



ICONIC AMERICA

— OUR SYMBOLS AND STORIES —

WITH DAVID RUBENSTEIN

ENGAGEMENT &
DISCUSSION GUIDE
FOR EDUCATORS



pbs.org/iconicamerica

#IconicAmericaPBS





ICONIC AMERICA

OUR SYMBOLS AND STORIES

WITH DAVID RUBENSTEIN

In *Iconic America: Our Symbols and Stories*, David Rubenstein examines the history of America through some of its most iconic symbols, objects, and places, on location and in conversation with historical thinkers, community members, and other experts. Together, they dive deep into each symbol's history and how its meaning has changed over time, using them as a gateway to understand America's past and present.

Through these icons, this series explores American culture, history, and values. The interpretation of these icons is not always straightforward and can evoke different meanings and reactions from people. This community engagement and discussion guide will help you facilitate a respectful and informative conversation about *Iconic America* and the history that surrounds them.





USING THIS GUIDE

The goal of this guide is to help educators facilitate deeper conversations around *Iconic America*, understand the complexities and histories surrounding these American icons, and promote dialogue. This guide will help you engage your school, your students, and your community and help you prepare thoughtful activities including school assemblies and classroom discussions, utilizing resources and support from local and national organizations. Whether you are hosting a private screening for other educators, a single classroom discussion, or a large public event for your entire community, we hope that this guide prepares you to spark meaningful conversations about local and national iconography, their enduring symbolism, their changing meanings, and their histories.

SERIES DESCRIPTION

Names, dates, and battles, that's often how American history is told. But history is all around us. It's a living, breathing story encapsulated in our physical world. From our flags to our statues and our most sacred texts, we live alongside and interact with history every day. In this series, David Rubenstein examines the history of America through some of its most iconic objects, symbols, and artifacts, diving deep into their story and using them as a gateway to the past. Each episode unpacks a symbol from history—the Statue of Liberty, the Gadsden Flag, Fenway Park, and the Hollywood Sign—familiar items with deep and significant meaning. He both tells the story of and goes beyond each object, using their stories as a portal into the lives of the extraordinary American figures who helped create, shape, and use these objects. This is not simply an examination of our country's history but the story of us and where we are today.

EPISODE DESCRIPTIONS

EPISODE ONE / “FENWAY PARK”

Baseball is America’s pastime and obsession, and no ballpark is more iconic than Fenway Park, home of the Boston Red Sox. The story of a city’s loyalty to its team and love for its ballpark through thick and thin.

EPISODE TWO / “THE HOLLYWOOD SIGN”

The story of how a real estate advertisement erected in 1923 became an international symbol of fame, fortune, and the American dream.

EPISODE THREE / “THE GADSDEN FLAG”

The “Don’t Tread on Me” flag is such a potent symbol of independence that it has been co-opted by a wide variety of Americans over its long history.

EPISODE FOUR / “THE COWBOY”

The cowboy is the quintessential American—fiercely independent, brave, and laconic. The episode examines the myths and realities of this archetype, which remains as potent as ever in the 21st century.

EPISODE FIVE / “THE STATUE OF LIBERTY”

The evolving meaning of this symbol for a “nation of immigrants,” and how it embodies our values and our conflicts, from abolition and women’s suffrage to the treatment of refugees.

EPISODE SIX / “THE AMERICAN BALD EAGLE”

The story of how the American Bald Eagle soared to its vaunted perch in American iconography, a symbol not only of patriotism but also of environmental activism and Native American traditions.

EPISODE SEVEN / “STONE MOUNTAIN”

As Confederate statues are torn down across the country and the nation wrestles with its past, there are heated arguments about the fate of the Monument at Stone Mountain, Georgia, the Confederate Mount Rushmore.

EPISODE EIGHT / “THE GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE”

The Golden Gate Bridge is an engineering marvel that symbolizes America’s can-do spirit. Can America continue to execute bold and ambitious infrastructure projects in the 21st century?

Production still from *Iconic America*,
Episode: “The Gadsen Flag”





MEET THE TEAM

DAVID M. RUBENSTEIN

HOST AND EXECUTIVE PRODUCER OF *ICONIC AMERICA: OUR STORIES AND SYMBOLS*

Co-Founder and Co-Chairman of The Carlyle Group, a global investment firm. Mr. Rubenstein is Chairman of the Boards of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the Council on Foreign Relations, the National Gallery of Art, the Economic Club of Washington, and the University of Chicago.

