

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.

Source: “Good Flag, Bad Flag,” North American Vexillological Association, <https://nava.org/good-flag-bad-flag>

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.