

Manitoba Symbols

Teacher Resource for Online Teaching

This resource is an adaptation of one of the Manitoba Crafts Museum and Library's school programs for teachers to use while teaching online. The content is taken from our Manitoba Symbols program, which focuses on cultural symbols and craft in Manitoba and is relevant to the Manitoba 150 celebrations.

Suitable for grades 1-6.

What are Symbols?

- Symbols are images, objects, or colours that stand in for an idea, belief, feelings, or a piece of information.
- Many groups of people and cultures use symbols to represent themselves, their heritage, values, and/or beliefs.
 - Example: The Jets logo represents Winnipeg's hockey team. Jets fans wear the logo to let others know they are fans of the Jets!
 - The Canadian flag represents the country of Canada. If you were travelling around the world and had a Canadian flag on your backpack, people would know that you are from Canada.
- Symbols can often be craft objects. This means that cultural symbols are physical objects that are made using craft techniques, such as weaving, embroidery, woodworking, etc.
 - Distinct craft traditions and styles are often associated with specific cultures.
 - For example, weaving is practiced all around the world, but tartan weaving is closely associated with Scottish culture.
 - The Métis Sash is also woven, but looks very different and is made using a different technique. The two types of weaving mean different things because they were made by different cultural groups.
 - Craft helps to embody/visualize culture.



We will look at three symbols taken from MCML's collection that represent Manitoba and its cultures.

- The Manitoba Tartan
- The Métis Sash
- The Manitoba Sampler

The Manitoba Tartan

- **What is tartan?**
 - Tartan is a type of pattern used on many textiles (you many know it as plaid) that originated in Scotland.
 - It is a pattern of repeating horizontal and vertical lines.
 - Many Scottish families have used tartans as a way to represent their family.
 - Each family has its own unique tartan pattern that distinguishes one family from another.
- **Manitoba has a tartan?**
 - Manitoba has its own tartan that was designed in 1958 by Hugh Rankine.
 - Hugh was born in Winnipeg, but his parents were from Scotland.
 - Hugh developed an interest in tartans while in Scotland during WWII.
 - When he returned to Winnipeg after the war he learned how to weave and started designing a tartan for Manitoba.
 - He researched the history of the province and experimented with lots of colours and designs until he came up with a design that reflected and symbolized Manitoba's history.
 - His wife, Dorothy, a weaver also of Scottish descent, helped weave the tartan.
- **Manitoba History in the Manitoba Tartan**
 - Hugh references significant Manitoban historical events in the Manitoba Tartan.
 - One is the establishment of the Red River Settlement. Lord Selkirk established the settlement in 1812.
 - Lord Selkirk brought over Scottish settlers who had been displaced from their homes in Scotland.
- **Symbolism in Manitoba Tartan diagram**
 - *See attached diagram for the colour symbolism.*

The Métis Sash

- **The Métis people**
 - The Métis are a distinct people and culture that emerged from the fur trade in the 18th century.
 - European fur traders intermarried with Indigenous women in order to better relationships with Indigenous groups and to secure alliances.
 - The Métis people also helped in establishing Manitoba as a province in 1870.
 - Métis culture is rich with many traditions, language (Michif – mainly a combination of French and Cree), and symbols.
- **Métis symbols**
 - One symbol is the Métis sash.
 - Much like the tartan, the Métis sash is a way to visually represent the Métis people.
 - Unlike the tartan, the sash is finger woven and has a unique arrow pattern, also known as the 'ceinture flechée' in French.
 - The sash was originally produced in the village of L'Assomption, Quebec and became popular with the Métis during the fur trade.
 - The sash is typically worn around the waist and had many uses. It was used to keep coats closed, pull or carry things, as a towel, or even a saddle blanket.
- **Symbolism of the Métis Sash**
 - *See attached diagram for the colour symbolism.*

The Manitoba Sampler

- The Manitoba Sampler is a work of embroidery. Embroidery is a craft technique that uses a needle and thread to decorate a piece of fabric.
- The Manitoba Sampler was designed in 1944 by Eric Bergman, a Winnipeg artist, and was embroidered by a group of women from the Manitoba Handicrafts Guild.
- The Sampler features natural and cultural symbols of the province placed in and around a map of Manitoba.
- The Sampler represents aspects of life from 1944 and gives us an idea what Manitoban identity and culture was like in 1944.

Symbols in the Manitoba Sampler – Can you find them all?

