

Lesson 4.1

THE MAINE STATE SEAL

Objective: Students will explore the significance of the symbols on the Maine State Seal and evaluate their relevance for present day Maine.

Materials:

- **Doc 4.1:** Copies of Maine State Seal for students
- Overhead of the seal
- Markers, paper, magazines for cutting, crayons, etc.

Timing: Three class periods

Procedure:

1. Put the Maine State Seal up on the overhead. Discuss with the class the fact that the images on the seal represent different things about Maine: its economy, its land, and its people.
2. Have students suggest the significance of the images on the seal. Ask questions to prompt them:
 - Why is one man holding a scythe?
 - Why is the other standing with an anchor?
 - What is pictured in the background? Why the pine tree?
 - What is the significance of the star?
 - What does Dirigo mean? ("I lead" in Latin)
 - Why might the men be looking off toward the right? What do the expressions on their faces convey?
 - What do you think the overall message of this seal is? In one sentence?
3. The seal focuses primarily on Maine industry (farming, sailing, shipping, logging, and hunting). Ask students: what subjects are missing from the seal? Are all people equally represented? All regions of Maine? What else might have been included? Was the seal representative of Maine in 1820? Does it represent Maine today?
4. Have students create their own Maine state seals representing present-day Maine. Each seal should include at least 4 symbols of present-day Maine, as well as a new motto for the state of Maine. Each student should write a paragraph explaining their seal. Give them enough time and materials to create a beautiful state seal.
5. Allow each student to present his or her seal and describe each of the symbols and their significance. Hang the finished seals in a prominent place in the classroom.

Evaluation: Provide students with a rubric that details your expectations for the project. Allow them to evaluate their own performance, then evaluate them yourself, using the same standards.

Follow Up Activities:

- Do this activity at the beginning of your semester on Maine studies. At the end of your semester, have students evaluate their own seals. Would they change anything based on what they've learned?
- Have students research the seals of other states and compare them to Maine's.
- Students may include their seal in their Unit Portfolio, if they choose.

Alignment with Learning Results:

Grade Level: **6th-8th**

Content Area: Social Studies: **HISTORY**

Standard: **Historical Knowledge, Concepts, Themes, and Patterns**

Students understand major eras, major enduring themes, and historic influences in the history of Maine, the United States, and various regions of the world.

Descriptor **E1b:** Analyze and critique major historical eras, major enduring themes, turning points, events, consequences, and people in the history of the United States and world and the implications for the present and the future.

