Inspiration Artists: Marlena Anglin, Harvey Ebanks

Age Range: Secondary +

Subject Area: Social Studies

CAYMAN ISLANDS NATIONAL SYMBOLS: THE FLAG AND COAT OF ARMS

NATIONAL GALLERY | CAYMAN ISLANDS

DART | MINDS INSPIRED

In This Packet

In this lesson, students will continue the lesson on National Symbols begun in <u>National Symbols Part 1: Flora and Fauna.</u> In Part 2, students will look at the Cayman Islands Flag and Coat of Arms.

Students will also learn about local artists who have represented important symbols of the Cayman Islands included on the Coat of Arms in their work. A follow-up art activity inspired by the Coat of Arms is included.

What is a National Symbol?

National symbols represent a country's identity. They are a way to show national pride and express our traditions and values to the rest of the world.

National symbols can include a country's flag or coat of arms, its national song, and the plants or animals that are unique to that country.

In this lesson, you will learn about Cayman's National Flag and Coat of Arms.

The Cayman Islands Coat of Arms

A Coat of Arms is a unique design comprised of several images and words that represent a country, family or group. They were traditionally used in medieval heraldry to signify a family or group.

The Cayman Islands Coat of Arms was adopted as an official symbol of the country in 1958. It shows a shield with a gold lion on a red background representing our ties to the United Kingdom. Below the lion are three green stars in a field of water, representing our three islands in the sea. Above the lion is a pineapple, representing our longstanding socio-political ties to Jamaica, and a turtle and rope, showing our long history of seafaring and thatch trades.

At the bottom of the Coat of Arms is our motto, "He Hath Founded It Upon The Seas" from Psalm 24, showing Cayman's Christian heritage.

Elements of the Coat of Arms in Local Art

Marlena Anglin, *Thatch Rope Cart*, 2012.

As you have learned, the rope on our Coat of Arms symbolises our traditional thatch industry, which flourised from the 1800s until the 1960s. Rope making was a major source of income in Cayman, peaking in 1964 with 1.3 million fathoms of rope exported.

This rope-making cart by Marlena Anglin is typical of the traditional devices used to twist silver thatch rope. *Thatch Rope Cart* highlights the everyday practical use of rope in Caymanian culture as well as its wider significance to our Islands' national identity.
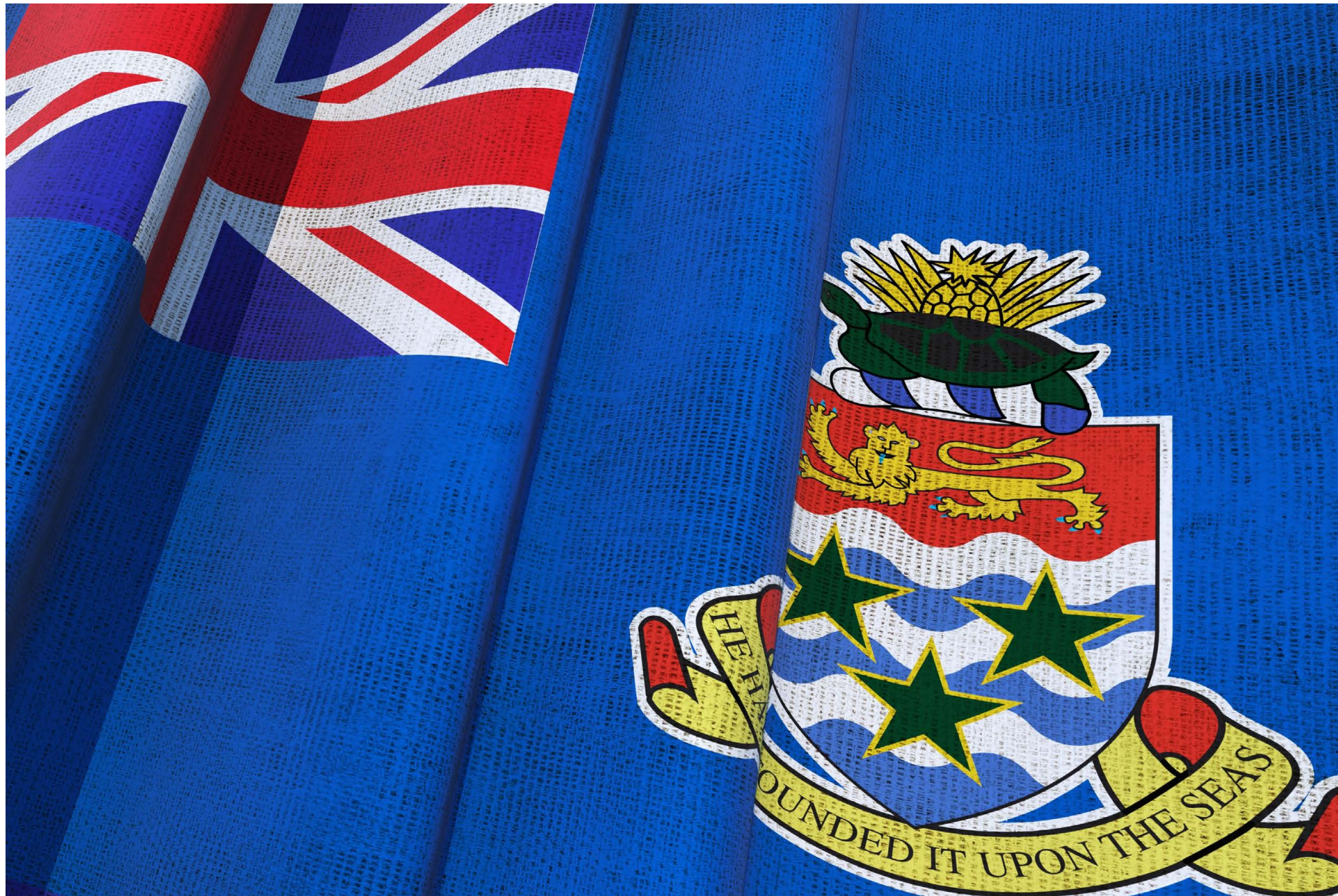
The turtle on our Coat of Arms is representative of our turtling and seafaring heritage. Along with the thatch industry, turtle fishing was once the islands' economic mainstay before tourism began.

