

Design It:

Student Stamps for America Curriculum

OVERVIEW

American history and culture continue to live vicariously through stamp imagery. This curriculum, geared towards students in grades 3–6, is designed to enhance students’ understanding of U.S. stamp development through the context of Social Studies and Visual Arts Standards of Learning. Thinking Routines and Visual Learning, as suggested throughout the curriculum, will bridge the relationship between American History and Visual Arts and promote student understanding.¹ Over four lessons, students will have an opportunity to learn elements of art, principles of design, and social studies. Students can show what they have learned by designing a stamp of their own.

After completing this curriculum, students will be able to:

- Name three characteristics of a stamp that help it communicate
- Identify one subject that is of significance to their nation
- Use and identify one element of art and one principle of design used in designing a stamp
- Complete a stamp design that meets United States Postal Service requirements

By integrating art and social studies content, this curriculum increases students’ opportunity to make and build connections on existing knowledge and experiences with art and national identity. Students will have the opportunity to reflect on the relationship between their nation and self after designing a stamp. They also will have the opportunity to improve their observation, identification, and drawing skills. The curriculum has built-in assessment activities that serve as an evaluation tool to see if students have met the stated objectives.

Although this curriculum is broken into four lessons, all four can be completed with limited discussion in one hour. Handouts and additional activities can extend the lessons into a multi-day activity. The curriculum guide is available on the National Postal Museum website (http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/educators/4b_DesignIt.html).

1. Thinking Routines and Visual Learning are long-term and extensive research projects for the promotion of strong learning skills through the arts by Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. For more information on Thinking Routines and Visual Learning, please visit their websites: <http://www.pz.harvard.edu/index.cfm>; <http://pzweb.harvard.edu/tc/routines.cfm>; & http://www.pz.harvard.edu/vt/VisibleThinking_html_files/03_ThinkingRoutines/03a_ThinkingRoutines.html.



Design It!

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