



## **Symbols in African Art**

### **Grade level**

4-6

### **Concept**

The following lessons are designed to teach students about symbols in relation to their immediate community as well as in the African culture. They will also learn how everyday objects can be viewed as symbols of other things.

### **Objectives**

- Students will learn about the use of symbols in their everyday life.
- Students will learn about the use of symbols in African culture.
- Students will learn how everyday objects can be considered works of art.
- Students will identify symbols that they relate to.

### **Guiding Questions**

What is a symbol?

What is the difference between a symbol and an object?

How are symbols used?

What symbols and traditions are important to your country? To your school? To you and your family?

### **National Standards**

Social Studies,

Technology,

Language Arts, and

Visual Arts

### **Suggested Materials**

- Rhonda Mitchell, *The Talking Cloth* (Orchard Books, 2001). Symbols Web Activity
- <http://www.kn.sbc.com/wired/fil/pages/samafricansa.html>
- Various objects that have significance to teacher (favorite piece of jewelry, grandmother's quilt, etc.)
- Vocabulary List  
<http://www.projectview.org/CincinnatiMuseumofArt/vocabularylist.pdf>

Estimated Time for Completion (including videoconference)

4 class periods



## Vocabulary list

- Artifact*** — — an object produced or shaped by human craft, especially a tool, weapon, or ornament of archaeological or historical interest
- Culture*** — — the totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought
- Custom*** — — a practice followed by people of a particular group or region
- Object*** — — something perceptible by one or more of the senses, especially by vision or touch; a material thing
- Symbol*** — — something that represents something else by association, resemblance, or convention, especially a material object used to represent something invisible
- Symbolism*** — the practice of representing things by means of symbols or of attributing symbolic meanings or significance to objects, events, or relationships
- Tradition*** — the passing down of elements of a culture from generation to generation, especially by oral communication