LIBRARY OF CONGRESS – PATHWAYS
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE LESSON MODULE

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Title: “I pledge allegiance to the flag…” Using Primary Sources to Discover the Pledge of Allegiance

Theme: American Identity

Historical Period: Post War United States – 1945-Present

Lesson Module Overview: Students will actively learn about the Pledge of Allegiance and United States flag through inquiry-based lessons about history and symbolism. Student learning will be supplemented with Library of Congress images and appropriate children’s literature provided by the teacher. Through a variety of activities students will become immersed in the meaning and origins of the Pledge of Allegiance, the United States flag, and related United States symbols.

Grade Range: Intermediate (2nd - 3rd)

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LESSON MODULE

DAY 1

Title: Origin of the Pledge of Allegiance

Learning Goals:

Knowledge

- Students will understand the history of the Pledge of Allegiance
- Students will understand the key people involved with the Pledge of Allegiance
- Students will be able to use their background knowledge to answer questions related to the Pledge of Allegiance
- Students will gain new knowledge about the Pledge of Allegiance

Skills

- Students will participate in playing a modified version of Candyland centered on the origin of the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Students will create a flag that shows all the key information they have learned about the origin of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Dispositions

- Students will be able show their own understanding of the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Students will engage themselves in cooperative learning as they share and learn from each other.

National Council for the Social Studies Themes:
http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/strands

Culture: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of culture and cultural diversity.

Time, Continuity, & Change: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the past and its legacy.

Power, Authority, & Governance: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create, interact with, and change structures of power, authority, and governance.

Civic Ideals & Practices: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the ideals, principles, and practices of a democratic republic.
Materials Needed:

- Candyland board game
- Paper
- Pencil
- Markers
- United States flag poster
- Copy of *The Pledge of Allegiance* by Marc Tyler Nobleman

Lesson Procedures:

Introduction:

1. Have the students come to the carpet and ask them *Where do you think the Pledge of Allegiance came from?* Discuss some of the different student’s answers.
2. Read the book *The Pledge of Allegiance* by Marc Tyler Nobleman. Highlight the key facts about where the pledge came from and what you are supposed to do during the Pledge of Allegiance. Before reading, ask the students what they all know about the Pledge of Allegiance and what we do while saying the Pledge of Allegiance. After reading the book share with the students the Library of Congress images 1 and 2 ask the students if they can tell you what the image is about and what the people are doing in it. Also see if the students know why you do certain things while saying the Pledge of Allegiance. Also make sure students understand that it is important for individuals who are wearing hats to remove their hat while reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Next show image 3 to the students so they can see what Francis Bellamy, the creator of the Pledge of Allegiance looked like. Before telling the students who he is, see if they know who he is. Image 4 also gives the students and idea of what the Pledge of Allegiance looked like when he wrote it.
3. Tell the class they will be playing Candyland today that is adapted with questions relating to the origin of the Pledge of Allegiance and what we do during the Pledge of Allegiance.

Development:

1. Divide the students into 4 groups of 4. Give each group the game Candy Land. Explain to the students they are not to open the game until the directions are done being given.
2. Tell the students that each of the color cards they have to draw has questions on them relating to the Pledge of Allegiance. They need to answer the question correctly before moving to that color on the Candyland board. (The answers will be on a separate piece of paper) Once the student has said the answer, a different student from the group will look on the answer sheet and let the student know if their answer is correct.
3. Some of the questions that will be asked on the cards will be the following:
   a. Name one thing that changed from the original Pledge of Allegiance
b. What year was the Pledge of Allegiance created?
c. What year did congress adopt the Pledge of Allegiance?
d. What was the guy’s first name who created the Pledge of Allegiance?
e. How many times has the Pledge been modified since its composition?
f. What did the words “The United States of America” replace from the original Pledge?
g. What did you do with your hand originally when reciting the Pledge of Allegiance?
h. What do you do with your hand today when reciting the Pledge of Allegiance?
i. According to the Flag Code, What are you supposed to do when reciting the Pledge of Allegiance?
j. What should people in uniform do while the Pledge of Allegiance is being recited?

4. When students do not say a correct answer, they should put that card back in the pile for another student to have to make sure everyone remembers the correct answer.
5. If the students complete the game early they can create questions they have about the Pledge of Allegiance that they still have. They can do this individually or as a group.

**Culmination:**

1. When all of the students have finished playing Candyland, ask the students to tell us about what they have learned. Write the students answers to all of the things they learned on a poster of the United States flag to be displayed in the classroom.

