



English 10-2, 20-2  
Can be modified for 10-1 and 20-1

Preventing  
Prejudice

Living  
Respectfully

Respecting  
Diversity


## I Am More Than What You See

### Lesson 1 Respecting Cultural Differences

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#### Lesson Objective

This lesson allows students to explore symbols associated with a particular cultural group. It also encourages discussion of the importance of respecting cultural symbols and the meaning they hold for a particular group.

 **Time** Two 50-minute classes

#### ✂ Materials

Student Handout 1 “Recognizing Symbols”

Student Handout 2 “Exploring Cultural Symbols”

Student Handout 3 “Assessment of Cultural Symbols Projects”

#### Getting Started

##### Knowledge Now

Distribute Student Handout 1. Ask students to work with a partner to identify as many symbols as they can. Students also need to identify at least one symbol not on the handout by consulting with other members of the class.

##### Engaging Interest

Review the symbols with the students. Explain that these symbols are fairly widely recognized by most people in our society because they are commonly used. Invite students to share examples of symbols not on the handout. Ask students to speculate on why certain objects take on symbolic meaning for a particular group or culture.

## Learning Activities

This lecture should be adapted according to the text the students are currently studying. For example, in *War of the Eagles* the eagle is an important symbol, *The Diary of Anne Frank* refers to a number of Jewish symbols and symbolic acts, and in *Whale Rider* the whale is an important symbol to Pai's people.

Symbols are concrete objects that represent an abstract idea or a larger concept. Actions can also have symbolic significance, as in many of the rituals of religious ceremonies. Objects or acts have a meaning of their own, but when a group agrees to accept these objects or acts as having another, greater meaning, they become symbols. Different cultures and even individuals may respect many different objects or acts as having symbolic meaning.

Objects or actions take on symbolic meaning often because of their association with important events in a group's or an individual's past. For example, in Aboriginal cultures, figures in nature often have symbolic meaning, reflecting the culture's close ties with the natural world. Many religious symbols are also associated with historical events and linked to the development of a group's religious beliefs.

## Discussion Questions

Do all symbols have the same meaning to all people? Why or why not? How can misunderstanding of symbols lead to conflicts?

1. How do people use symbols to display pride in their culture?

Note that writers often use symbols in their writing to communicate a key idea or to enhance a theme in the literature.

## Activity

Randomly assign students to groups of no more than four. Distribute Student Handout 2, which provides an outline of the assignment. Using the Internet, library resources and their own knowledge, students are to research up to five symbols associated with a particular cultural group. You may want to specify particular groups, based on the literature you are studying or the cultural backgrounds of your students. Some suggestions are as follows:

- Métis
- Western Canadian Aboriginal (Blackfoot, Cree)
- West Coast Aboriginal (Tsimshian)
- Japanese
- Jewish
- Maori

Each group is to prepare a visual presentation, in the form of either a poster or a PowerPoint presentation that explains the symbols to the class.

## **Assessment/Analysis**

Provide students with a copy of the assessment rubric (Student Handout 3) before they begin their activity. Explain that each group presentation will be assessed by the class.

## **Application**

Following the group presentations, invite students to share their new knowledge in a talking circle. (If the class is large you may need to have two circles.) Provide students with an appropriate symbolic object to hold in the circle, possibly something that represents your school or classroom. Remind students that only the person holding the object speaks, while others listen. The object is then passed to the next person who wants to speak. Participants in the circle should share a new insight, idea or something they learned from their research or the presentations.

## **Activities for Extension and/or Integration**

Depending on the diversity and talents of students in your class, some may be encouraged to further explore this subject by demonstrating a cultural activity, such as a traditional dance, or bringing a traditional food to share with the class. The class projects could be displayed in the school to celebrate diversity.

