



Today's Lesson Plans



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American Symbol Project

**SPECIAL EDITION:
TECHNOLOGY &
INFORMATION
LITERACY**

Mr. Twedt's 5th grade students at Purdy Elementary School get a double dose of fun and life-skills in his Geography class. Working with Ms. Shicker, Purdy's Library Media Director, students create a Web page about American symbols.

In the process, they apply state standards for social studies and technology and information literacy, learn about American history, and get some "hands-on" experience creating Web pages with MS FrontPage. Samples of student projects can be seen at:

<http://www.fortschools.org/purdywebs/twedt/projects.htm>

Each student analyzes an American symbol, focusing on three questions:

1. What is the meaning of the symbol and what does it represent?
2. What part did it play in American history?
3. When and how is it used to represent America?

The project begins with a drawing that assigns each student a topic. Working in the LMC, students locate appropriate information and sources and complete a bibliography. Using

concept organizing software in Purdy's LMC (Inspiration 6.0), students create an information web to organize notes from their sources.

Then, students locate at least 2 pictures and 2 links to related Web sites to include in their Web page (again, in the LMC). Before actually creating Web pages, Mr. Twedt has students sketch designs to plan their Web page's layout.

Students construct their Web page in the LMC using MS FrontPage. As a culminating, fun activity, students complete the unit by presenting their Web to the class and sharing what they have learned.

Evaluating the American Symbol Project

A rubric is used to evaluate students' projects along 5 areas:

Work Habits

- Time use & organization
- Self-direction, follow directions

Research Skills

- Locates text (2), Internet (2) sources and complete a bibliography of resources
- Locates pictures (2) and links (2)

Content

- Organizes correctly on Inspiration
- Answers 3 Topic questions

Product

- Design/creativity
- Information clear/easy to understand
- Proofreads and revises.

Wisconsin's Model Academic Standards For Information And Technology Literacy: Mr. Twedt's American Symbol Project

Media and Technology

- A.8.3 Use a computer and productivity software to organize and create information.
- A.8.5 Use media and technology to create and present information.

Information and Inquiry

- B.8.1 Define the need for information.
- B.8.2 Develop information seeking strategies.
- B.8.3 Locate and access information sources.
- B.8.4 Evaluate and select information from a variety of print, nonprint, and electronic formats.
- B.8.5. Record and organize information.
- B.8.6. Interpret and use information to solve the problem or answer the question.
- B.8.7. Communicate the results of research and inquiry in an appropriate format.



Information and Technology Literacy Standards Covered

A.8.3. Computers are used in this project as a research tool to located information (both print and nonprint), as an organization tool for creating an “*information web*” (using Inspiration 6.0), and to create a hyperlinked document to present information about the topic.

A.8.5 Students utilize Purdy’s electronic catalog, a Web browser, Inspiration 6.0, and MS FrontPage to create and present the results of their research as a HTML document with hyperlinks.

B.8.1. Each student is assigned an American symbol to research and each must identify information about that symbol that will allow them to answer three questions about the topic.

B.8.2. Once students are given topics and the requirements of the assignments, they work out strategies for locating resources in the LMC (both print and nonprint). The application of this standard could be enhanced by reviewing the structure of the assignment (see next section).

B.8.3. Students are required to locate information from both print and nonprint media and are required to locate at least 2 appropriate pictures and links to relevant Web sites.

B.8.4. Students are required to look at a variety of print, nonprint, and electronic formats. Their selections are included in their final bibliography and project. The application of this standard could be enhanced by reviewing the structure of the assignment (see next section).

B.8.5. Information is recorded in the LMC and a bibliography is completed using a format from the LMS. After taking notes and citing their sources, students create an “*information web*” using Inspiration 6.0.

B.8.6. To apply the information that has been selected, cited in a bibliography, and organized into an information web, students answer three questions about what the symbol means, it’s role in US History, and how it is used to represent America.

B.8.7. The results of this research project are presented in a Web page using MS FrontPage. For the final activity, each student presents their Web page to the class. The application of this standard could be enhanced by reviewing the structure of the assignment (see next section).

Information and Technology Literacy Standards Not Covered

After talking with Mr. Twedt, I have identified standards and benchmarks that directly apply. In this section, some standards that do not appear directly in the project as outlined to me are presented. Of course, not all projects need all standards. As technology skills are more fully integrated across the curriculum, it is possible to re-evaluate some projects to enhance their uses of technology.

Mr. Twedt takes the initiative to integrate technology in his classroom and the project as presented to me does include appropriate technology skills for the students he works with. The ideas presented here are not meant to challenge Mr. Twedt’s assessment of student readiness; they are merely thoughts on areas that might be incorporated in the future if it was appropriate to extend the application of Wisconsin’s standards and benchmarks into this project.

A.8.1. Except in the broadest sense, this standard is not really applied – and every project does not need to include every standard. Assuming the hardware and software is available, this project would be easily adapted to utilize graphic images from a scanner, digital camera or other digital sources. Cropping pictures for the Web page might be an appropriate addition to this project.

A.8.2 Again, this standard is present in the broadest sense. Assuming that students are learning about other types of software, this project could incorporate integrated software.

