

Signs of the Nation

Read how national symbols and founding documents carry meaning.

SS.5.CG.2.6 "Explain symbols and documents that represent the United States."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the name of each United States symbol or document. Circle a nearby detail that explains what it represents.

Objects and Ideas That Represent the United States

- ① At a school assembly, a flag may stand near the speaker. The United States flag is a national symbol. Its 50 stars represent the states, and its 13 stripes recall the original colonies. These parts connect people today with the nation's beginning. When people see the flag at public events, it can represent the country and its shared history.
- ② Another official symbol is the Great Seal of the United States. It shows an eagle holding an olive branch and arrows. The olive branch suggests peace, while the arrows show readiness to defend the nation. A shield on the eagle's chest has stripes. Above it, the words E Pluribus Unum mean "Out of Many, One." The seal appears on some official papers and represents the federal government and the union of the states.
- ③ Important documents also represent the United States and its ideals. The Declaration of Independence announced that the thirteen colonies were separating from Great Britain in 1776. It states that people have rights and that government gets its power from the consent of the governed. The Constitution sets up the national government and is the nation's highest law. The Bill of Rights, the first ten amendments to the Constitution, protects freedoms such as speech and religion.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How do the stars and stripes help the United States flag represent both the country today and its past?

2 What message do the olive branch and arrows give when they appear together on the Great Seal?

3 Explain one difference between what the Declaration of Independence represents and what the Constitution represents.

4 Why does the Bill of Rights represent United States ideals? Use one freedom named in the passage.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a two-sentence museum label for one symbol or document from the passage. Name it, describe one detail about it, and explain what it represents.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the name of each United States symbol or document. Circle a nearby detail that explains what it represents. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do the stars and stripes help the United States flag represent both the country today and its past?	The 50 stars represent the states today, and the 13 stripes recall the original colonies. Together, they connect the country with its beginning and shared history.
2	What message do the olive branch and arrows give when they appear together on the Great Seal?	They show that the United States values peace but is ready to defend the nation.
3	Explain one difference between what the Declaration of Independence represents and what the Constitution represents.	The Declaration represents independence, rights, and government by consent. The Constitution represents the plan for the national government and the nation's highest law.
4	Why does the Bill of Rights represent United States ideals? Use one freedom named in the passage.	It represents ideals because it protects freedoms, such as freedom of speech or religion.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Great Seal of the United States shows an eagle holding an olive branch and arrows. It represents the federal government and shows peace along with readiness to defend the nation.

Accept any accurate two-sentence label that names a passage item, includes a correct detail, and explains what it represents. Students may choose the flag, Great Seal, Declaration of Independence, Constitution, or Bill of Rights.