*Kindergarten* ► *Unit 4*

**America: Symbols and Celebrations**

**In this fourth six-week unit of Kindergarten, students study America’s symbols and celebrations.**

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**Overview**

* + Building on asking questions about neighborhoods, students begin this unit by asking questions about a local symbol. They progress to asking questions for more detailed information in non-fiction texts. Students learn to write informative pieces with richer content. Through shared writing, students also learn to expand complete sentences by using more details about American symbols. To be sure the content resonates with the children, celebrations from the student’s own ethnicity or religion will be encouraged as part of the information gathering.
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**Focus Standards**

* + These Focus Standards have been selected for the unit from the Common Core State Standards.
		- **RI.K.1:**With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
		- **W.K.7:**Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., explore a number of books by a favorite author and express opinions about them).
		- **L.K.1:** Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
		- **L.K.1(f):**Produce and expand complete sentences in shared language activities.
		- **L.K.2:** Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
		- **L.K.2(d):**Spell simple words phonetically, drawing on knowledge of sound-letter relationships.
		- **SL.K.4:**Describe familiar people, places, things, and events and, with prompting and support, provide additional detail.

[Common Core State Standards, ELA](http://commoncore.org/free/resources/CCSSI_ELA_Standards.pdf) (1.5 MB)

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**Suggested Student Objectives**

* + - Describe the connection between two events or ideas in a text, such as *The American Flag* (Lloyd Douglas) and *Independence Day* (David F. Marx).
		- Recognize cause and effect relationships, such as the contributions by Martin Luther King, Jr. and the holiday celebrating his life.
		- Review characters, setting, and key events as they retell fictional stories.
		- Answer questions about unknown words, details, and events in both fiction and informational texts.
		- Demonstrate phonemic awareness by isolating and pronouncing the initial, medial, and final phoneme of CVC words.
		- Gather information from text sources and experiences to answer questions about holidays they celebrate.
		- Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose an informative text about holidays.
		- Ask questions to get information, to seek help, or to clarify something that is not understood.
		- Produce and expand complete sentences in shared writing about symbols in America.
		- Identify new meanings for familiar words and apply them accurately (e.g., march—verb, March—month, march—musical piece).
		- Use newly learned words in conversation about unit’s focus on celebrations and symbols.
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**Suggested Works**

* + (E) indicates a CCSS exemplar text; (EA) indicates a text from a writer with other works identified as exemplars.

**Literary Texts**

**Picture Books (Read Aloud)**

* + - *Duck for President*(Doreen Cronin and Betsy Lewin)
		- *Clifford Goes to Washington*(Norman Bridwell)
		- *This Land is Your Land* (Woody Guthrie and Kathy Jakobsen)
		- *My Country, ‘Tis of Thee* (Samuel Francis Smith)
		- *America the Beautiful*(Katharine Bates, Wendell Minor)
		- *Pledge of Allegiance*(Scholastic, Inc.)
		- *I Pledge Allegiance*(Bill Martin, Jr., Michael Sampson, and Chris Raschka)

*(Tailor to represent the cultures in your classroom)*

* + - *Apple Pie and the Fourth of July*(Janet S. Wong and Margaret Chodos-Irvine)
		- *Family Pictures*(Carmen Lomez Garza) (E)

**Poems (Read Aloud)**

* + - “Celebration” in *Song and Dance* (Alonzo Lopez) (E)
		- Selections from *I Am America* (Charles R. Smith)
		- “Thanksgiving Day” in *Flowers for Children,* Vol. 2 (Lydia Maria Child)

**Songs (Read Along)**

* + - "America the Beautiful” (Katharine Lee Bates and Samuel A. Ward)
		- “America (My Country, ‘Tis of Thee)” (Samuel Francis Smith)
		- “Yankee Doodle” (Traditional)
		- “You’re a Grand Old Flag” (George M. Cohan)

