



America

Heritage and Culture



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OUR NATION'S SYMBOLS

If you're a sports fan, you probably like to show pride in your team. You might wear your team's colors and its symbols.

You use symbols to show patriotism, or pride in our country. You show patriotism when you display the United States flag. The flag is one symbol that represents our American values and heritage. Values are the standards and behaviors that matter to a people. Heritage is our shared history and traditions.

Look at some important American symbols. How does each one represent our values and heritage? How do they create a sense of community among Americans?



↑ **The bald eagle** became our national bird in 1782. Why? It is found only in North America. It is also a symbol of strength and

freedom. The bald eagle appears on \$1 bills. It also appears on many stamps, coins, and government buildings.

→ In 1777, the nation's first official flag had 13 stripes and 13 stars. The stars and stripes symbolize the 13 colonies. As our country grew, the flag changed. In 1818, Congress decided to add a new star for each new state. Today our flag has 50 stars.



➔ **The Great Seal** dates back to 1782. Like the flag, it has 13 stars and stripes. The

13 arrows in the eagle's talons stand for the power to make war. The olive branch in the other talons stands for the power to

make peace. The ribbon has the motto *E pluribus unum*. This is Latin for "Out of Many, One." The motto celebrates the 13 colonies joining together to form one nation.



➔ **In 1752, a new** bell was hung in the Pennsylvania State House. Words on the bell read, "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land. . . ." For many years, the bell called

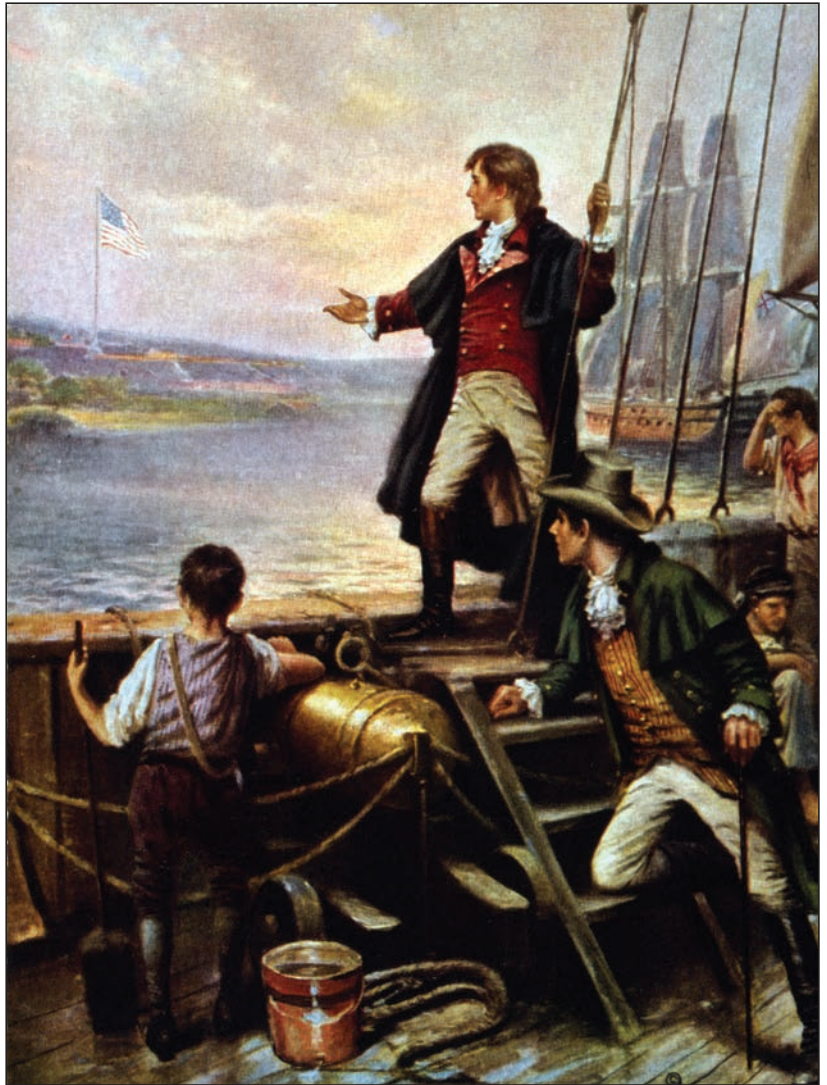
lawmakers to meetings. But its words also inspired many. It was first called the Liberty Bell in 1839. Today, it reminds all of us to "Let freedom ring."

