

Symbols as History

OVERVIEW

Symbols tell people about values, traditions and belief systems of countries. A closer look at symbols helps us to see what is important to the people of other cultures. Some symbols change over time, while others remain virtually untouched throughout long periods of history.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON

- Students will learn the definition of symbol and give examples of symbols.
- Students will learn that other countries have symbols that are important to them.

MATERIALS

- images of 5 Korean symbols (should be cut into 5 strips)
- worksheet #1 (explanations for each Korean symbol; these should be cut into 5 strips)
- crayons
- worksheet #2 (symbols questions)
- worksheet #3 (Korean symbol game)
- magazines, optional
- tag board, optional

Time Frame: 1 day

THE LESSON

1. Point to the U.S. flag and ask students to talk about what its symbols mean. Encourage students to think about other symbols that are meaningful. Brainstorm and make a chart of all the symbols students mention. Some suggestions are: Olympic rings, Olympic torch, presidential seal, monuments, coat of arms. Try to categorize the symbols suggested by the students. Are the symbols political? familial? regional? holiday? historic?

Symbol: a material object used to represent something else, sometimes immaterial.

2. Show the students the five Korean symbols. Mounting these on tag board is a good idea. Have students brainstorm what they think each symbol is and what it might represent (for example, event in history, important invention, or hero).
3. Divide the students into five groups and give each group one symbol and its corresponding worksheet. Have students read and discuss their symbol in a group. Ask the groups to highlight six words in their reading that best describe their symbol. Then bring the groups together and have each group present information about its symbol.
4. Examine each symbol again and discuss whether the U.S. has a comparable symbol. For the "Turtle Ships," for example, compare the iron warships of the U.S. Civil War. The Monitor and Merrimack can be researched.

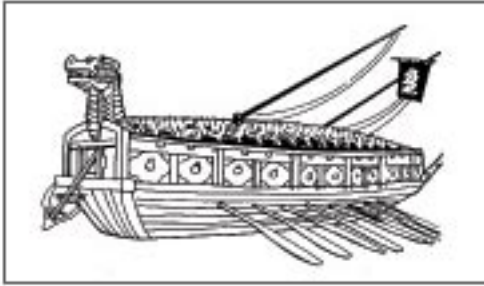
ASSESSMENT

1. Use worksheet #2 as an evaluation tool. Students can do this individually or as a group.
2. Color and cut out worksheet #3. This symbol game can be played by younger children by replacing the words with pictures.
3. Children of all ages can create a book of symbols and include the Korean symbols they learned as well as those in the community and rest of the country. Each image they draw should have corresponding written information.

4. Students can collect many symbols and categorize them. Have students create a symbol for the class or for their families. These can be used for a bulletin board, or have students research the development of the U.S. flag and other patriotic symbols.

WORKSHEET #1

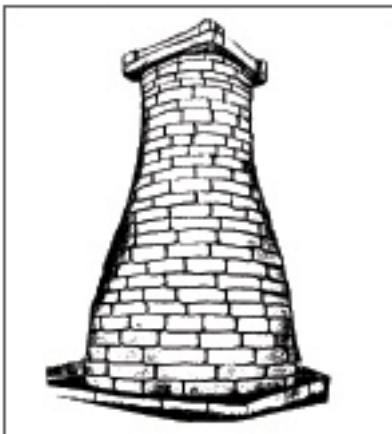
1. Yi Soon-shin became a military officer when he was 21 years old. He was a brave soldier. When he was 44 years old, he prepared for an invasion by Japan by building a new kind of battleship. He called it the "Turtle Ship." The ship was framed in wood but was covered with an iron shell and spikes.



The first Turtle Ship is said to have been 113 feet long, 14 feet high and 10 feet wide. The boat had one gun on its head, which was the front of the ship. Other guns were mounted on the boat. Men moved long oars on both sides of the boat to propel it through the ocean. Sails also helped the ship to move.

No original Turtle Ships exist today. We can only imagine them from the artists' drawings. On August 1, 1997, the Korean Association of Seattle, Washington, build a replica of the Turtle Ship and paraded it in an annual Torchlight Parade. The Turtle Ship took first prize in the parade's special entry category.

2. In 647, an observatory was built to study the stars. It was built in the ancient Silla capital, Kyongju. Kyongju is in southeastern Korea. Please review a map to see where Kyongju is located. The observatory, named *Chomsongdae*, is still standing today. Some people believe that it is the oldest observatory in Asia.



A queen ruled Silla when the observatory was built. Her name was Queen Sondok. The observatory is 29 feet tall and shaped like an old-fashioned milk bottle. It is made up of 365 stones, one stone for each day in the year.

One square window is located in the middle of the observatory and faces the south. People probably used a ladder to climb up inside the observatory.

Studying the stars helped people decide when to plant and harvest. Also, studying the heavens helped people develop calendars.

3. The South Korean flag is called *Taegukki* . It was created in 1882 to symbolize Korea's independence from Japan. The flag is a symbol for the people of South Korea. It has four colors: white, red, blue and black.



The circle is called *taeguk* and represents the people. The circle is divided into two equal parts for perfect balance. The parts are red and blue. The comma shapes in the circle represent opposites: light and dark, heat and cold, black and white.

The four sets of lines represent balance and opposites. The three unbroken lines stand for heaven. The three broken lines stand for the earth. The corner of the flag with two solid lines and one broken in the middle represent fire. The two broken lines with one solid line in the middle represent water.

The white background on the flag represents the land of Korea.

4. This is a picture of one of the most famous buildings in Korea. It is a temple called *Popchusa* (BOB choo sa). It was built in 553 and made of wood. It has five carved levels with curved roofs.



There is a statue of Buddha, the "Enlightened One," at the temple. The statue is 108 feet high and is the tallest statue of Buddha in Korea. Buddhism is the religion of many people in Korea. Buddhism started in India and spread to China, Korea and then Japan. Many people believed that a pagoda would bring happiness and wealth to surrounding towns.

This pagoda was built around a center pole of wood to allow it to sway if an earthquake should occur.

5. The tiger is an important symbol in Korea. The tiger is often featured in Korean folktales and is considered a messenger for the mountain deities. The tiger is also portrayed as a helpful friend of the people.



The official mascot for the 1988 Summer World Olympics was a mascot named "Hodori." The theme of the 1988 Olympics was "harmony" and "progress." The tiger is shown as friendly and welcoming.

WORKSHEET #2

Name: _____

Date: _____

1. What is a symbol?

2. Give an example of a Korean symbol.

3. What does this symbol mean to Korean people?

4. Give an example of a U.S. symbol.

5. What does this symbol mean for people of the U.S.?

6. What symbol best represents Korea and why?

7. Pick either your school or state and draw a symbol for it below.

WORKSHEET #3

DRAW A SYMBOL BELOW

<p>A Turtle Ship made by General Yi Soon-sin</p>	<p>My name is</p> <hr/>	<p>A Tiger who is a friend to people</p>
<p>An Observatory to study the stars and heaven</p>	<p>The Flag of South Korea</p>	<p>A Pagoda with five stories</p>

My Book on
Important Symbols of
Korea

by _____