**Informational Texts**

* + - *Our Country* (Emergent Reader) (Susan Canizares and S. Berger)
		- *The American Flag*(Welcome Books) (Lloyd G. Douglas)
		- *The White House* (Welcome Books) (Lloyd G. Douglas)
		- *The Statue of Liberty* (Welcome Books)  (Lloyd G. Douglas)
		- *The Bald Eagle* (Welcome Books) (Lloyd G. Douglas)
		- *The Liberty Bell* (Welcome Books) (Lloyd G. Douglas)
		- *Giving Thanks: The 1621 Harvest Feast*(Kate Waters and Russ Kendall)
		- *Independence Day*(Rookie Read-About Holiday Series) (David F. Marx)
		- *Martin Luther King Jr. Day*(Rookie Read-About Holiday Series) (Trudi Strain Trueit)
		- *Veterans Day*(Rookie Read-About Holiday Series) (Jacqueline S. Cotton)
		- *John Philip Sousa: Getting to Know the World’s Greatest Composers* (Mike Venezia)

*Example of a series of more books on holidays celebrated locally by students in your classroom:*

* + - *El Dia De Los Muertos: The Day of the Dead (*Rookie Read-About Holiday Series) (Mary Dodson Wade)
		- *Cinco de Mayo*(Rookie Read-About Holiday Series) (Mary Dodson Wade and Nanci R. Vargus)
		- *Chinese New Year*(Rookie Read-About Holiday Series) (David F. Marx)
		- *Kwanzaa*(Rookie Read-About Holiday Series ) (Trudi Strain Truett)
		- *Christmas*(Rookie Read-About Holiday Series) (Trudi Strain Truett)
		- *Diwali*(Rookie Read-About Holiday Series) (Trudi Strain Truett)
		- *Chanukah* (Rookie Read-About Holiday Series) (David F. Marx )
		- *Ramadan*(Rookie Read-About Holiday Series) (David F. Marx)

**Art, Music, and Media**

**Music**

* + - John Philip Sousa, *Stars and Stripes Forever* (1896)
		- John Philip Sousa, *The Liberty Bell* (1893)
		- John Philip Sousa, *The Washington Post* (1889)
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**Sample Activities and Assessments**

* + **Class Discussion/Vocabulary**

To introduce the concept of a symbol, choose a symbol well known to the students in your class (e.g., professional sports team logo or school mascot). Discuss why a symbol is important for unifying fans behind a team or school. Go on to discuss the meaning behind the symbol as a source of inspiration. (RI.K.4, SL.K.2, SL.K.3, SL.K.4, L.K.4, L.K.6)

**Writing**

Use a theme-related short sentence to begin your unit, such as “The flag waves.” Challenge the class to think of details to add to the sentence to make it more interesting (e.g., “The red, white, and blue flag waves”; “The red, white, and blue American flag waves in the strong winds of March”). (W.K.5, L.K.1f, L.K.1c, L.K.1b)

**Reading/Informational Text**

Create a KWL chart for American symbols and holidays to set the stage for asking questions, answering questions, and gathering information under main topics. Teachers may need to model the questioning until the students begin to generate questions on their own. As the class reads an informational book (e.g., The Liberty Bell, Lloyd G. Douglas), look for information about the main topic. Remind the students of the importance of also studying the illustrations for information. Add the information to the KWL chart. Look for connections between ideas as you add information to the charts. Use Post-Its or white boards for students to fully participate in adding information to the charts. (RI.K.1, RI.K.2, RI.K.3, RI.K.7, RI.K.8)

**Writing/Informative**

Choose one of the symbols or holidays on your KWL chart and write a complete sentence or two about it. Be sure to use the information on your chart as you write. Illustrate your ideas before you write or after you are finished. (W.K.2, W.K.8, SL.K.5, L.K.1a, L.K.2d)