- Animals found in the province
 - Bison, polar bear, beluga whale, caribou, otter, wolf, beaver, geese, fish, moose, deer, rabbits, fox, ducks
- Plant life
 - Wild flowers – including the crocus, Manitoba's provincial flower
 - Coniferous trees (pine trees)
- Transportation
 - Railways – Trains were one of the few ways to travel long distances in 1944. The TransCanada Highway wasn't built until 1962.
 - Planes – Much of northern Manitoba/Canada is hard to get to. Small planes are one of the only ways to get to remote communities.
 - Dogsledding – A method of winter travel developed by Indigenous peoples thousands of years ago.
 - Canoes – Developed by Indigenous people, adopted by European fur traders, canoes were small boats, perfect for travelling along streams, ponds, rivers, or lakes.
- Industry
 - Mining – Flin Flon's biggest industry is mining.
 - Agriculture – Represented by the wheat in the bottom left corner and the grain elevators. Farming is a large industry in Manitoba.
- Government
 - The Legislative Building – Home of the provincial government of Manitoba.
 - The Manitoba Coat of Arms – Designed in 1905, the coat of arms is a symbol/logo of the province's government.
- People
 - Tee pees – Represent Indigenous peoples. Tee pees are traditional tents made from animal skins and wooden poles.
 - Log cabin – Represents European settlers in Manitoba.

Activities

We have provided three activities that expand upon the concepts presented in the program. The activities range in difficulty and require minimal supplies. Complete one or all at your discretion.

1. Manitoba Sampler Bookmark

Revisit the Manitoba Sampler with this bookmark activity. Colour in, decorate, or embroider a bookmark that features symbols from the Manitoba Sampler.

Materials:

- Bookmark template (attached)
- Colouring or decorating materials

2. Create a symbol that represents you!

To get your students thinking about the intersection between symbols and culture and identity have them design or create a symbol that represents themselves!

Before getting started, have your students consider what their culture is, what they think their identity is, their values, beliefs, and traditions. Their symbol can encompass all of these aspects or only a few. Have them fill out the attached worksheet to get them started thinking about their culture or identity. They can use their answers from this exercise to help them with creating their symbol.

Materials:

- What Makes You, You? Worksheet (attached)
- Paper
- Drawing materials - pencil, pencil crayons, crayons, markers, etc.

3. Design Your Own Provincial Logo

The Manitoba Coat of Arms was designed in 1905 and represented the values and identities of a select group of Manitobans at the turn of the century. A lot has changed since 1905. The demographics of the province have changed greatly over the past century and Manitoba now welcomes immigrants and refugees from around the world. We have also seen an increase in Indigenous representation, activism, and autonomy in government, media, and education.

What is a coat of arms?

A coat of arms is a symbol, usually portrayed on a shield, which represents a family or country. They have been used in Europe to represent noble families, kingdoms, and countries since the 12th century. Many modern countries, such as Canada, have been granted or adopted their own coat of arms.

In Canada each province and territory has a coat of arms. They feature symbols that represent aspects of the province or territory, like history, geography, natural resources, plants, animals, and values. Manitoba's Coat of Arms, which is featured on the Manitoba Sampler, was designed in 1905. The bison represents Indigenous peoples (Assiniboine and Cree) who hunted bison for food and clothing. The red cross represents the cross of St. George, the patron saint of England, and the Hudson's Bay Company who governed the territory before it became Manitoba.



The Manitoba Coat of Arms designed in 1905. Do you think this still represents Manitoba? What would you change about it?

Design your own provincial logo

You have been commissioned by the provincial government to design a new logo for Manitoba. Consider Manitoba's current Coat of Arms, its pros and cons, and the cultural and political changes that have happened since 1905. What would you change about the Coat of Arms? Would you keep any of the symbols? Would you add new symbols? Would you start from scratch and design something completely different? Think back to the Manitoba Crafts Museum and Library's presentation on Manitoba Symbols and the different types of symbols that are used to represent the province. Design a new logo that you feel represents present-day Manitoba, its values, and citizens.

Materials:

- Paper
- Drawing materials

What Makers You, You?

Name: _____

Before you start creating your symbol that represents you, answer these questions to get you started thinking about what makes you, you.

