Symbols Tell Stories

Read how Oklahoma's name, flag, and seal share its history.

3.C.1.3.A "Describe the significance of symbols represented on the State Seal and Oklahoma Flag, explaining how the name of Oklahoma is derived from the Choctaw language and reflects the state's American Indian heritage."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the Choctaw words and their meanings, circle two flag symbols, and number two State Seal details to track what each tells about Oklahoma.

Oklahoma's Name and Symbols

1. Imagine a name that tells part of a state's story. Oklahoma comes from two Choctaw words: okla means "people," and humma means "red." Together, they mean "red people." The Choctaw are an American Indian nation. The state's Choctaw name is one way Oklahoma honors its American Indian heritage. It reminds us that American Indian peoples and their languages are part of the state's story.

2. On Oklahoma's state flag, a round shield rests on a blue background. It is an Osage shield, a kind once carried by Osage warriors. A peace pipe and an olive branch cross over the shield. Both stand for peace. The shield honors the Osage Nation and its history. Together, these symbols show that American Indian heritage and the hope for peace matter to Oklahoma.

3. The State Seal tells more of this story. At its center, an American Indian man and a settler shake hands. Their handshake stands for friendship and cooperation. Around them are five parts with symbols of the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole Nations. These parts honor those nations' place in Oklahoma's history. The seal shows that many people helped shape the state.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the name Oklahoma show the state's American Indian heritage?

2. Why is the Osage shield an important symbol on the flag?

3. What idea do the peace pipe and olive branch share?

4. What do the handshake and the five parts of the State Seal tell about Oklahoma?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a three-sentence museum label for someone seeing Oklahoma's flag and State Seal for the first time. Explain what one symbol from each means, and tell how the state's Choctaw name adds to the story of its American Indian heritage.

ANSWER KEY

Symbols Tell Stories

GRADE 3 · 3.C.1.3.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the Choctaw words and their meanings, circle two flag symbols, and number two State Seal details to track what each tells about Oklahoma. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the name Oklahoma show the state's American Indian heritage?	**Oklahoma comes from the Choctaw words okla, meaning "people," and humma, meaning "red." Its Choctaw name honors an American Indian language.**
2	Why is the Osage shield an important symbol on the flag?	**It honors the Osage Nation and its history.**
3	What idea do the peace pipe and olive branch share?	**Both stand for peace.**
4	What do the handshake and the five parts of the State Seal tell about Oklahoma?	**The handshake stands for friendship and cooperation. The five parts honor the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole Nations and their place in Oklahoma's history.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Osage shield on the flag honors the Osage Nation and its history. The handshake on the State Seal stands for friendship and cooperation. Oklahoma comes from the Choctaw words okla, meaning "people," and humma, meaning "red," so its name also shows the state's American Indian heritage.

Accept any accurate flag symbol and State Seal symbol with meanings supported by the passage. For the museum label, look for a connection between the Choctaw name and Oklahoma's American Indian heritage.