

Symbolic Landmarks: Determining the Central Idea

In this interdisciplinary lesson, students will explore the symbolism of iconic American landmarks in representing our nation as they work to identify the central idea of a text.

Grades: 3-5		Subject(s): ELA
Focus Standard(s)	R2: Determine a theme or central idea and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize portions of a text. D2.His.17.3-5. Summarize the central claim in a secondary work of history.	
Learning Objective	Students will be able to find the central idea of a text by discussing the key details in large and small groups.	
Materials/Resources	Step Inside Independence Hall White Board or chart paper, marker Sticky notes, pencil	
Vocabulary	Delegates: people who represent a country or group; adopted: officially chosen; quills: writing tools with feather tips dipped in ink	
Essential Question(s)	How do important places like Independence Hall, the Lincoln Memorial, and the Capitol show us what our country is all about?	
Anticipatory Set	Ask students the following question, “When someone says the word America, what pictures come to mind?” [students might think of the White House, the Statue of Liberty, the city, etc.] Invite students to share their definition of the word ‘symbol’. [Students should have prior knowledge on this.] Ask students to draw some symbols that represent the United States on the board.	
Mini-Lesson/Guided Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show pictures from the article, “Step Inside Independence Hall”. Explain that today they will be reading a story about a very important landmark in the United States. • Invite students to follow along as you read aloud, pausing periodically to ask the following questions: “Why was Independence Hall important in 1776?” “What did the delegates do there?” “What important event happened there in 1787” • After reading and discussing the article, explain to students that today they will find the main idea (or the most important thing the author wants us to know) of the passage. Provide examples of central ideas from everyday life, such as the main idea of a previous story read, or a movie. 	
Independent Practice	Pair students together and have them read the article again, paying close attention to what they think the most important thing about the story is. Have students write their ideas on a sticky note. Collect the sticky notes and place them on the board. (Alternatively, use an online tool that allows students to post their thoughts where others can see.)	
Closure/Assessment	Read some of the students’ responses and write the most common central idea on the board. [Independence Hall is an old and special place where important documents were made that helped make our country.]	
Optional Activities	Invite students to read more articles about places that symbolize the United States of America. For example: Symbol of Unity at 100, History of the Capitol, Colors Over the Capitol!, President #4: James Madison, A “Perfect” Document	
Differentiation	Adjust lexile® levels as needed; answer questions as a whole group; use accessibility features or read-to-me feature as needed; print copies of article	