

The artwork of the Nebraska State Capitol can be used to teach Nebraska Department of Education Kindergarten Social Studies Standards. Civic Participation SS 0.1.2.b. Identify patriotic symbols, songs and actions.

Civic Participation and the Nebraska State Capitol

Nebraska became the 37th state in the United States of America on March 1, 1867.

Nebraska's Legislature voted to build a new Capitol in 1917 when Nebraska was only 50 years old. The third Capitol, our current Capitol, is filled with artwork that represents the United States, Nebraska and citizenship.



The Great Seal of the United States has a Bald Eagle with a red, white and blue shield on its body. There is a circle with 13 stars representing the 13 original colonies or states. The eagle holds a ribbon with our nation's motto in its beak and an olive branch and arrows, symbols of peace and war, in his claws.

Artists used the U.S. Flag, the United States Shield, the Bald Eagle and the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. to represent the United States on the inside and outside of the Nebraska State Capitol.



The Bald Eagle in the Vestibule dome artwork, above, is one of the animals of Nebraska created by mosaicist Hildreth Meiere.

Mosaicist Hildreth Meiere created mosaic panels in the Capitol to show activities of citizenship. To be good citizens we obey the laws, we vote, we serve as elected leaders, and we go into the military to protect our country.



The eagle and shield appear in the ceiling of Nebraska's Unicameral Legislative Chamber to show Nebraska became part of the United States with the Louisiana Purchase.



Sculptor Lee Lawrie used symbols in United States Seal and moved them around to make a relief sculpture on the outside of the Capitol showing Nebraska is one of the 50 United States.

The national motto
- E PLURIBUS UNUM -
- Out of Many One -
means all the people in all 50 states act together to make the United States of America.

On the outside of the Capitol, sculptor Lee Lawrie carved a relief sculpture to symbolize Nebraska becoming a state.



In the picture Nebraska is a pioneer woman standing beside a soldier who will help the farmers behind her build our state. Nebraska hands a star to the United States, a woman sitting on an eagle throne holding the United States Flag with the Capitol in Washington, D.C behind her.

Inside the Great Hall of the Nebraska State Capitol, artist Hildreth Meiere's ceiling mosaics show different ways Nebraskans put citizenship into action. We vote, we serve as elected leaders in the Executive and Legislative branches of Government, and we go into the military to protect our country.

In this picture, the farmer is turning from his plow toward the United States flag and the soldier in brown showing it is a patriotic action to serve in the military when called upon by our country.



An important action of citizenship is voting in elections. This picture shows three people voting by putting paper ballots into a special box so the vote is private. When voting is over, officials gather the boxes and count the votes to see who will take office and represent citizens in their government.

The three people in this picture represent the first people to come to Nebraska, a Native American, an African American and a European American. Above the entrance on the government building behind them is a balanced scale. This means government is open equally to everyone and should treat all people equally or the same. Nebraska's State Motto is "Equality Before the Law".





Citizens take patriotic action by running for elected office.

A judge in a black robe holds a book of laws for the person who got the most votes in the election to promise they will do their best to make rules for all people. There are two flags behind the United States Shield, one blue to represent Nebraska and a red, white and blue flag to represent the United States of America because we can serve in local and national government.

In the ceiling of a room in the Capitol is a picture of a figure running from the Nebraska Capitol to the nation's Capitol in Washington, D.C. Nebraska sends locally elected leaders to Washington, D.C. to share our ideas and needs with other state's elected leaders. Buildings can be symbols and show how we participate in Nebraska and United States government.



Vocabulary

Balanced scale - (bal enc ed skal) when two things being weighed are equal

Ballots- (bal et) a paper list of people for an election

Chamber - (cham ber) a room

Citizenship - (sit e sen ship) a persons actions as a citizen

Colonies - (kal a nes) a group that moves away to live together

Elect - (e lekt) to chose by voting

Equality - (e kwel e te) being the same

Executive - (eg zek yoo tiv) a part of government that carries out the laws

Legislative - (lej is lat iv) the law making part of government

Motto - (mat o) words to represent a nation

Mosaic - (mo za ik) picture made with small pieces of stone, glass,
paper or other material

Mosaicist - (mo za a sist) an artist who makes mosaics

Official - (a fish el) a person holding a position of authority

Participate - (part i sip pat) to do something with others

Relief Sculpture - (ri lef skulp cher) a carving which sticks out from another surface

Represent - (rep ri zents) a likeness or image, a sign or symbol

Sculptor - (skulp ter) a person who carves

Unicameral - (yoon i kam er el) a one house legislature