SONGS AND WORDS OF LIBERTY

“O say can you see. . .”

Do you know those words? They begin “The Star Spangled Banner,” our national anthem. A national anthem is a song of patriotism.

People use words and songs to show pride for their country. Those words and songs can stir feelings of bravery, honor, and love. Like the flag and the bald eagle, they create a sense of community among citizens and exemplify cherished ideals. Here are some important expressions of patriotism.



↑ **Francis Scott Key** wrote the “The Star Spangled Banner” in 1814. He wrote it after

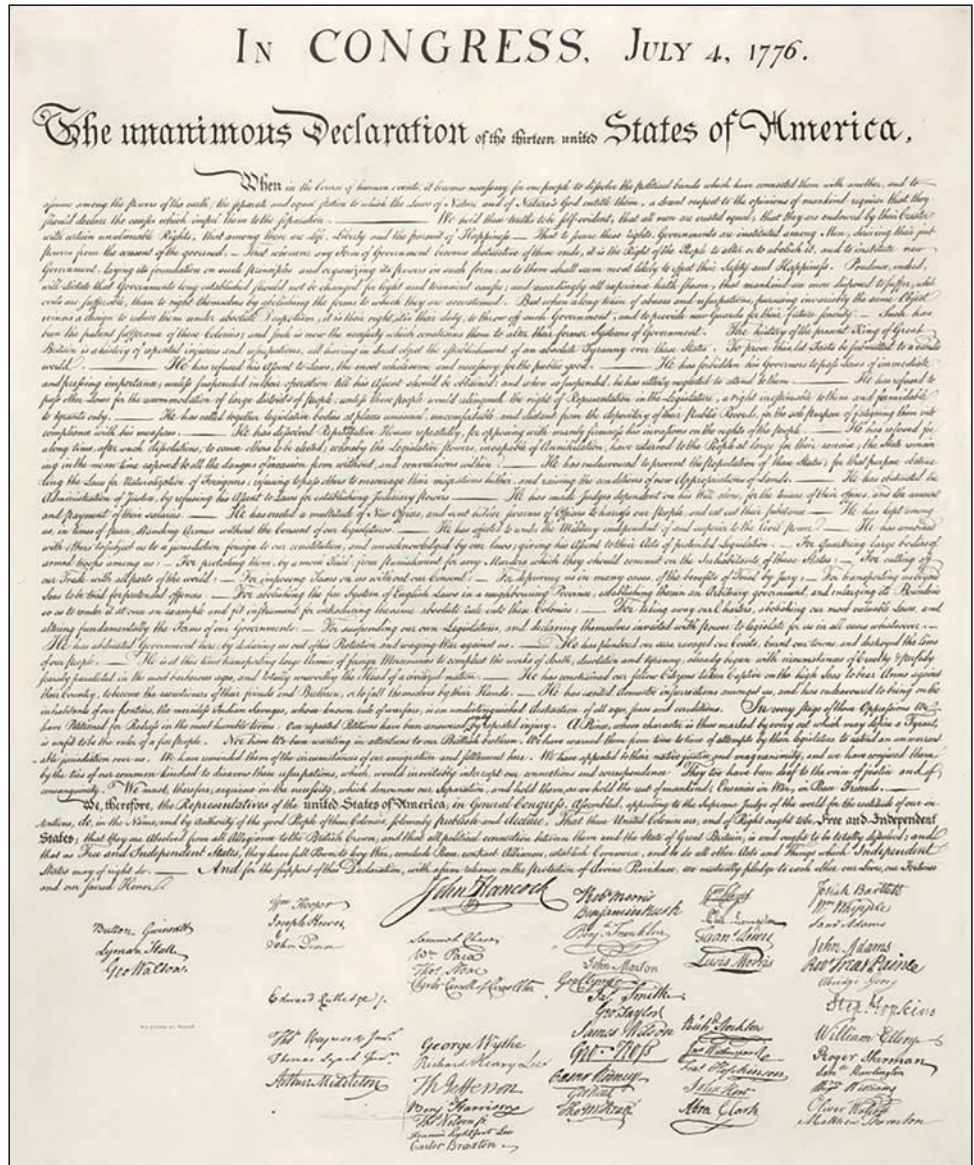
watching a battle at Baltimore’s Fort McHenry. As the smoke cleared, he saw that our flag

was still flying proudly. Congress made it our official anthem on March 3, 1931.