## **Subject and Level Learner Outcomes for Subject and Level**

Senior High English Language Arts

2.2 .2 Relate elements, devices and techniques to created effects

- explain the contribution of symbol to theme

2.3.1 Connect self, text, culture and milieu

- identify and consider moral and ethical perspectives as well as cultural perspectives when studying literature and other texts

3.2.1 Select, record and organize information

4.1 Develop and present a variety of print and nonprint texts

4.1.2 Consider and address form, structure and medium

4.1.3 Develop content

4.1.4 Use production, publication and presentation strategies and technologies consistent with content

## **Safe and Caring Topics and Concepts**

Living respectfully

- Identifying ways that people show respect and disrespect
- Working cooperatively in groups
- Respecting others' ideas

Respecting Diversity and Preventing Prejudice

- Studying different cultures

## Teaching Strategies

<b>Go to</b> <a href="http://www.sacsc.ca">www.sacsc.ca</a> <b>Click on</b> Resources, Strategies for strategy descriptions	<b>Cooperative Learning</b>	<b>Inquiry Learning</b>	<b>Direct Instruction</b>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Problem solving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lecture</li> </ul>

<b>Generalization and Transfer</b>	<b>Peer Teaching</b>	<b>Empathy/Affective Education</b>	<b>General Teaching Activities/Ideas</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Literature</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer assessment</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Creating posters,</li> <li>▪ Presentations</li> </ul>

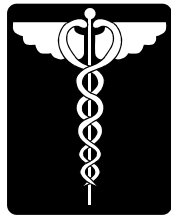
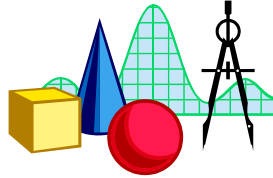
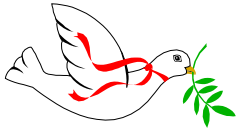
## Supplementary Resources

- Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA). 2006. *Education Is Our Buffalo*. Edmonton, Alberta: ATA.
- Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett. 1996. *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Dramatists Play Service)
- Eric Walters. 1998. *War of the Eagles* (Orca Book Publishers)
- *Whale Rider*, (film)

## Student Handout No 1

### Recognizing Symbols

Identify the meaning of as many of the following symbols as you can. You may consult with a partner on this assignment.



Think of other symbols that you know. Be prepared to explain their meaning.

## Student Handout No 2

### Exploring Cultural Symbols

In this assignment, you will have the chance to explore symbols from another culture.

You may use library resources, the Internet, and your own knowledge and background to complete this assignment.

If you are doing an Internet search, you may find the keywords *symbol* and *culture* useful. Match these with the name of the culture or group you are investigating.

Steps in completing this assignment:

1. Choose a group or culture whose symbols you will investigate. Your teacher may have some suggestions for you.
2. Find up to five symbols of the culture or group to explain. In your explanation, you should include the following:
  - The name of the culture or group
  - A description and/or drawing or image of the symbol
  - Important characteristics of the symbol
  - Any historical background as to why this object has become symbolic
3. You may present your information to the class using a poster, a PowerPoint presentation or actual artifacts.
4. You will be assessed by the class on this assignment. Be sure to read over the assessment rubric.

### Student Handout No 3

#### Assessment of Cultural Symbols Projects

You will assess the projects according to two criteria: content and presentation.

Content	5—Excellent The information was interesting and clear. The descriptions were complete and gave good detail. Information was given about the symbol that helped me to understand it and the culture.
	4—Proficient The information was clear. The descriptions were complete with some detail. Additional information about the symbol and its importance was provided.
	3—Satisfactory Information was clear. Descriptions were adequate. Basic information was provided.
	2—Limited Fewer than three symbols were described. The explanations were not clear or did not give much information.
	1—Poor I did not learn anything from the information. Descriptions were hard to understand, unclear or incomplete. Fewer than three symbols were described.

Presentation	5—Excellent The method of presentation was interesting and effective. Visuals were clear, creative, precisely used and easy to understand. The information was readable and understandable.
	4—Proficient The method of presentation was effective. Visuals were clear and easy to understand. I understood the information being presented.
	3—Satisfactory The method of presentation was clear. Visuals helped to make the presentation understandable.
	2—Limited The presentation was hard to follow. I did not clearly understand the information being presented.
	1—Poor The presentation was confusing and the presenter appeared unprepared. Visuals were not effective or were non-existent.