

Paloma Wants to Be Lady Freedom | Lesson Plan

Why are the Statue of Freedom, American citizenship, and the Capitol Building important symbols of American values and history?

Students will understand the significance of the Statue of Freedom, American citizenship, and the Capitol Building in representing the core values and history of the United States, including liberty, democracy, and unity, through the story of "Paloma Wants to Be Lady Freedom."

Learning Objectives:

- Identify the Statue of Freedom, also known as Lady Freedom, and describe its appearance and symbols.
- Explain the significance of the Statue of Freedom and what it represents about American values.
- Recognize the importance of American citizenship and the rights and responsibilities it entails.
- Describe the Capitol Building, its historic components, and their significance in American history.
- Discuss how the Capitol Building, the Statue of Freedom, and the concept of citizenship reflect American principles of liberty and democracy.

Key Vocabulary:

- **American monument:** A structure or statue that commemorates a significant person, event, or idea in American history.
- **Capitol Building:** The building in Washington, D.C., where the United States Congress meets to make laws.
- **Capitol Dome:** The large, iconic dome atop the Capitol Building, completed in 1866 during the Civil War.
- **Capitol Rotunda:** The large, circular room under the Capitol Building's dome, used for important ceremonies, featuring artworks like "The Apotheosis of Washington" and "The Baptism of Pocahontas."
- **National Statuary Hall:** A chamber in the Capitol Building that houses statues of prominent Americans, including Rosa Parks.
- **Freedom:** The condition of not being controlled by political power; being able to make choices and enjoy civil liberties.
- **American citizen:** A person who is legally recognized as a member of the United States, with rights and responsibilities.
- **Statue of Freedom (Lady Freedom):** A bronze statue atop the Capitol Building, symbolizing freedom and democracy, standing 19.5 feet tall and installed in 1863.

Educational Standards: CCRA.R.7, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.2, CCRA.L.4, CCRA.SL.4



Academic Topics: Life Lessons, American Values, America

What You'll Need

- Video: *Otto's Tales: Paloma Wants to Be Lady Freedom* (Watch [Here](#))
- Book (Optional): *Paloma Wants to Be Lady Freedom* (Buy [Here](#))
- Worksheet: *Paloma Wants to Be Lady Freedom* (Click [Here](#))
- Virtual tour of the Capitol Building (a web search yields several options)
- Virtual map of Washington, D.C.

Lesson Plan (45 mins.)

Warm-Up: (15 mins.)

1. Begin with a quick introduction to the Capitol Building, highlighting its location in Washington, D.C., and its importance as the home of the United States Congress, where laws are made. Show a map of Washington, D.C., and point out the Capitol Building's location in the center of the city.
2. Conduct a virtual tour of the Capitol Building, focusing on the following locations and items:
 - The Dome: Explain that the Capitol Dome was completed in 1866 and symbolizes the nation's unity and resilience. It is an iconic architectural feature visible from many points in the city. Share that the Dome is 288 feet tall and 96 feet in diameter and weighs a staggering 14.1 million pounds.
 - The Rotunda: Explain that the Capitol Rotunda was completed in 1824 and serves as a ceremonial space for state functions and important events. Highlight the Dome sits directly above this amazing space.
 - Zoom in on painting inside the Dome. Explain that it is known as "The Apotheosis of Washington" and allow students time to remark on various details of the painting. (Provide a quick explanation of what apotheosis means - the deification of a person.)
 - On the Rotunda wall, zoom in on the "Baptism of Pocahontas" and explain that this painting by John Gadsby Chapman depicts the Christian baptism of a significant figure in early American history. Pocahontas helped to foster peace between the Native Americans and English settlers.
 - National Statuary Hall: Explain that the hall houses statues of prominent American individuals. Zoom in on the statue of Rosa Parks and explain her role in the Civil Rights Movement by sparking the Montgomery Bus Boycott.
 - Plaster Cast of the Statue of Freedom: Proceed to the Capitol Visitor Center and zoom in on Lady Freedom. Explain her appearance and the significance of the following:
 - Classical Roman toga: The toga symbolizes wisdom, dignity, and authority. It reflects the influence of ancient Roman culture on American ideals of democracy and governance.

- Helmet adorned with stars and an eagle’s head and feathers: The stars symbolize the states of the union, representing the unity and equality of all states under the federal system. The eagle, a symbol of strength and freedom, reflects the national bird of the United States and signifies courage, vision, and resilience. The helmet, overall, suggests a readiness to defend the nation's principles.
 - Sheathed sword: The sheathed sword represents preparedness and the nation's commitment to defending its liberty and justice. It also signifies peace, as the sword is not drawn, indicating that America seeks peace but is ready to defend itself if necessary.
 - Laurel wreath: The laurel wreath is a classical symbol of victory and honor. It represents the triumph of freedom and democracy. In ancient times, laurel wreaths were awarded to victors and heroes, signifying honor and achievement.
 - Shield: The shield symbolizes protection and strength. It signifies the nation's resolve to protect its citizens and uphold its values. The shield, together with the sword and laurel wreath, embodies the balance between defense, peace, and honor.
 - Explain that Lady Freedom faces east for a specific reason that will be revealed in today’s story. Encourage students to listen for the reason as they listen to the story.
3. After the tour, invite students to share their observations and what they learned about the Capitol Building, the Dome, the Rotunda, the National Statuary Hall, and the Statue of Freedom (Lady Freedom). Reinforce the significance of these symbols in American History and their representation of American values such as liberty, democracy, and unity.
 4. Queue up the video featuring the story “Paloma Wants to Be Lady Freedom” by Rachel Campos-Duffy.

Watch and Discuss: (15 mins.)

1. Play the video *Otto’s Tales: Paloma Wants to Be Lady Freedom*. As students watch, ask them to pay close attention to the places and artifacts mentioned.
2. Pause the video at key moments to check for understanding. Give students the opportunity to express their recollections and details about what they have learned.
 - Pause when the video mentions the Capitol Dome, Pocahontas, Rosa Parks, and Lady Freedom. Ask students to share what they know about these symbols and their significance.
3. After the video, review the story with the students.
 - Why did Paloma’s father want to visit Washington, D.C.?
 - What buildings/places did Paloma visit?
 - What symbols of American values and history were represented?
 - Why did Paloma change her mind about visiting Washington, D.C.?

- Paloma's father says Americans are "born free." What does he mean by that?

Wrap-Up: (20 mins.)

1. Invite students to share their thoughts and what they learned about the Statue of Freedom, American citizenship, and the Capitol Building through the story of "Paloma Wants to Be Lady Freedom."
2. Distribute the "Paloma Wants to Be Lady Freedom Worksheet" and allow students to either draw the missing components or draw lines to where they should go.
3. Discuss the significance of each part of Lady Freedom together as a class.
4. Assessment: By the end of this lesson, students should be able to recount the significance of several American symbols.

Don't have time for the full lesson? Quick Activity (15 mins.)

Play the video *Otto's Tales: Paloma Wants to be Lady Freedom*. After the video, review the story and hand out the worksheet to complete together as a class.