➔ **The words to “The Pledge of Allegiance”** first appeared in a children’s magazine in 1892. A pledge is a promise people make to be loyal or true. Francis Bellamy wrote the words for schoolchildren to recite on the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus’s arrival in the Americas.



➔ On July 4, 1776, the Continental Congress declared the 13 American colonies "free and independent states." They marked their decision with an official document, the Declaration of Independence. The document stated why the colonies were unhappy with Great Britain. It also included ideas about people's rights. The Declaration of Independence is a lasting symbol of our country's basic beliefs.



➔ In 1787, 55 delegates met to write a constitution, a plan for a government, for the United States. They decided on a central government with a separation of powers, or three branches – executive, legislative, and judicial. The states adopted the Constitution in 1788. Since then, amendments have been added to guarantee individual rights. They include freedom of speech, the end to slavery, and the right for women to vote.

PUTTING A FACE ON AMERICAN VALUES

What well-known lady is green and wears a spiked crown? If you said the Statue of Liberty, you'd be right. This United States symbol has a face most people recognize. People – both real and fictional – can be American symbols. How many of these symbols do you know?

➔ **Because Americans** cherish the idea of liberty so much, we celebrate the Statue of Liberty. Standing in New York Harbor, she was the first thing many European immigrants looked for when they arrived in the United States long ago. In one hand she holds up a lit torch to guide people to the U.S. shores. In her other hand is a tablet with the date July 4, 1776, in Roman numerals.

From 1892 to 1954, millions of immigrants were processed at nearby Ellis Island. They brought their culture, or way of life, and shared it with others in their new country. Today, the Statue of Liberty reminds us that we are a country of immigrants.





↑ **Uncle Sam** became a popular symbol of the United States in the mid-1800s. He is often featured in ads and political cartoons. He appears in this

poster used to recruit soldiers during World War I. Over time, the name Uncle Sam has also become a nickname for the United States.



↓ In 1738, **Miss Columbia** became a symbol of the colonies and the lands explored by Columbus. Today,

many places have her name. They include the District of Columbia and Columbia, South Carolina.



↓ **Justice** is another cherished ideal for Americans, so images of Lady Justice often appear near courthouses. She holds a sword to show authority and scales to show that evidence

must be weighed. Lady Justice often wears a blindfold. This reminds us that true justice does not “see” money or power, but judges all people equally and fairly.



AMERICAN LANDMARKS

Imagine giving directions to your home. You might tell someone to turn right at the gas station or go two blocks past the school. In your directions, the gas station and school are landmarks.

A landmark is an important natural or human feature. Natural landmarks, such as the Grand Canyon, are amazing places in nature. Human landmarks may be buildings or markers that recall important people or events. Many landmarks have a special place in America's heritage.