1. What culture do you belong to?

2. What are some of your family's traditions?

3. Where do you come from? Where is your family from?

4. Where do you live? Have you lived in other places?

5. What are your interests?

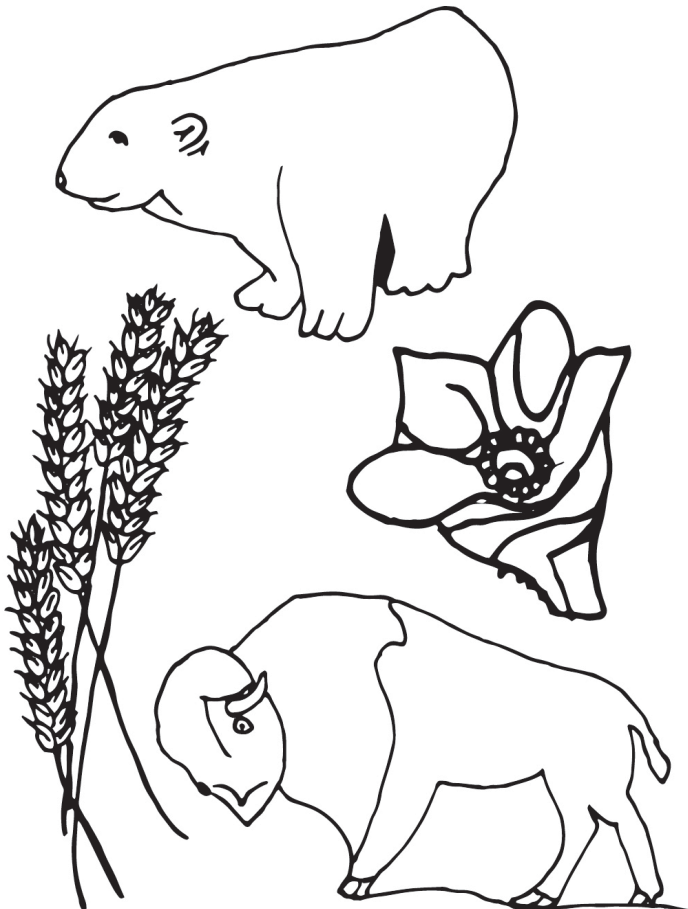
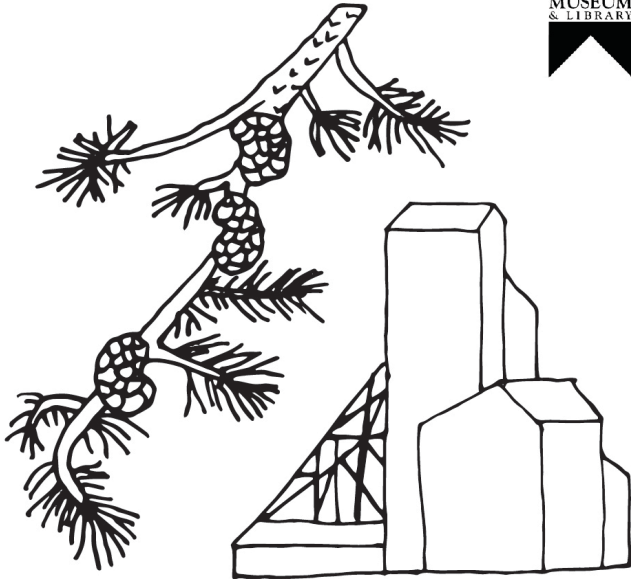
6. What are your beliefs and values?

7. What makes you individual?

THE MANITOBA SAMPLER

BOOKMARK

Symbols of Manitoba



THE MANITOBA TARTAN SYMBOLISM



Dark red squares: represent the Red River Settlement (1812) and the fur trade posts from which many of Manitoba's urban settlements developed.

Green squares: for the rich natural resources of the province – farm lands, forests, minerals, fisheries, and water power.

Azure blue lines: the three blue lines symbolize the Hamilton blood of Thomas Douglas, founder of the Red River Settlement. The intersections of the lines represent the joining of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers.

Dark green lines: for the men and women of diverse cultures who enriched the life of the prairies.

Yellow lines: for the grain crops and farm produce which make up a large segment of the province's economy.

THE MÉTIS SASH SYMBOLISM



Each colour used in the sash has a symbolic meaning.

- Red:** represents the blood of the Métis shed while fighting for their rights.
- Blue:** represents the depth of their spirit.
- White:** represents their connection to the earth and creator.
- Green:** represents the fertility of the Métis nation.
- Yellow:** represents the prospect of prosperity.
- Black:** represents the dark period of suppression and dispossession of Métis land.

