

## Mapping the State Symbols of Illinois

**Overview:** Illinois has 14 tactile official state symbols, Tree, Flower, Prairie Grass, Snack food, Animal, Bird, Insect, Fish, Reptile, Amphibian, Mineral, Soil, Fossil, and Dance. Students will give background and descriptions of each symbol attempting to understand and explain how each of these warrants designation as the state symbol.

**Grade Levels:** 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grades

**Time Needed:** 5-10 class periods depending on class time allotted for research,

### Illinois Learning Standards:

- IL 17A2a Locate, describe, and explain places, regions, and features
- IL 17B2b Analyze and explain characteristics and interactions
- IL 17C3a Understand relationships between geographic factors and society
- IL 17D2a Understand the historical significance of geography

### Objectives:

Students will be expected to:

- Give background and descriptions of each of the 14 state symbols of Illinois
- Identify Illinois state symbols as shown in pictures, sketches, or photographs
- Plot on an Illinois map where the “symbol” is most prevalent or most common in the state
- Explain the use or importance of the “symbol” to the state of Illinois

**Materials:** (handout) Map of Illinois identifying counties  
Computer/ Internet access, encyclopedias, Illinois Government Handbook

**Advanced Preparation:** Duplicate Map handouts  
Acquire computer lab, encyclopedias, and handbooks

**Introducing the Activity:** Discuss that the state of Illinois acknowledges and recognizes historically important or prominent “things” within the state and honors these “things” by designating them state symbols.

**Procedures:** Distribute handout - Map of Illinois identifying counties. Explain to the students that they are to create a booklet on research conducted on each of the 14 Illinois state symbols to find and explain in paragraph form their findings on background, description (including either a picture, sketch, or photograph) and explanation of the use and importance to the state of Illinois. Students will also plot on the map where each of the state symbols is most commonly found or prevalent in the state.

**Concluding the Lesson:** Discuss the findings of the students research especially concerning background, descriptions, use, importance, and where most commonly found or prevalent in the state as well as reasons the symbol was designated a state symbol.

**Assessing the Activity:** The finished booklet including the written paragraphs on each symbol, explanations, and maps will give evidence of student’s knowledge of the Illinois state symbols.

**Extending the Activity:** Have students determine if the choices of Illinois state symbols seem to be the most appropriate to represent the state. Students may also discuss as time has gone by if there might be better representations today. Students may choose to also research the Illinois state seal, slogan, song, and flag.

**Special Information:** the Illinois State Museum website:  
<http://www.museum.state.il.us/exhibits/symbols/> and the State of Illinois website  
<http://www.state.il.us/kids/learn/symbols/> are very useful in this project.

**References:**

Counties of Illinois Map

<http://www.hometownlocator.com/StateMap.cfm?StateCode=IL>

Cover picture taken at the Illinois State Museum