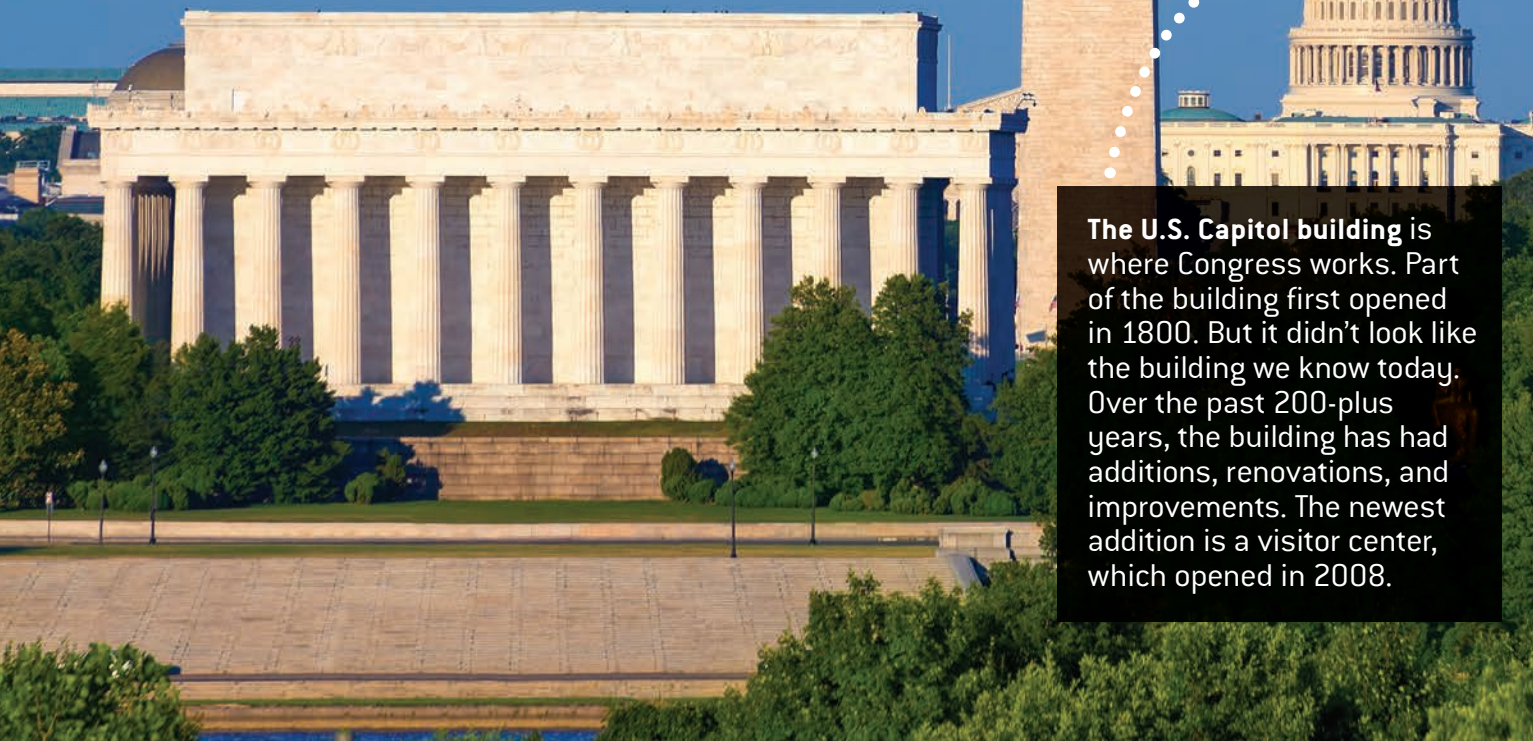
George Washington chose the site for the White House, the building where the president lives and works. In 1800, John Adams became the first president to live there. The British set fire to the White House in 1814, but it was rebuilt and later expanded.



The Washington Monument honors the first president of the United States. When it was completed in 1884, it was the tallest building in the world – about 555 feet high.



The U.S. Capitol building is where Congress works. Part of the building first opened in 1800. But it didn't look like the building we know today. Over the past 200-plus years, the building has had additions, renovations, and improvements. The newest addition is a visitor center, which opened in 2008.



➔ **Mt. Rushmore in South Dakota** honors four great presidents. They are George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, and Abraham Lincoln. Look at those faces. They are rock carvings about 60 feet high.



↑ **Had the signing of the Declaration of Independence** been the only important event that happened at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, it would be a major American landmark.

But Independence Hall is the birthplace of the U.S. Constitution, too. These events together make Independence Hall one of the most important historic landmarks in the U.S.

IN THIS TEMPLE
AS IN THE HEARTS OF THE PEOPLE
FOR WHOM HE SAVED THE UNION
THE MEMORY OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN
IS ENSHRINED FOREVER



A Mighty Memorial

The Lincoln Memorial honors President Abraham Lincoln. About 6 million people visit the memorial each year. Why is the Lincoln Memorial so popular? Lincoln led the country through the Civil War, which divided the country. As president, he preserved the Union. He also abolished slavery and strengthened the government.

The memorial is a building surrounded by 36 columns, one for each of the states when Lincoln died. Grand steps rise to an area with a large marble sculpture of a seated Lincoln. Two of his famous speeches are carved on the walls. Murals representing liberty, freedom, and justice appear above the speeches.

The Lincoln Memorial has been the site of other famous speeches. The memorial has been the backdrop for some important speeches about civil rights because of Lincoln's role in ending slavery and standing for equality.



