

Tennessee Secretary of State

Blue Book Lesson Plans

Tennessee and American Symbols

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Grade Level: K-1st grade

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For additional lesson plans, click [here](#).



Flag of Tennessee, Artist's original sketch, Blue Book pg. 601

There are a limited number of hard copies of Blue Books available. To see about ordering a set for your classroom, please contact the Secretary of State's office at (615) 741-2819 or one of your local legislators. The online version of the Blue Book is also available [here](#).

Introduction:

The *Tennessee Blue Book* can be used as a main resource to teach many of the government/civics standards at the primary level. Kindergarten and first grade students are learning to identify both state and national symbols. Although this lesson is written for first grade, it can easily be adapted for kindergarten.

Guiding Questions:

- What purpose do state and national symbols serve?
- What makes a good symbol?
- Are the Tennessee symbols good representations of our state?

Learning Objectives: In the course of the lesson, students will...

- Identify Tennessee state symbols.
- Identify national symbols (kindergarten).
- Create visual representation of Tennessee symbols.
- Write an opinion piece explaining why Tennessee symbols are/are not good choices.
- Choose classroom symbols and explain why these symbols were chosen (extension activity).

Curriculum Standards:

K.16 - (Social Studies) Identify the following state and national symbols:

- The American flag and its colors and shapes
- The Tennessee flag and its colors and shapes
- The words of the Pledge of Allegiance
- The Tennessee state flower (Iris) and bird (Mockingbird)
- The national symbols of the bald eagle, Statue of Liberty, and the White House

1.34 - (Social Studies) Create a visual representation, such as a graphic organizer, of Tennessee symbols, including the state tree (Tulip Poplar), flower (Iris), motto (Agriculture and Commerce), animal (raccoon), nickname (Volunteer State), flag, and one song (Tennessee Waltz, Rocky Top). Write an opinion piece explaining why you think these are/are not good choices, including supporting details.

Materials Needed:

- 1) *Tennessee Blue Book* (PDFs provided)
 - [pgs. 599-627, Tennessee Symbols and Honors](#) **OR** attached PDF with selected symbols & simplified descriptions
 - [pg. 621, Tennessee Treasures](#) painting **OR** attached PDF with enlarged photo
- 2) Projector or SMART Board
- 3) Paper, markers, crayons, etc.
- 4) Map of the United States
- 5) Copies of graphic organizers (attached)
- 6) Optional: opinion graphic organizer (attached)

Background:

Official symbols of the state are designated by an act of the Tennessee General Assembly. The first Tennessee state symbol was the original state seal, which was authorized by the state constitution of 1796. In 1987 the current state seal was officially adopted by the 95th Tennessee General Assembly. Many state symbols have been adopted throughout Tennessee's history such as our flag, motto, nickname, tree, flower, fish, bird, animal, insect and amphibian.

See *Tennessee Blue Book*, [pages 599-627](#).

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Lesson Activities:

- 1) Discuss what a symbol is. Talk about familiar symbols (show pictures of common symbols such as the McDonald's arches or a traffic light color) and discuss what each represents. Consider the purpose of symbols.
- 2) Talk about symbols in your classroom or school (American flag, school mascot).
- 3) Discuss/review which state we live in, identifying Tennessee on a map of the United States. Explain that our country and our state both have special symbols.
- 4) Using the online *Tennessee Blue Book* (or the attached PDF) show the students our state symbols. Discuss each symbol. Read the descriptions. Brainstorm reasons why they were chosen. Debate the validity of these choices. (Focus: tulip poplar tree, iris, "Agriculture and Commerce," raccoon, "Volunteer State," flag, and choose one state song)
- 5) Explain our nation also has symbols and ask students to brainstorm a few examples. [Show pictures](#) of the White House, Statue of Liberty, American flag, and bald eagle. Talk about what each represents.
- 6) "Tennessee Symbols" graphic organizer: Student will write the name of the symbol in each box and make a small drawing for each. (Graphic organizer can be enlarged as needed.)
- 7) View Tennessee painting (project on board if possible). This painting is located on [page 621](#) of the *Tennessee Blue Book* and also attached to this lesson plan. Have students locate Tennessee symbols in the painting.



Tennessee Treasures
BY
MICHAEL SLOAN
Tennessee Treasures, Michael Sloan



Assessment:

Write an opinion piece explaining why you think these are/are not good choices. Include supporting details. The graphic organizer included in this plan may be helpful for your students.

