

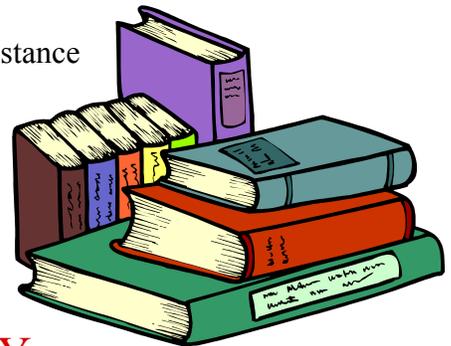


Sandy Garrett, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Oklahoma State Department of Education

Symbols & Service: A Study in Literary Symbols and Literacy

AREA OF SERVICE	Education
COMMUNITY NEED	Language development and reading assistance
TYPE OF SERVICE	Direct
SUBJECT AREA/LEVEL	Language Arts/6-12
CONCEPT	Symbols



SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECT SUMMARY

This secondary school project uses student learning from a study of literary elements and symbolism to solve a community problem or need for literacy assistance. Participating students will conduct a tutoring project or another related literacy initiative.

LEARNING STANDARDS

Oklahoma Priority Academic Student Skills

Language Arts

Visual Literacy: The student will interpret, evaluate, and compose visual messages

Standard 1: Interpret Meaning

Standard 2: Evaluate Media

Standard 3: Compose Visual Messages

Reading/Literature: The student will apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, appreciate, and respond to a variety of texts.

Standard 2: Comprehension

Standard 3: Literature

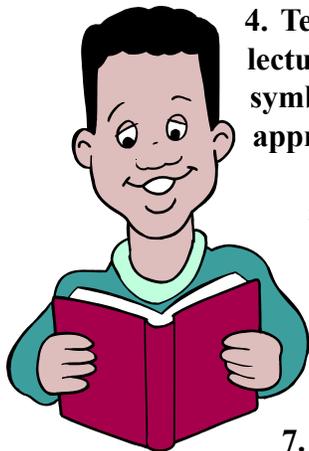
Information Literacy

Social Responsibility

Standard 7: The student who contributes positively to the learning community and to society is information literate and recognizes the importance of information to a democratic society.

Symbols & Service Implementation Outline

1. Teacher will initiate a group decoding exercise to familiarize students with the concept of symbols.
2. Teacher will guide students to reflect on their experience in decoding exercise.
3. Teacher will guide students to consider symbols as a foundation for literacy.



4. Teacher will present information related to the concept of symbols through lecture, text assignments, films, visuals and guest speakers. Topics will include symbolic speech, visual messages, strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, appreciate, and respond to text, and literacy.

5. Under teacher direction, students will practice and demonstrate their new learning and understanding of topics outlined in #4.

6. Students will identify a need in their community and design service project(s) that utilize the knowledge and skills developed in #4 and #5.

7. Students will refine their service project(s), identify any local, state, or national laws, agencies, or policies that relate to the identified community need and their proposed service, and articulate the civic and public meaning of their proposed service.

8. Students will implement their service project and share their accomplishments with the community.

TEACHER'S GUIDE Symbols & Service

Teacher's Note

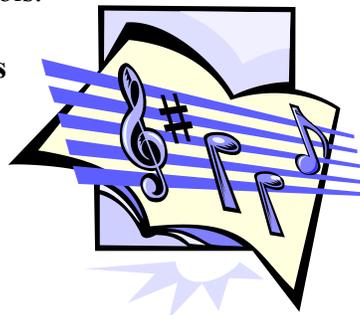
Using the concept of “symbols” the teacher will engage students in an active unit of study around the language arts topic of “literary elements” to solve a student identified community problem. Teachers may collaborate with others to broaden student understanding of the concept including formal government symbols, mathematical symbols, scientific symbols, and art and music symbols.

1. Teacher will initiate a group decoding exercise to familiarize students with the concept of symbols.

Activity 1: Play a portion of a rap song, a classical tune, or a Broadway hit and ask students to “decode” the meaning of the music and/or lyrics.

Activity 2: Play a game of charades with students.

Activity 3: Play a recording of a hymn, poem, or speech in a language other than English.



Activity 4: Distribute a rebus to students to solve in groups.

Activity 5: Ask students to brainstorm/draw a list of household symbols.

Activity 6: Distribute a copy of the Greek alphabet. Instruct students to write their names on a slip of paper using the Greek alphabet. Collect the alphabets. Collect the slips then redistribute and ask students to decode the names on the slips then return it to the proper classmate.

Activity 7: Ask students to draw a “tattoo” design on a sheet of paper that represents something or someone special to them. Collect and post the drawings. Ask students to review all of the “tattoo” designs and match each drawing with a classmate. Continue with a study of *Tinker v. Des Moines* (1969) and *Stephenson v. Davenport Community School District* (1997) as presented in the Landmark Supreme Court Cases “Gangs, Tattoos, and Symbolic Speech” activity referenced at www.landmarkcases.org. In this activity, students will review the case and revise a school policy that prohibits the display of gang symbols so that it is constitutional. Teacher may discuss the history and laws related to tattoos and health concerns regarding this practice.

2. Teacher will guide students to reflect on their experience in decoding exercise.

Activity 1: Guide students to reflect on their experiences from the previous activity and to discuss the similarities and differences between the symbols they used in the activity and the words they use in daily conversation.

Activity 2: Discuss with students their understanding of symbols and symbolic speech. Discuss the uses of different systems of symbols i.e. science and the Greek alphabet; Morse code; map symbols.