**Assessment:**

Informal:
- Check for understanding when reading the book, *The Pledge of Allegiance* this can be done while reading and after you are finished reading the book.
- When the students are playing Candyland, walk around and see what they understand and know about the Pledge of Allegiance.

Formal:
- Ask the students to write down two new things they learned in today’s lesson and one question that either they have or a question that could be added to Candyland.
LESSON MODULE

DAY 2

Title: The Meaning of the Pledge

Learning Goals:

Knowledge
- Students will understand the meaning of the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Students will be able to use their background knowledge to form their understanding of the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Students will gain new knowledge about the importance of the U.S. flag and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Skills
- Students will be creating a poster answering questions that create new understanding of the Pledge of Allegiance by drawing or writing.
- Students will be able to use resources such as the computer to find images, quotes, the Pledge of Allegiance, etc. to create their poster.

Dispositions
- Students will begin to evaluate multiple perspectives of the meaning of the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Students will be able develop an ability to think critically about the past and create their own understanding of the Pledge of Allegiance.

National Council for the Social Studies Themes:  
http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/strands

Culture: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of culture and cultural diversity.

Time, Continuity, & Change: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the past and its legacy.

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Civic Ideals & Practices: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the ideals, principles, and practices of a democratic republic.
Materials Needed:
- *I Pledge Allegiance* by June Swanson
- Flag Visual
- Rebus Cards
- Posters
- Markers
- Gifted and Talented Activity:
  - Computer
  - Venn Diagram

Lesson Procedures:

Introduction:

1. Explain to students that one of the most important American patriotic symbols is the flag of our country. Like we learned in the previous lesson, The Pledge of Allegiance expresses our feelings for the flag, so it is important that we understand what the words in the pledge mean. Present background information about the Pledge of Allegiance by reading the book *I Pledge Allegiance* by June Swanson to the class. This book will refresh the student’s memory on what we learned in the previous lesson. Before reading, ask the students what they already know about the Pledge of Allegiance that we learned in the previous lesson. While reading, ask students questions to check of understanding and for any questions students may have. After reading, ask the students what they have learned after reading the book.

2. When asking students what they have learned, have a large visual of a flag. When students tell the class what they learned from the book, write down the students’ responses on the flag visual. Students will add what they have learned at the end of the lesson. Hang this flag up as a visual for students to see in the classroom.

Development:

1. Divide students into groups of 3-4 students. Give each group an envelope containing a set of the Pledge of Allegiance Rebus Cards. Tell students to create the Pledge of Allegiance by arranging the picture cards in the correct order. Check for accuracy. [Find Rebus Cards Here](http://www.texaslre.org/downloads/082003_lp_k-2.pdf)

2. When the students are completed with the short Rebus Cards activity in their groups, have them discuss responses to the following questions at their tables of four students:
   a. Write the Pledge of Allegiance in your own words. What are you promising to do when you say the Pledge of Allegiance?
   b. What kind of feeling do you get when you look at the flag and say the Pledge of Allegiance?
c. Why do you think the flag, Pledge of Allegiance, and/or the National Anthem make people feel a certain way?

3. In their groups, they will be given a poster to write on. They will be given the options to draw to explain their response from the questions above, but they can write out sentences if they do not want to draw their response. This allows choice in their activity. Students will be able to use a computer to look up images, quotes, the Pledge of Allegiance, etc. to print off and use on their poster. (Use of the Library of Congress images provided (Number 2, 10, & 13) Students will use other researched materials to add to their poster.

4. If students complete their discussion early (gifted and talented students group), they can compare and contrast the United States Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas Pledge of Allegiance using a Venn Diagram or chart. They may use the computer or any other resources to research the Texas Pledge of Allegiance. If they do not finish this before other students are completed with their discussion, they can work on it when they have down time the rest of the day.

**Culmination:**

1. When all students are completed with their poster of their responses, the group will present their information to the whole class. They will explain their reasoning’s for each question.

2. Ask the students what they have learned and what they can take away from learning about the meaning of the Pledge of Allegiance. Remind students to be respectful of other students’ ideas and new knowledge. Expect multiple answers from students. Students will write what they have learned on the flag visual introduced at the beginning of the lesson after the discussion.

**Assessment:**

Informal:

- During the students’ small group activities, walk around and make sure they are understanding the importance of the Pledge of Allegiance, on-task, and cooperating well as a group.

Formal:

- When students present their materials, assess them on their understanding and thoughts of the Pledge of Allegiance.
LESSON MODULE

DAY 3

Title: The United States Flag: A US Symbol

Learning Goals:

Knowledge:
- Students will be able to tell what a symbol is and give examples of a symbol.
- Students will understand the importance and meaning of the United States Flag

Skills:
- Students will create their own symbol that represents them.
- Students will have an opportunity to communicate about what is important to them.

