



CURRICULAR FOCUS:
SOCIAL STUDIES, ART
GRADE LEVELS: 2-6



Your Own Customs Office

Miss Columbia is the world traveler, and your school is a port of call along her journey. How would students design your official passport stamp?

Objective: Students produce an official stamp and page for Miss Columbia's passport that will become part of her permanent museum collection.

Background

Part of Miss Columbia's travel kit is her official passport and journal. As a participant in *Around the World with Miss Columbia*, your school is encouraged to contribute to both documents. The journal entry is covered in activity 4.3.3 ("Miss Columbia Strikes Again!"). This Setup Activity for Part 4 focuses on your school's official passport stamp and provides a good way for you to introduce the themes of Part 4 to your students.

The whole idea of passports and passport stamps is a natural one to pique students' interest. As Miss Columbia travels about the world on her centennial journey, students will be able to look through her passport and see the "stamps" and pages prepared by host schools. The passport provides a window for communities to learn about others near and far; a "front door" for schools to use as a way to inspire students' thinking about how to pictorially represent their own communities; and — eventually — a wonderful treasury of Miss Columbia's visits around the world.



Materials

- ◆ Paper; markers, pens, or pencils
- ◆ Other materials as needed by final design

Getting Started

This activity can become a cornerstone of your school's celebration of Miss Columbia and the turning of the millennium. Explain to students what customs offices and "passport control" agents do today at airports and other national points of entry, checking passengers' credentials and citizenship status and (sometimes) examining baggage to ensure that no outlawed substances are entering their nation. Let them know that Miss Columbia will have an official passport, too, and that it is your school's responsibility to come up with an official entry "stamp" and to create a special page in her passport to share with other schools.

Note: your school can only contribute one official stamp and passport page that will become part of Miss Columbia's permanent collection. If you pursue this activity, many students and/or many classes will be creating possible passport stamps. The activity suggests a number of ways schools can sift through all of the possible entries and come up with their one official contribution.



Procedures

1. Ask students to think about symbols that represent their community. If they have trouble with this concept, start them off with a discussion of symbols they'd recognize: buildings such as the U.S. Capitol that represent a government or country; public messages such as the green "walking person" signifying it's safe to walk across a street; or even corporate symbols such as McDonald's golden arches or the Nike "swoosh." You might bring to class existing symbols, such as your community's official seal (if there is one), or a local newspaper with a representatively local logo.
2. Create a list of their ideas for symbols on the blackboard or on an easel pad. Tell students they are graphic designers who've been given the responsibility of creating a passport stamp to represent their school and community. At this point, you can let the activity roll out in a number of different ways:
 1. Keep going with the professional graphic design competition motif and set up "design teams," each of which would create and present preliminary and final designs to a panel of judges — composed either entirely of students or a mixture of students and teachers.
 2. Let democracy rule, asking each child to create a stamp and having students vote for their favorite one.
 3. Turn the project over to your school's art teacher(s), who may be able to integrate the symbol-as-art idea into visual arts concepts they're already working on with students.
3. Follow the same procedures with the passport page for Miss Columbia's passport book. This is your school's opportunity to be as creative as you can possibly be. The page needs to incorporate the stamp, but it can also include anything else you want — as long as it is representative in some way of your school or community, or of Miss Columbia's visit.

Possible ideas:

 1. Signatures of every teacher and student in the school;
 2. A quilt pattern of symbols representing your school or community;
 3. A student-designed flag, representing your school;
 4. Photos of Miss Columbia's visit to your school;
 5. Student poetry or song that summarizes your celebration of Miss Columbia's trip.
4. When your school's passport stamp and page are finished, consider making their presentation to Miss Columbia's travel kit part of a closing observance of her journey at your school — a "bon voyage" before she heads off to her next destination.



YOUR OWN CUSTOMS OFFICE

A Sample of Symbols

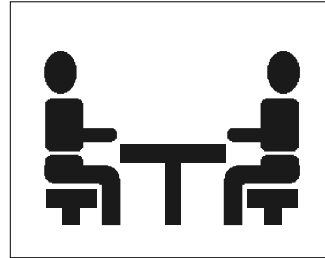
Use these symbols as inspiration for your young graphic designers as they work on passport stamp-symbols for your school.



CUSTOMS



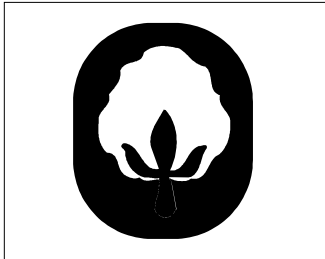
NO SMOKING



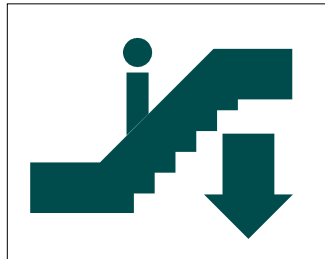
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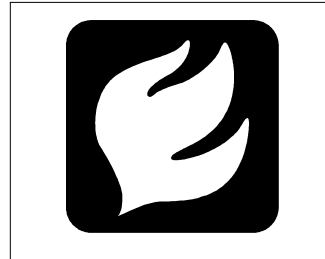
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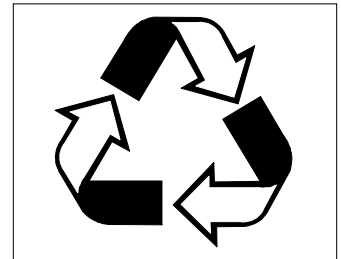
COTTON



DOWN ESCALATOR



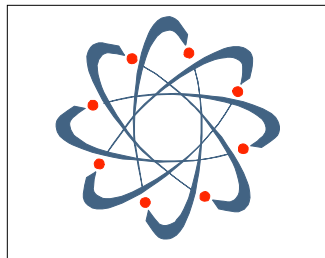
FIRE



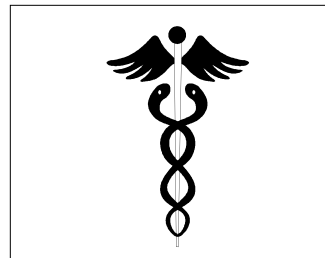
RECYCLE



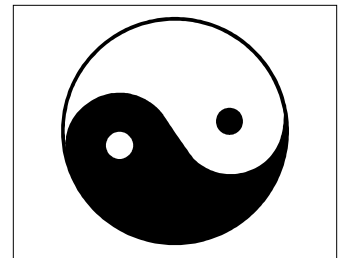
CROSSWALK



ENERGY



MEDICINE



YIN YANG

Passports to the World

An alternative activity that prompts students to make their own passports and become world travelers themselves has been included at the end of this activity. It was prepared by the National Geographic Society and Nissan for National Geography Week 1995. Consider creating, as part of your Miss Columbia experience, an "International Day" at your school when each class sets itself up as a certain nation and every student, passport in hand, visits each country throughout the day.