Blue Book Pages:

| Symbol | Tennessee Symbol | Page in Blue Book |
|----------|---|-------------------|
| Tree | Tulip Poplar tree | pg. 606 |
| Flower | Iris | pg. 607 |
| Motto | Agriculture and Commerce | pg. 604 |
| Animal | Raccoon | pg. 609 |
| Nickname | Volunteer State | pg. 604 |
| Bird | Mockingbird | pg. 609 |
| Flag |  | pg. 601 |
| Song | (choose 1) | pgs. 612-617 |

Extension Activities:

Students have now studied national and state symbols. Now students will choose symbols to represent their classroom or school. Some schools may have a mascot, motto, or song. If applicable, familiarize your students with these. Allow students to create a class/school flag, motto, mascot, etc.

Music specialist – Teach the students the school song (may wish to include one Tennessee song).

Art specialist – Work with students to create a classroom or school flag and/or a classroom or school painting that shows its symbols. Use the Tennessee state painting on p. 608 as an example (Kindergarten may wish to create a national painting).

Media specialist – Work with students to research school history, local wildlife, etc. in order to help students choose symbols.

ELA – Students write an opinion piece explaining why the school/classroom symbols they select represent the school/classroom well.

Option for extension: Invite state legislators or local elected officials to come speak to the classroom about their role in government.

Name _____

Tennessee Symbols

tree

flower

motto

nickname

bird

animal

flag

song

Tennessee Treasures

By Michael Sloan

Locate the following state symbols: raccoon, iris, ladybug, mockingbird, tulip poplar tree.



Agriculture and Commerce

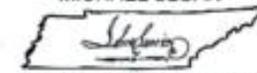


June 1, 1796 16th State

Tennessee Treasures

BY

MICHAEL SLOAN



JOHN SEVER, FIRST GOVERNOR (1793-1815 AD)



Name _____

Topic

Opinion

Reason #1

Reason #2

Reason #3

Opinion

Tennessee State Flag



The Tennessee flag features three stars representing the grand divisions of the state: East, Middle and West. The stars are held together by an unending white circle.

State Motto

Agriculture and Commerce

State Nickname

Volunteer State

State Tree: Tulip Poplar



The tulip poplar became the state tree of Tennessee in 1947. The tulip poplar was chosen because it grows all across the state. The tulip poplar was used to build houses, barns, and buildings.

State Flower: Iris



The iris became Tennessee's state cultivated flower in 1933. (Cultivated means it is raised or grown by people; opposite of wild). There are 170 species of irises. Although there are many colors, the purple iris is commonly shown as our state flower.

State Animal: Raccoon



The raccoon became Tennessee's wild animal in 1971. The raccoon is a furry animal that has a bushy, ringed tail and a band of black hair around its eyes which looks like a mask. Raccoons, often called coons, eat fish and frogs that they catch in rivers and streams. Raccoons living in Tennessee measure from 30 to 38 inches long, including their tails. They weigh from 12 to 25 pounds.

State Bird: Mockingbird



The mockingbird was selected in 1933 as state bird of Tennessee. Its upper-feathers are gray, with darker, white-edged wings and whitish under-feathers. They can sing many different songs and can even mimic nonliving things such as chainsaws and car alarms!

State Song: Tennessee Waltz

In 1965 Tennessee Waltz by Redd Stewart and Pee Wee King became an official song of the state.

I was waltzing with my darlin' to the Tennessee Waltz
When an old friend I happened to see
Introduced him to my loved one and while they were waltzing
My friend stole my sweetheart from me.

I remember the night and the Tennessee Waltz
Now I know just how much I have lost
Yes I lost my little darlin' the night they were playing
The beautiful Tennessee Waltz.

State Song: Rocky Top

Rocky Top, by Boudleaux and Felice Bryant, was adopted as an official song of Tennessee in 1982.

First Verse

Wish that I was on ol' Rocky Top,
Down in the Tennessee hills;
Ain't no smoggy smoke on Rocky Top
Ain't no telephone bills;
Once I had a girl on Rocky Top;
Half bear, other half cat;
Wild as a mink, but sweet as a soda pop,
I still dream about that;

Third Verse

I've had years of cramped-up city life
Trapped like a duck in a pen;
All I know is it's a pity life
Can't be simple again.

Second Verse

Once two strangers climbed ol' Rocky Top
Lookin' for a moonshine still;
Strangers ain't come down from Rocky Top;
Reckon they never will;
Corn won't grow at all on Rocky Top
Dirt's too rocky by far
That's why all the folks on Rocky Top
Get their corn from a jar

Chorus

Rocky Top, you'll always be
Home sweet home to me;
Good ol' Rocky Top;
Rocky Top, Tennessee;
Rocky Top, Tennessee