Mr. Rubenstein has made transformative gifts for the restoration or repair of the Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, Jefferson Memorial, Monticello, Montpelier, Mount Vernon, Arlington House, Iwo Jima Memorial, the Kennedy Center, the Smithsonian, the National Archives, the National Zoo, the Library of Congress, and the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

Mr. Rubenstein is an original signer of The Giving Pledge; the host of The David Rubenstein Show and Bloomberg Wealth with David Rubenstein; and the author of *The American Story*, *How to Lead*, *The American Experiment*, and *How to Invest*.

MARO CHERMAYEFF

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER WITH *SHOW OF FORCE*

Maro Chermayeff is an Emmy, Peabody, and IDA award-winning filmmaker. Selected multi-part series and documentary works include: *Hostages*, *Atlanta's Missing and Murdered: The Lost Children*, *Marina Abramovic The Artists is Present* (HBO) *Soundbreaking*, *Carrier*, *Circus*, *Juilliard*, *Half the Sky*, *Frontier House* (PBS), *Soundtracks: Songs that Defined History* (CNN) among many others. Maro is a member of The DGA, AMPAS, and ATAS, and is the Founder and Chair of the MFA program in Social Documentary at SVA/NYC.

JEFF DUPRE

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER WITH *SHOW OF FORCE*

Jeff has earned numerous illustrious honors, establishing him as a producer/director with a knack both for managing complex large-scale productions and for bringing his subjects to life. His work has been released theatrically and screened at film festivals throughout the world as well as airing on PBS, HBO, the BBC, CNN, and ARTE.

JOSHUA BENNETT

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER WITH SHOW OF FORCE

Joshua has produced projects in over 35 countries and on all 7 continents. Projects he's produced have won The Television Academy Honors Award, The Peabody Award, Emmy and Real Screen awards, and a Grammy Nomination for Best Music Documentary. His short film *Los Comandos* was shortlisted for an Academy Award in 2018. Most recently with Show of Force, he executive produced and directed the critically acclaimed, IDA Award winning 5 part HBO documentary series *Atlanta's Missing and Murdered: The Lost Children* and *Hostages*, a four-part series on the Iran Hostage Crisis for HBO, and *Where is Private Dulaney* a 3 part documentary series for Hulu.

SAM POLLARD

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER WITH SHOW OF FORCE

Sam is an accomplished feature film and television video editor, and documentary producer/director. In 2020 he was one of the directors on the 2020 HBO Series *Atlanta's Missing and Murdered: The Lost Children*. In 2021 HBO premiered two of his films *Black Art: In the Absence of Light* and *Citizen Ashe*.

CHRISTOPHER ULLMAN

PRODUCER WITH DMR PRODUCTIONS

Christopher is a communications professional, author, inspirational speaker and champion whistler. He is president of Ullman Communications, a strategic advisory firm, and previously served in lead communications roles with The Carlyle Group, the White House Budget Office, and the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, among others.

Iconic America features an incredible group of historians, authors, researchers, librarians, conservationists, and more that help dive into the complex history of some of these icons. Interviewees include:

- **Lonnie Bunch**, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution
- **Sarah Duke**, Library of Congress
- **Pete Buttigieg**, US Secretary of Transportation
- **Jack E. Davis**, Historian and Author of *The Bald Eagle*
- **Jerry Brown**, former governor of California
- **Sam Kennedy**, President & CEO of the Boston Red Sox
- **Howard Bryant**, Author and ESPN Senior Writer
- **David Ortiz**, Boston Red Sox
- **Tracy K. Smith**, US Poet Laureate
- **Walter Isaacson**, Historian and Author
- **James Clyburn**, US Congressman from South Carolina
- **Hasan Jeffries**, Historian with The Ohio State University
- **Michael B. Moore**, Founding president of the International African American Museum
- **Peter Ansoff**, Historian
- **Leah Brooks**, Economist
- **Natalie Dawson**, Executive Director of Audubon Alaska
- **Jones Hotch**, Vice President, Chilkat Indian Village

FILM WEBSITE AND EDUCATION COLLECTION

- pbs.org/weta/iconic-america
- pbslearningmedia.org/collection/iconic-america

CLASSROOM ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Iconic America: Our Symbols and Stories is accompanied by educational materials for middle and high school classrooms. The lessons and activities provide opportunities for classrooms to explore U.S. history, English language arts, and STEM by diving into important iconography that shaped our country. Lesson topics cover the history and relevance of major American images, like the Gadsden Flag and Stone Mountain; the varying symbolism of the Statue of Liberty; an examination of the myths and realities of the cowboy archetype; a deeper look into environmental activism and Native American traditions related to the bald eagle; an analysis of the exclusion felt in Hollywood by people of color; an examination of primary sources to better understand the history of racism in Fenway Park and in the larger city of Boston; and an inquiry inviting students to scientifically explore the Golden Gate Bridge and consider what it will take to imagine the next iteration of American transit innovation.

