next 100 years.

Authors

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