Teaching Activity:
Designing a New Minnesota Flag & Seal

Grade Levels: K-8 (can be modified for any grade level)  
Duration: 50-60 min

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See also accompanying PowerPoint slides for images/graphics

1. Introduce lesson by asking students to consider the current state flag and seal  
   (hold up an actual flag or point to image on Slide 2; display image of seal on Slide 3)

   **Questions to consider:**  
   - What do you see?  
   - What do these images/symbols mean or signify?  
   - What is happening on this flag/seal?

2. Once students have pointed out the different aspects of the flag/seal, ask them to consider:

   - What thing(s) do you like about the flag/seal?  
   - What thing(s) do you not like about the flag/seal?

3. Point out the “5 Principles of Good Flag Design” (Slide 4 – Note: These are not laws, but simply guidelines for creating a good flag)

   **Keep It Simple.** The flag should be so simple that a kid can draw it.  
   **Use Meaningful Symbolism.** The flag's images, colors, or patterns should relate to what it symbolizes. Example: Blue symbolizes the water or sky.  
   **Use 2 or 3 Basic Colors.**  
   **No Lettering or Seals.** Don’t use writing of any kind.  
   **Be Distinctive.** Avoid copying other flags.


4. Ask students to consider in what ways Minnesota's flag does or does not follow these principles (Slides 5-6)

(continued on next page)
5. Point out to students that other states have redesigned their flags (Slides 7-8)
   Examples: Mississippi & Utah

   **Questions to consider:**
   • What do you like about these flags?
   • In what ways do they or do they not follow the 5 principles of flag design?
   • Are these new flags better than the old flags?

6. Some cities in the region have also recently adopted new city flags (Slides 9-10)
   Examples: Sioux Falls, SD, and Duluth, MN

   **Questions to consider:**
   • What do you like about these flags?
   • Do they follow the 5 principles of good flag design?

7. Tell students that Minnesota is also redesigning both its flag and seal. All Minnesotans can submit up to 3 entries for each. Tell students they are free to create any design, but it must follow 2 rules (Slide 11):

   • No obscene or profane wording or imagery
   • No symbols, emblems, or likenesses that represent only a single community or person (an example: Someone's face)

   Encourage students to follow the 5 Principles of Good Flag Design when creating their design.

8. Their design for the new state seal must also follow 2 rules (Slide 12):

   • No obscene or profane wording or imagery
   • No symbols, emblems, or likenesses that represent only a single community or person (an example: Someone's face)
   • It should be circular/round

9. Implementation: Hand out 8 ½ x 11 paper and markers/crayons/colored pencils for students to draw their idea(s) for a new flag/seal (younger students) or create a design on the computer with graphic design software (older students).

10. Encourage all students to submit their design(s) to the State Emblems Redesign Commission.

    • All entries are due on October 30, 2023
    • Provide students with a hard copy of the submission form, or show them the online submission form: https://www3.mnhs.org/serc

*This lesson plan can be modified as necessary to accommodate student abilities, age/grade level, and available time.*