We invite you and your students to have conversations in your classrooms and wider community—from the perspectives of history, media literacy, civic engagement, and more. This guide is filled with tools to help you plan for teaching about America's iconography, plan screening events for your students and school community, and spark discussion. We hope it will support a deeper understanding of the complex stories presented in *Iconic America: Our Symbols and Stories*.

GUIDELINES FOR CREATING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AROUND AMERICAN ICONS

Classroom engagement should strive to provoke new inquiry and reflection among your students about the iconography of America and its impact on American history and culture.

KEY CONCEPTS FROM THE FILM

To support your teaching efforts, here are some of the key concepts that are explored in *Iconic America*:

The American Story

Emphasizing that these symbols represent both the American story, but also serve as a gateway for personal stories. As individual citizens, we make the American story come together with our life's experiences.

Personal Narratives

Engaging with personal stories. The series includes the stories of a diverse range of Americans. Personal stories illustrate how each symbol's history and meaning has changed over time, using them as a gateway to understand America's past and present.

Different Perspectives & Experiences

Encountering diverse perspectives about the icons. This series includes stories of women, African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, immigrants, veterans, journalists, historians, and individual citizens to show the range of the American experience.

STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGING STUDENTS WITH THIS TOPIC

Personal Reflection

Have students reflect on what the series and its episodes have taught them, or what preconceived notions it has challenged. Questions you can ask are:

- What are some of the stories from the series that stand out to you?
- What surprised you when making this series/episode? Did you have any preconceived ideas that ended up changing as you explored this topic?
- What does this series tell us about our country, our history?

Tell Their Stories

Have students tell their own stories of what icons have shaped their own experience. Questions you can ask are:

- What American story do you want to tell? What made you want to tell this story?
- Why is it important for us to explore icons in America?
- What icon and/or story is missing? Why?

BUILDING STRONG CLASSROOM PARTNERSHIPS

WETA, the producing public media station for *Iconic America: Our Symbols and Stories*, has established strong national partnerships across the U.S. to support this project. These organizations may offer additional resources for you and your students around topics and themes related to American icons.

PBS BOOKS pbsbooks.org

Builds and enhances working relationships between libraries and their local PBS stations. Libraries are great partners to share information and for student research. PBS Books helps to amplify local station content to its library partners and beyond. In partnership with PBS Books, WETA is helping stations connect with public libraries around community and educator engagement to amplify and engage around *Iconic America*.

PBS NEWSHOUR STUDENT REPORTING LABS studentreportinglabs.org

An award-winning youth media organization connecting classrooms and after-school programs to the PBS NewsHour and local PBS stations. Now operating in 170 middle and high schools, SRL trains teenagers across the country to produce stories that highlight the achievements, challenges, and reality of today's youth. Through their work with a growing community of educators and new StoryMaker platform, SRL fosters the next generation of media creators by inspiring students to find their voice and engage in their communities.

Production still from *Iconic America*,
Episode: "The American Bald Eagle"



CLASSROOM ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Creating meaningful and engaging classroom activities around *Iconic America* may include collaboration with historical, civic, arts, cultural, and humanities organizations in your community. Activities may explore the history of America through some of its most iconic symbols, objects, and places, as well as how their meaning has changed over time, using them as a gateway to understand America's past and present.

Potential Activities May Include:

- **Series screening and discussion** in your classroom or in your school auditorium that features a local or national subject matter expert.
- **Civic engagement workshops** with other classrooms, schools, or organizations that seek to further explore iconography and American culture, history, and values.
- **Local storytelling:**
 - Classrooms may partner with local public media production and content creators who can provide a local lens to explore icons in your community.
 - Student Reporting Labs: Work with your local PBS NewsHour Student Reporting Lab on an event about the impact of journalism in sharing American stories at home.
 - Collect and share the stories of icons from your community.
- **Educator trainings** may utilize materials from PBS LearningMedia.
- Your school may explore **partnerships with other organizations** that are hosting the exhibit in your area.
- **Art exhibits** and performing art programs about the icons highlighted in *Iconic America*.