A.8.4. This standard could be incorporated (assuming the network allowed this), by having students email a short message about there project along with a hyperlink to their Web page to a group that has been set up for that purpose (other teachers, possibly in other academic areas). This could be the first step in turning this into a multi-discipline project.

A.8.5. While students do present their Web pages to the class, Mr. Twedt did not indicate that the students were directed to design their Web pages with this in mind. HTML will support most of the multi-media features that are used in presentations such as PowerPoint and Hyperstack. The project could incorporate more as to how to effectively utilize the multi-media capabilities of FrontPage.

A.8.6. Mr. Twedt did indicate that his project was probably the first one students complete at Purdy to create a Web page – because this is often students’ first exposure to creating Webs, Mr. Twedt has appropriately set this project up as an introductory activity. As these types of skills are integrated elsewhere in the curriculum, it might be appropriate to spend some time looking at what makes Web pages effective communication tools. As students look for Web resources, they could complete rubrics to evaluate the pages that they review. Students could then apply this same evaluative rubric to review the Web pages of their classmates.

B.8.8. This standard is not directly addressed, but could be easily incorporated by having students reflect on their projects and identify how they might complete a similar task. This could be done as a short writing assignment or a group discussion.



Standards for independent learning (C) and the learning community (D) do are not really present in the project as described to me. Again, this is not a deficiency, it merely reflects the project as used at this point-in-time based on Mr. Twedt's analysis of what his students are ready to achieve and what the school's technology is ready to support. The following ideas are presented to further a discussion as to how information and technology skills might be worked into this type of activity.

C.8.1. Students could make this a more independent project by having more choices in the symbol they research and the type of format they want to present it in. A fourth question could be added, "*What does this symbol mean to me and my life?*"

C.8.2. Students might be asked to locate some literature that relates to the Web page. While this could be done in collaboration with a literature class, students might also just create a listing of books and summaries about books that are available and that address their topic. Using online catalogs and Web sites, this information could be located without requiring students to actually obtain or read the books.

C.8.3. Along the same lines, students might be asked to locate literature that talks about their topic from a different point of view (another race, culture, or country).

C.8.4. The basic objectives of the American Symbols project could be presented to the class and discussed as a group to see if students can articulate desired outcomes for this unit and develop a plan to meet these objectives and evaluate the success of their work in attaining these goals.

D.8.1. While Mr. Twedt does incorporate work habits into his assessment; students could be grouped with each student completing 1 page of a multi-page Web. Collaboratively, they would need to create a Home page and work out a navigation structure for their Web.

D.8.2. This standard is rather broadly written and could be a challenge to directly incorporate in any 1 academic project, but this important skill can be embedded in a series of projects that use LMC and Internet resources. The expectations of students when using the LMC and computer lab reflect this standard across the curriculum.

D.8.3. Respecting intellectual property rights is an important outcome of research projects. While students completing Mr. Twedt's American Symbol project do complete a bibliography, their Web pages are not required to cite sources. When projects are posted on the Internet, the use of copyrighted material may not be considered "*fair use.*" It may be appropriate to post these projects on a

password protected site. At the very least, it may be appropriate for students to more fully cite their sources in their Web pages. Currently, this is only required in a bibliography that is completed in the LMC, but not incorporated in the final Web project.

D.8.4. This is also a broadly written standard that can be embedded in a variety of projects that integrate academic skills, technology, and the LMC. Many of the American symbols that students use as a topic relate to freedoms that American's enjoy. When appropriate, students might be encouraged to relate how their American symbol relates to how the free-flow of information contributes to an informed citizenry and furthers the democratic process.

The Library Media Specialist As An Instructional Consultant, Information Specialist And Teacher: Mr. Twedt's American Symbol Project

If technology and LMC resources are going to be effectively used, the Library Media Specialists needs *to be actively engaged in the process of designing lessons that move students towards Wisconsin's Model Academic Standards for Technology and Information Literacy.* Mr. Twedt's American Symbol Project provides an excellent case study as to how the LMC, Ms. Shicker, promotes utilization of LMC resources and incorporates important skills.

Instructional Consultant. Purdy's Library Media Director, Phyllis Schicker, actively promotes the use of LMC resources across the district. The basic idea for this project came from a professional journal that she regularly reads, *School Library Media Activities Monthly* (June 2002). By sharing ideas with other teachers, the LMS is acting as a leader in embedding technology and information literacy skills across the curriculum. Mr. Twedt liked the idea and wanted to work out a similar activity for his classes. Working collaboratively, the two of them created a project that applies the following skills: researching, problem solving, web searching (on-line encyclopedias and search engines), data organization, and web page development.

Information Specialist. Ms. Shicker promotes the "*Big6.*" an information literacy model that we have reviewed in class. Using this model, she helped Mr. Twedt identify appropriate strategies for students to locate appropriate resources to successfully complete the activity. She has a bibliography format that she uses with students across the curriculum to help students organize their sources and this was incorporated into the American Symbol Project.

Teacher. Ms. Schicker was extensively involved in the implementation of this lesson plan, providing direct instruction to students in locating and using text sources, Internet searching, bibliography, Internet searching, note taking and relating information to topic questions, organizing notes with Inspiration 6.0, creating an outline, setting up folders in MS FrontPage, creating Web pages with MS FrontPage, keying text, setting up the Web's background, and inserting hyperlinks and pictures.