SCENES OF AMERICAN CELEBRATIONS

Picture an Independence Day picnic or a Memorial Day parade. These celebrations are fun, but they have important meanings for Americans, too. The Fourth of July reminds us how much we value freedom. A Memorial Day parade honors soldiers



↑ In January, people celebrate the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther

King Jr. This holiday honors his peaceful actions for civil rights.

→ In May, Memorial Day honors men and women who died serving in the military. Many towns have parades. Some people visit cemeteries and memorials. They may place flags on graves.



★ January February March April May June



← We celebrate Presidents' Day in February. This holiday once marked the birthday of George Washington. Today, we honor all U.S. presidents on this day.

who have died fighting for the United States.

The U.S. government has declared Independence Day, Memorial Day, and other days as national holidays. On these days, people celebrate important events in U.S. history

or honor people who have served our country. These holidays help Americans remember our traditions and values. They also bring people together as a community.



← **The Declaration of Independence** was signed on July 4, 1776. Every year on that date, we celebrate Independence Day. Many Americans gather to watch fireworks and fly the U.S. flag. We show pride by wearing red, white, and blue.

July

August

September

November

December



← **In 1621, the Pilgrims and the Wampanoags** had a feast to give thanks for a good harvest. Thanksgiving helps us remember that feast. It also reminds Americans to be thankful for what we have. Abraham Lincoln made it official. In 1863, he declared the last Thursday in November a national day of "Thanksgiving." Today, Thanksgiving is celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November.

AMERICAN HERITAGE IN STORIES

Does your family tell stories about its history? Do your parents tell stories about when you were born? Are there stories about how your parents met or how your ancestors came to the United States?

The United States has stories, too. The stories tell about how real people became larger than life. They turned into legends because they stand for ideas that are important to our country, such as bravery and exploration.

Meet some American legends.



↑ **Suppose you wanted to fight** for your country, but couldn't because you were a woman at a time when only men could join the army. What would you do? During the Revolutionary War, Deborah Sampson dressed as a man and joined the Continental Army. She fought hard against the British and was wounded several times. She was honorably discharged at the end of the Revolutionary War.



← **In the early 1800s,** John Chapman traveled through Pennsylvania, Ohio, and other states planting apple trees. That's how he earned the nickname "Johnny Appleseed." He walked nearly everywhere he went, carrying little and wearing a tin pot for a hat. Today, he represents independence and the pioneering spirit.

↓ **Around the time of** the Revolutionary War, Daniel Boone explored and settled parts of Kentucky. He opened the area to new settlers.

Daniel Boone may be the first American hero. He is still remembered today as a legendary adventurer.



↑ **Annie Oakley was a** sharpshooter who became famous in the 1880s. Called “Little Sure Shot,” she showed off her shooting skills in Wild West shows and performances for royalty and heads of government. Annie Oakley became known as a strong, self-reliant woman.



← **“Davy, Davy Crockett . . . king of the wild frontier. . . .”** Know this song? Davy Crockett was a soldier, politician, and adventurer who lived from 1786 to 1836. Because of his many adventures, he is remembered as a folk hero.

STATE SYMBOLS

As Americans, we're proud of our country. But we're also proud of the states where we live or came from. We can feel good about being Americans and about being Nebraskans, or Californians, or New Yorkers.

Just as America has national

symbols, states have symbols, too. States have their own flags, birds, trees, flowers, quarters, seals, and mottos. Most states have colors, songs, mammals, fish, foods, reptiles, and insects, too. Some even have a fossil! Here are just a few.



↑ A state flag often shows the state colors, seal, or other symbols. The California flag, for example, shows the state mammal – the grizzly bear. This bear is a popular symbol of the state.



↑ A state tree is usually a tree that is common or important in the state. In Iowa, it's the oak tree.



↑ Some birds represent more than one state. The state bird of Arkansas, Florida, Mississippi, Texas, and Tennessee is the mockingbird.



← You can learn something about a state from its nickname. Delaware calls itself "The First State." Why? Because it was the first state to ratify, or approve, the U.S. Constitution. It became the official nickname in 2002 after a first-grade class in Delaware requested it.

➔ **Some state songs** have the name of the state in it. Can you guess the state song of Oklahoma? It's "Oklahoma," from a popular musical. It was adopted in 1953. Others are songs you might know. "Yankee Doodle" is Connecticut's state song. It was adopted in 1978, but was sung during the Revolutionary War. It was a patriotic song that poked fun at British soldiers.