Production still from
Iconic America, Episode:
"The Gadsen Flag"

ICONIC AMERICA PHOTO CHALLENGE

Join the *Iconic America* Photo Challenge and showcase your students' talent in capturing the essence of our nation's most cherished icons. Whether it's the awe-inspiring landmarks featured in the David Rubenstein series or the hidden gems in your own backyard, we want to see your students' best shots! Share student photos using the hashtag **#IconicPhotoChallenge** and join us in celebrating the rich tapestry of American culture. Participants may have their photos featured on the *Iconic America* website. Tell your students to grab their cameras and get ready to make history! **#IconicPhotoChallenge** **#IconicAmericaPBS**: pbs.org/weta/iconic-america/through-the-lens-iconic-america-photo-challenge/

ICONIC AMERICA READING CHALLENGE

The *Iconic America* Reading Challenge encourages people to explore the symbols and icons from the series through reading. The booklist includes fiction and non-fiction books that present opportunities to explore stories aligned with the topics and themes explored in each episode of the series and for readers to share their thoughts online using **#IconicBookChallenge** across social platforms. The Reading Challenge is a great way to engage students in your classrooms. Download the *Iconic America* [Book Bingo Card](#) to facilitate participation.

For more information on the *Iconic America* Reading Challenge, visit:
pbs.org/weta/iconic-america/activities/the-iconic-america-reading-challenge.



Production still from *Iconic America*,
Episode: "The Hollywood Sign"

LESSON PLANS

To support educators, *Iconic America* is accompanied by educational materials for middle and high school classrooms on PBS LearningMedia. These materials include clips from the film as well as other resources that connect to its core themes.

■ Fenway Park

- Lesson Plan 1—The Great Bambino **13**
- Lesson Plan 2—Fenway Park's Legacy **13**
- Lesson Plan 3—Racial Injustice at Fenway **14**
- Lesson Plan 4—Boston Strong & Redemption **14**

■ The Hollywood Sign

- Lesson Plan 5—Exclusion in Hollywood **15**
- Lesson Plan 6—Symbolism & History of the Hollywood Sign **15**

■ Gadsden Flag

- Lesson Plan 7—Origin of the Gadsden Flag **16**

■ The Cowboy

- Lesson Plan 8—Cowboy vs. Cowflop **16**

■ The Statue of Liberty

- Lesson Plan 9—The Statue of Liberty as a Symbol **17**
- Lesson Plan 10—Legacy of "The New Colossus" **17**