Dispositions:
- Students will develop an awareness of the importance of the United States Flag.
- Students will engage themselves in cooperative learning as they share and learn from each other.

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Materials Needed:
- The United States Flag
- Smart board or marker board
- The American Flag: Symbols of America
- Dictionary (optional)
Materials for their symbols: (have a variety of materials)
• Variety of paper- construction, tissue and different colors
• Magazines, newspapers
• Stickers, glitter, puff balls, pipe cleaners, ribbon
• Glue, tape
• Scissors
• Pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils

**Lesson Procedures: (italicized words are things that the teacher can say)**

**Introduction:**

1. Have the students come to the carpet and say *Yesterday we talked about how the Pledge of Allegiance expresses our feelings for the flag and that the flag is an important symbol of our country.*

2. Ask *where have you seen the flag* (school, sporting event, post office, park, White House etc). Allow for some of their answers. Show images 7, 8 and 9 (in the appendix) and talk about how many times they see the flag on a pole (show image 9). *Sometimes you might see flags at the beginning of a parade* (like in image 8). *Or you might have seen the flag on someone who is in the military* (show image 7). *The flag is an important symbol of our country and that is why you see it many places.*

3. *What are the colors of our flag? Does anyone know what the colors mean?* Have the students make predictions and write them down on the board.

4. Read the book *The American Flag: Symbols of America* by Rob Olliges. Highlight the pages that talk about the meaning of the colors and the stars and stripes.

5. Turn to the page in the book where it talks about the meaning of the colors. Talk about how white means purity, red means bravery, and blue means persistence and justice. Write the words on the board. Ask: *Does anybody know what those words mean?* Allow for student answers.

6. Use the dictionary or internet to look up the definition and write them on the board.
   - purity- innocence, clean
   - red- bravery, strong
   - blue- persistence, justice, don’t give up

**Development:**

1. Have students go back to their seats. *The United States flag is a symbol of our country. What does symbol mean?* Something that stands for or represents something else. *What other symbols do you know?* (Can be US related, symbols in the classroom, sports symbols etc.)
2. Have students close their eyes and think about something that is important to them or something that represents them. Have students open their eyes and turn to a partner (person in their desk groups) and talk for 30 seconds about what they are thinking about doing for their symbol. Have a few students share their ideas to the class. Have students make a symbol that represents them, like the flag represents the United States and freedom.

3. Provide students with a variety of different materials to make their symbols (materials listed above). *Note* - Don’t restrict students to just making a flag shaped symbol. Allow them to be creative and explore different materials.

4. Have students write a few sentences explaining their symbols and the meaning (colors, shapes etc.).

**Culmination:**

1. Tell students to create a short (15 seconds) presentation about their symbol. Tell them to explain why they picked that symbol, the meaning, and why it represents them. They can use their sentences that they wrote and read them to the class if they would like. Create an “author’s chair” like environment for the students to present to the class.

2. Reiterate that all of these projects are symbols of each other, just like the flag is a symbol for the United States.

**Assessment:**

Informal:
- Check for understanding when you are reading the book and asking questions after reading.
- Circulate during work time to see what the students are planning or doing with their symbols.

Formal:
- Evaluate student’s sentences that they wrote about their symbols. Do the sentences describe their symbol?
- Evaluate student’s presentation. Are they able to communicate why the symbol is important to them and why it represents them?
LESSON MODULE

DAY 4

Title: Related National Symbols

Learning Goals:

Knowledge
- Students will be able to list national symbols of the United States
- Students will be able to explain the significance of national symbols of the United States

Skills
- Students will use research skills to collect information about their assigned symbol
- Students will create a written and visual presentations about their assigned symbols

Dispositions
- Students will gain an awareness of the national symbols that represent the United States

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Materials Needed:
- US Symbols
- Smart board or marker board
- Computer/library access
- Printer access
- Paper and pencils
Lesson Procedures:

Introduction:

1. Begin with a review of the previous day’s lesson. That lesson was all about the American flag and how it is a symbol of the United States. Explain that there are many other symbols that represent the United States. Ask students if they can think of any.
2. Read the book, *US Symbols*, by Ann-Marie Kishel. This book lists national symbols such as the bald eagle, the liberty bell, and the national anthem as representations of our country.
3. Create a list of the symbols included in the book as well as others that may be appropriate to study. Possibilities include: The bald eagle, the Liberty Bell, the National Anthem, the Statue of Liberty, the White House, the Great Seal, the Lincoln Memorial, and the Washington Monument. Explain that the Pledge of Allegiance and the American flag are also symbols, but the class has already spent time learning about them.
4. Explain to students that they will be doing research on the national symbols listed above.