THINK PIECE!

States have many symbols – sometimes even a state dog or fish or food or rock. What are some of your state symbols? What is the history behind one of them?

Other State Nicknames

What can you learn about these states from just their nicknames?

Alaska	The Last Frontier
Florida	The Sunshine State
Michigan	The Great Lakes State
New Mexico	The Land of Enchantment
Wisconsin	The Badger State

Some states have nicknames for the people who live there. Where do you live if you're a Hoosier or a Tar Heel or a Buckeye?

(That would be Indiana, North Carolina, and Ohio.)

Activities

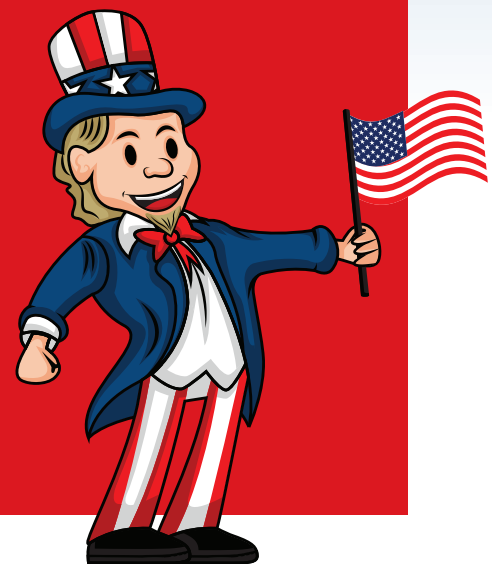


DESIGN A BROCHURE

Suppose you were to visit a landmark, historical site, or monument that is an important part of American heritage. You might want to take home a brochure, or pamphlet, about it. Work with two or three classmates to write, design, and illustrate a brochure about a landmark. Write about what visitors will see. Explain why the landmark is important. Cut out or draw pictures for the brochure. Compare your completed brochure with those others have created.

PATRIOTIC SHOW

Imagine yourself as a singer or actor. Work with classmates to plan and perform a show that celebrates the United States. Sing patriotic songs. Recite famous speeches. Dress as an important historical figure. Perform a skit about a holiday and tell why Americans celebrate it. Plan and rehearse with your group. Then, decide with your teacher on a date for the performance. Invite others to see the show. And have fun!



MAKE CONNECTIONS WITH THESE RELATED TITLES



Heroes

What do Abraham Lincoln, Marie Curie, and Jackie Robinson have in common? They are all heroes. Learn how individuals help shape history and society through their action and character.



Family Histories

How do families remember their past? How is one family different from another? How is it the same? Studying families through photographs, oral history, and other artifacts helps you understand its history.



Leaders and Government

You're a citizen of your community. What does that mean? What does it take to be a good citizen? What are the rules in the community, and who makes them? Who leads, and who follows? You'll find the answers and more right here.



LEARN MORE ONLINE!

- Did you know that there are rules and traditions for flying the United States flag? Read about some of them online!
- States also have constitutions. Many are modeled on the U.S. Constitution. State constitutions are usually longer than the 7,500-word U.S. Constitution. Why?
- Likenesses of real people often appear on our money. These people represent the values we hold as Americans.
- States have landmarks, too. Read about two examples and why they are important.



CALIFORNIA STANDARDS

HSS 2.1 Students differentiate between things that happened long ago and things that happened yesterday.

HSS 2.2.3 Locate on a map where their ancestors live(d), telling when the family moved to the local community and how and why they made the trip.

HSS 2.5 Students understand the importance of individual action and character and explain how heroes from long ago and the recent past have made a difference in others' lives (e.g., from biographies of Abraham Lincoln, Louis Pasteur, Sitting Bull, George Washington Carver, Marie Curie, Albert Einstein, Golda Meir, Jackie Robinson, Sally Ride).

Historical and Social Sciences Analysis Skills

Research, Evidence, and Point of View

3. Students distinguish fact from fiction by comparing documentary sources on historical figures and events with fictionalized characters and events.

Historical Interpretation

3. Students identify and interpret the multiple causes and effects of historical events.



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GRADE 2 TITLES

Family Histories

Why People Work

Location

Heroes

North America

**America: Heritage
and Culture**

Leaders and Government

Communities and Resources

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