■ The American Bald Eagle

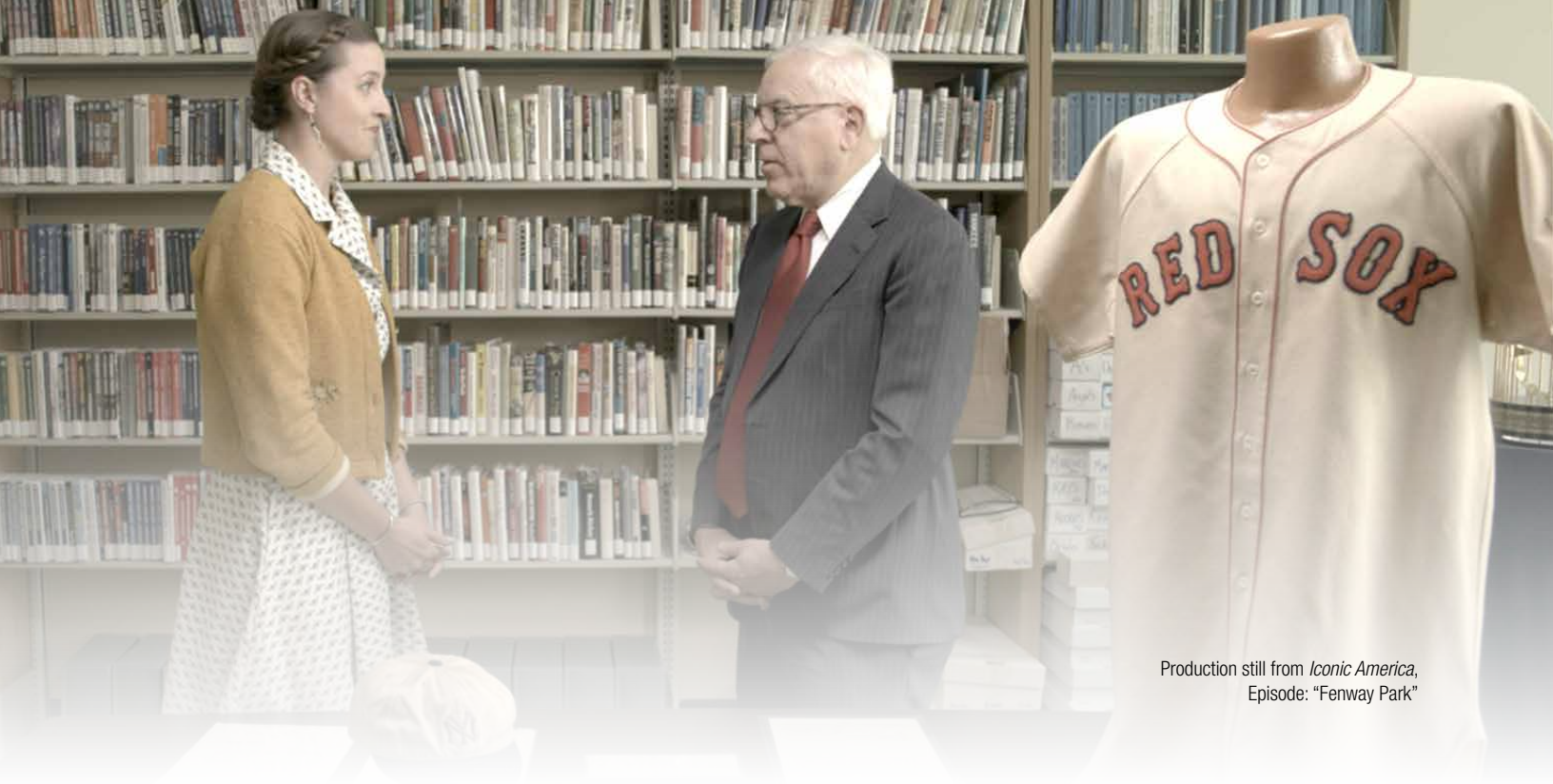
- Lesson Plan 11—The American Bald Eagle: Imagery & Symbolism **18**

■ Stone Mountain

- Lesson Plan 12—History of Stone Mountain **19**

■ The Golden Gate Bridge

- Lesson Plan 13—American Crossroads **19**



Production still from *Iconic America*,
Episode: "Fenway Park"

FENWAY PARK

pbslearningmedia.org/collection/iconic-america/t/fenway-park

THE GREAT BAMBINO

- Grades 6-8, 9-12
- Written by: Greg Timmons

About the Lesson

Learn about the 'Curse of the Bambino' and how it provides an alternative explanation for the Red Sox lack of a World Series win for 84 years.

Students will explore the phenomenon of sports celebrities and their impact on fans and the general public.

Support Materials for Teachers

- Teaching Tips
- Activity 1: Make Your Own Baseball Card
- Activity 2: Athlete Biography

Support Materials for Students

- Discussion Questions
- Vocabulary

FENWAY PARK'S LEGACY

- Grades 6-8, 9-12
- Written by: Greg Timmons

About the Lesson

Take a tour of Fenway Park and experience many of its iconic features backstage, on the field and in the stands. Fenway is the oldest ballpark in America, and it embodies many of the values Americans hold dear, like determination and resilience, but it also represents a history marked by racial discrimination and exclusion.

Students will learn how Fenway is an integral part of the neighborhood in its structure and character and continue researching the iconic ballpark to create a brochure.

Support Materials for Teachers

- Teaching Tips
- Activity: Fenway Park's Legacy

Support Materials for Students

- Discussion Questions
- Vocabulary



RACIAL INJUSTICE AT FENWAY

- Grades 6-8, 9-12
- Written by: Greg Timmons

About the Lesson

The Boston Red Sox was the last Major League Baseball team to integrate African American players. The accompanying video uses interviews and historical narrative to explore the history of racism both in the team's ownership and in the larger city of Boston.

Students will create a timeline and then work in small groups to investigate primary sources on racial integration in baseball.