**Class Discussion/Reading/Literature**

Introduce a book showing a diverse viewpoint of an American holiday such as Apple Pie and the Fourth of July (Janet Wong). As you read the book, ask the students to look for ways that the main character sees one of the traditional American holidays. Encourage the students to look closely at the illustrations and to listen closely to the story. When you are finished reading, discuss how people see holidays and celebrations differently depending on their family and ethnic experience. Before turning to whole-group discussion, have students draw a picture or “turn and talk” in preparation for sharing ideas. (RL.K.3, RL.K.7, RL.K.10, SL.K.2)

**Writing Activity/Home Connection**

Send a note to parents asking them to find a photograph of the child taken during a family celebration. Ask parents to name the celebration and to tell what makes it special as their family celebrates it. Use this information to create a display of your class’s celebrations and to prepare for the shared research project on community celebrations. (SL.K.4, W.K.8)

**Class Discussion/Shared Research/Writing Activity**

Choose a holiday celebrated in your community. Gather information about the holiday by reading books and asking people in your community to tell you why it is celebrated, when it is celebrated, who celebrates, and how it is celebrated. Create a large cube for the holiday and assign small groups of students to prepare an illustration for each face of the cube. Use the guiding questions above to assign the faces of the cube. Repeat this activity with several holidays celebrated by the members of your classroom. (SL.K.4, L.K.5c, W.K.2, W.K.7, W.K.8)

**Language/Vocabulary**

Tell the students that there are words that are spelled the same and sound the same, but have very different meanings. Listen to John Philip Sousa’s music and “march” around the room. Explain that in this case, “march” is an action word. The name of this type of song is a “march,” because you want to march to it. And you could even do this “march” in the month of “March.” The lesson: Some words are used differently to mean different things. This activity can be repeated with the word “flag,” using the word as a verb and as a noun. (L.K.4a)

**Language/Vocabulary**

Create a word bank to collect new words from this unit. These words can be used in discussion and in journal writing to reinforce their proper use. Use the word bank to practice making nouns plural (e.g., statue, statues). (L.K.1c, L.K.6)

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**Reading Foundations**

* + **A Pacing Guide for Reading Instruction**

This guide is based on the “reading foundations,” writing, and language standards in the CCSS and is customized to the maps. Completed for Kindergarten and first grade (more grades to come), the guide tracks curriculum map units, as indicated in the first row of the document. Concepts of print, phonological awareness, and text reading fluency are all addressed and woven into a developmental progression that leads to word recognition and text reading. Accomplishment of these milestones can be achieved with daily practice and brief activities, suggestions for which are highlighted in the guide.

[Reading Foundations and Activities (K: Units 1-3)](http://commoncore.org/free/resources/Kindergarten_Foundations_U1-3_%288.19%29.pdf)

[Reading Foundations and Activities (K: Units 4-6)](http://commoncore.org/free/resources/Kindergarten_Foundations_U4-6_%288.19%29.pdf)

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**Additional Resources**

* + [Martin Luther King Jr. and Me: Identifying with a Hero](http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/martin-luther-king-identifying-257.html?tab=1#tabs) (ReadWriteThink) (W.K.7, W.K.8)
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**Terminology**

* + - adding information
		- cause
		- composer
		- effect
		- gathering information
		- informational text
		- KWL chart
		- questioning
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**Making Interdisciplinary Connections**

* + **This unit teaches:**
		- **Music**:
			* Patriotic Songs (e.g., “America the Beautiful,” “America (My Country, ‘Tis of Thee,” “Yankee Doodle,” “You’re a Grand Old Flag”)
			* Band Music (e.g., marches of John Philip Sousa)
		- **Geography**: United States
		- **History**:
			* Celebrations of Diversity (e.g., Chinese New Year, Cinco de Mayo, Kwanzaa, Chanukah, and Christmas)

**This unit could be extended to teach:**

* + - **Art**: Sculpture
		- **History**:
			* Native Americans (e.g., a tribe or nation located near your students compared /contrasted to a tribe or nation farther away)
			* Voyage of Christopher Columbus
			* Presidents, past and present