Turtles in the Sound by Harvey Ebanks shows a group of turtles in the North Sound, referring to our traditional turtling heritage. To learn more about Cayman's maritime history, catboats and the importance of turtles to Cayman, read our Maritime Heritage lesson.

Harvey Ebanks, *Turtles in the Sound*, c. 1997.

The Cayman Islands Flag

The Cayman Islands Flag became an official symbol of the Cayman Islands in 1959, closely following the adoption of the Coat of Arms.

There are two versions of the flag: one with a deep blue background (called a 'field') which is used on land, and one with a red field which is used at sea.

In the upper left corner of the Cayman Islands Flag is the Union Jack, the official Flag for the United Kingdom. The use of the Union Jack honours our ties to the UK; many UK dependencies feature the Union Jack on their flags. To learn more about the Union Jack, visit https://www.royal.uk/union-jack.

Our flag also includes the Coat of Arms, which you read about on the last page.

The Flag must always be shown respect as a symbol of the country, and thus it comes with many rules for care. The Flag should never touch the ground, be torn or damaged on purpose, flown at night or used for any reason other than as a flag.

Art Activity:
Create a personal Coat of Arms

Materials:
- Paper
- Pencil
- Pen
- Coloured pencils, markers or crayons
- Scissors (optional)
- Glue (optional)
- Old magazines (optional)

Step 1: On a piece of paper, sketch a shield shape with a flat top rounding to a point at the bottom. You can look at the Cayman Islands Coat of Arms for reference.

Step 2: Think about what represents you. What is your name? What are some of your favourite things? Your favourite colours, animals or hobbies?

Step 3: Start to sketch some of your favourite things into your shield. Try to group them by theme, like the three stars together on the Cayman Islands Coat of Arms. Use a pencil first until you are satisfied with the look of your personal Coat of Arms, then you can go over it in pen and add colour. You can also layer symbols on top of the shield, like the pineapple, turtle and rope in the Cayman Islands Coat of Arms.

Step 4: At the bottom of your shield, draw a banner - you can make it any shape you want - curvy like our National one, straight or diagonal. Write your name or a personal motto inside the banner.

Optional Steps: Instead of drawing every part of your personal Coat of Arms, try cutting out images from old magazines and gluing them on. You can create a 3D collage, or add your Coat of Arms to a larger flag design. If you want to create a flag, you can glue the left length of the paper to a staff (using a long stick or thin piece of wood like a wooden kitchen skewer).

Image source: http://mrmintart.blogspot.com/2014/10/personal-coat-of-arms-project.html