Development:

1. Divide the students into pairs. Give the students the following questions to answer in their research:
   a. What is the symbol?
   b. When was it made/When did it become a symbol?
   c. Why is it important?
   d. Where can it be found today?
   e. What is something that others might find interesting?
2. Additionally, ask students to find or create a visual representation of their symbols.
3. Randomly select pairs to reserve which symbol they would like to research. When a symbol has been chosen, cross it out from the list.
4. Take students to a school media center, or utilize a classroom library and a traveling computer lab to assist in student research. While students develop their projects, monitor progress and be available for assistance with technology, literature, and other questions. Students should use the library of congress website to conduct their research, and my supplement this information with nonfiction books.
5. Students may write or type their findings, making sure to include their names somewhere on the paper.
6. When students have completed their written assignment, they will find or create visual representations of their symbols. Students may use the library of congress website for this task. If desired, students may choose to draw or create 3-dimensional models of their symbols instead, based on images they find.
Culmination:

1. When students have completed their written and visual assignments, they will be asked to share present their work with the class. Students can display their picture using the smart board, and read at least three of the questions they answered.

2. After presenting, student projects will be displayed on a wall or bulletin board for further review.

Assessment:

Informal:
- Questioning will be used throughout the work time and presentations to check for student understanding

Formal:
- Have students fill out a self-evaluation for their team. Students should reflect on their level of productivity, their teamwork, and the quality of their finished product.
- Assess students based on their self-evaluations and the quality at which they met the requirements for the writing and visual assignments. Look for all of the required questions to be answered fully and the visual to be present.
APPENDIX I:
IMAGES AND GRAPHIC MATERIALS
FROM THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

1. Image
 Refugees children saluting the United States Flag in New York during 1943.
2. **Image:**
Students from Washington D.C. pledging the United States flag during 1899.
3. **Image:**
Image of Francis Bellamy. Francis Bellamy wrote the first Pledge of Allegiance which was published in 1892.
4. Image:
Image of the written Pledge of Allegiance by Francis Bellamy

I pledge allegiance to my Flag and to the Republic for which it stands—One Nation indivisible—with liberty and justice for all.
5. Image:
First grade students reciting in 1955.
6. Image:
Picture of women working at a flag shop sewing the United States flag in 1917.
7. Image:
Image taken by Joe Rosenthal. This photograph is of soldiers raising the United States flag at Iwo Jima on February 23, 1945.
8. Image:
Image of the United States military walking in a parade in New York City in 1917.
9. **Image:**
Flag raised on a battleship deck during World War II.
Photograph of Francis Scott Key’s manuscript of what became known as the National Anthem of the United States. It was declared the National Anthem in 1931.
11. Image:
Image of a bald eagle, an important United States Symbol.
The Liberty Bell in Independence Hall in Philadelphia, PA.
13: Image:
Mrs. Claire Cumberbatch, leads group of protesting alleged “segregated” school, leads the pledge.
APPENDIX II:
BIBLIOGRAPHY AND WEBLIOGRAPHY OF RESOURCES
FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Bibliography of Children’s Literature


Webliography of Supporting Online Resources for Students

**Flags and Other Symbols- Texas Almanac.**
This is an almanac that contains the Texas pledge and other flags that students can view and use in their research.

This is a website that contains the Texas Pledge and information for students to use in their research.
Retrieved from: [https://www.tsl.state.tx.us/ref/abouttx/flagpledge.html](https://www.tsl.state.tx.us/ref/abouttx/flagpledge.html).

**The Pledge of Allegiance by LaFontaine, D. - YouTube (2007)**
This video is the pledge of allegiance.
This website contains the history of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Webliography of Supporting Online Resources for Teachers

I Pledge Allegiance by Aldridge, K. - News, Events, and lesson Plans
This is a lesson plan that can be used to learn the meaning of the pledge.

Pledge of Allegiance (2013, Sept 30).
This website contains the meaning, origin, and controversies about the flag and the pledge of allegiance.

This website contains lesson plan ideas for teachers to use.

The American Flag- Teachnology. (2012)
This website contains a lesson plan about the flag.

The Pledge of Allegiance by Buss, M.
This website contains the meaning and the origin of the Pledge of Allegiance.
Retrieved from http://www.legion.org/flag/pledge

The Pledge of Allegiance: What is the History of our Pledge? by Rosen, C.
This website contains information about the meaning and the origin of the pledge.