Activity 3: Encourage students to discuss the ease or difficulty of decoding the symbols used in the activity. Ask students to discuss how they would feel if they did not have a key to decode the symbols or any other knowledge that would allow them to understand the messages in the activities.

Activity 4: Ask students if they know of any other historical uses of symbols and to identify other symbol systems. Ask students to discuss the uses and importance of those symbols or systems.



Activity 5: Ask students to share how and when they learned to read. Ask them to discuss any difficulties they have had learning to read or to comprehend what they read. Ask them to talk about the importance of understanding what the words mean and the difficulties they have when they don't understand the words or their meanings. (This can be done as a group, in pairs, or as an individual written reflection.)

3. Teacher will guide students to consider symbols as a foundation for literacy.

Activity 1: Display international signs and symbols and ask students to guess the meanings of each of the symbols. Discuss the different purposes of signs and symbols e.g. information, safety, advertising. Discuss with student different ways that these signs and symbols are used and how they convey their meanings. Ask students to discuss how color, shape, wording, and pictures contribute to the impact of the signs.

4. Teacher will present information related to the concept of symbols and symbolism through lecture, text assignments, films, visuals and guest speakers. Topics will include literary elements, symbolic speech, visual messages, strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, appreciate, and respond to text, and literacy.

Activity 1: Read aloud one or two books from the Service-Learning Bookshelf to assist students understand the importance of language development and literacy. Talk to students about the importance of understanding readers' emotions and recognizing how difficult reading is for some students. Tell them that "books remind us that the opportunity – as well as the ability – to read is closely linked to the rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness in modern society." (Cathryn Berger Kaye, M.A., *The Complete Guide to Service-Learning*.)



Activity 2: Ask students to make a collage that symbolizes the importance of literacy.

5. Under teacher direction, students will practice and demonstrate their new learning and understanding of topics outlined in #4.

Activity 1: Students will read and identify the literary elements of assigned materials with special emphasis on symbols and symbolism.

Activity 2: Students will locate a children's book that contains the same literary elements as found in the assigned materials and write a comparison essay based on the shared elements of the two works.

6. Students will identify a need in their community and design service project(s) that utilize the knowledge and skills developed in #4 and #5.

Activity 1: Students may identify a need in their community related to literacy to design a service project that utilizes their knowledge and skills of symbols, reading comprehension, and literary elements. For assistance in designing a service or action project refer to the resources listed at the end of this unit.

Activity 2: The teacher will work with an after-school program coordinator to coordinate reading partners. High school students will be paired with elementary-aged students to provide direct service by working one-on-one utilizing different reading techniques. High school students will complete a total of ten hours of service with their reading partners. High school students will help their partners develop reading strategies to increase reading proficiency. Service hours will be logged and a journal kept examining the progress.

Activity 3: High school students will also select one of the following options for encouraging reading throughout the community:

A) Students may volunteer at a local library by facilitating a story hour for children. Students will read a collection of children's books and share with the audience the importance of reading. They will highlight any symbolism present within the books. Other activities will be planned for the children, which foster reading skills. The students will work with the librarian to select appropri-

ate reading materials and activities. Students will submit a summary of the books to be graded. They will also write a journal reflecting on the event. Story hours will be publicized in the local newspaper.



B) Students may volunteer at the local library by facilitating a community book talk. Students will work with a local librarian to select a book for the book talk. Students will read and outline the book. They will facilitate a community book talk at the library. Students will share insights gained from the book and discuss any symbolism found. Students will submit a summary of the book to be graded. They will also write a journal reflecting on the event. The book talk will be publicized in the local newspaper.

7. Students will refine their service project(s), identify any local, state, or national laws, agencies, or policies that related to the identified community need and their proposed service, and articulate the civic and public meaning of their proposed service.

Activity 1: Students will analyze and refine their project design and develop a rubric for assessing the personal and community impact of their service.

Activity 2: Students will explore the deeper civic and public meanings of their service and synthesize any formal or informal government structures or laws related to the causes or effects of the community need addressed in their project. Students will write a paragraph, essay, or journal entry that reflects their understanding of the concept of symbols related to literacy, government, and personal responsibility.

Activity 3: Students will develop a cause/effect chart related to the community need then discuss any questions raised by the chart relative to their own lives and the general welfare of their community.

8. Students will implement their service project and share their accomplishments with the community.

Activity 1: Students will implement their project(s).

Activity 2: Students will document their learning and their service in a reflective report or other manner suitable for the public.

INTERNET and OTHER RESOURCES

Lingo

<http://www.thesourcefym.com/teenlingo/index.asp?PrinterFriendly=True&>

Greek Alphabet

<http://www.ibiblio.org/koine/greek/lessons/alphabet.html>

<http://www.physlink.com/Reference/GreekAlphabet.cfm>

http://www.logoi.com/learn_the_greek_alphabet.html

Math Symbols

<http://people.bu.edu/jlbrown/Site/symbols.html>

Code Talkers

<http://www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq61-4.htm>

<http://www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq61-2.htm>

Tutoring

<http://www.nwrel.org/request/oct96/article7.html>

<http://www.nwrel.org/learns/resources/servltn/#service>

<http://www.igesl.org/Literacy.htm>

Symbolic Speech

<http://www.landmarkcases.org/tinker/home.html>

<http://www.landmarkcases.org/tinker/gangs.html>

Literacy

<http://www.nifl.gov/>

http://www.nifl.gov/nifl/facts/facts_overview.html

<http://www.famlit.org/ProgramsandInitiatives/index.cfm>

<http://www.literacyvolunteers.org/home/>