Support Materials for Teachers

- Teaching Tips
- Activity 1: KWL Chart
- Activity 2: Timeline of Baseball Integration
- Activity 3: Investigate Primary Resources

Support Materials for Students

- Discussion Questions
- Vocabulary
- Handout: KWL Chart

BOSTON STRONG & REDEMPTION

- Grades 6-8, 9-12
- Written by: Greg Timmons

About the Lesson

This lesson explores the events surrounding the Boston Marathon bombing in 2013, and how the people of Boston reacted as Americans do when experiencing a tragedy: by embracing the values that pull a community together.

Students will research and create a presentation of another example in the history of when sports helped heal a city, state, or nation.

Support Materials for Teachers

- Teaching Tips
- Activity: Sports as Healing

Support Materials for Students

- Discussion Questions
- Vocabulary

THE HOLLYWOOD SIGN

pbslearningmedia.org/collection/iconic-america/t/hollywood-sign

EXCLUSION IN HOLLYWOOD

- Grades 6-8, 9-12
- Written by: The Yuri Education Project

About the Lesson

This lesson examines the history of stereotyping and exclusion in Hollywood. The accompanying video clip from *Iconic America* explores the exclusion felt in Hollywood by people of color. The Hollywood Sign has come to stand-in for the glamor and promise of the American film business, but is that promised to everyone?

Students will research a contemporary actor, filmmaker or producer in Hollywood who has challenged issues of representation in the film industry. They will then design a literal chair, with creative additions, that reflects their chosen actor taking a seat at Hollywood's table.

Support Materials for Teachers

- Teaching Tips
- Activity: Finding a Seat at Hollywood's Table
- Further Information

Support Materials for Students

- Discussion Questions
- Pre-Video Worksheet
- Student Worksheet

SYMBOLISM & HISTORY OF THE HOLLYWOOD SIGN

- Grades 6-8, 9-12
- Written by: The Yuri Education Project

About the Lesson

Learn about the dreamy promise and shifting intentions of the Hollywood sign, an icon perched in the hills overlooking Los Angeles. In 1923, the sign originally read "Hollywoodland." Students will investigate how artists have responded to its larger-than-life qualities. The sign has come to stand in for the glamour and promise of the American film business. Industries beyond the Los Angeles region have borrowed the term, such as Dollywood or Bollywood. In the early twentieth century, the sign reflected the bustling and bigger-than-life film industry in Los Angeles.

Students will analyze artistic interpretations of the sign and discuss if now, given the prominence of video streaming and film production in cities outside California, the symbol still lives up to its original promise. Students will then complete an arts activity.

Support Materials for Teachers

- Teaching Tips
- Activity: Responding to the Hollywood Sign with Artist Ed Ruscha
- Further Information

Support Materials for Students

- Discussion Questions
- Vocabulary
- Pre-Video Worksheet

Production still from
Iconic America,
Episode: "The Hollywood Sign"





Production still from
Iconic America,
Episode: "The Cowboy"

- Student Worksheet

THE GADSDEN FLAG

pbslearningmedia.org/collection/iconic-america/t/gadsden-flag

ORIGIN OF THE GADSDEN FLAG

- Grades 6-8, 9-12
- Written by: Greg Timmons

About the Lesson

Flags come in many shapes and colors, and usually are designed to symbolize some idea or tale of history. Learn about the history behind the Gadsden Flag and its precursor, Benjamin Franklin's "Join, or Die" cartoon.

Students will conduct an analysis of the primary sources, the 'Join, or Die' cartoon and the Gadsden Flag, to identify their potential meaning and significance both in American history and contemporary American culture.

Support Materials for Teachers

- Teaching Tips
- Activity: Primary Source Analysis

Support Materials for Students

- Discussion Questions
- Further Information
- Student Worksheet

THE COWBOY

pbslearningmedia.org/collection/iconic-america/t/the-cowboy

COWBOY VS. COWFLOP

- Grades 6-8, 9-12
- Written by: Antonio M. Gomez

About the Lesson

Learn about the Black and Navajo rodeo athletes and hear from historians who document the emergence of the American cowboy as an imprint of the Mexican vaquero. The accompanying clip from *Iconic America* examines a largely Black, Latino, and Indigenous workforce that would be utterly transformed in dime novels, movies, and TV, and traces the story of Annie Oakley and the many unsung women who homesteaded and rode the Chisholm trail.

Students will compare and contrast popular images of the American Cowboy with actual history, and document how iconic images have represented (and misrepresented) who cowboys are and were.

Support Materials for Teachers

- Teaching Tips
- Activity: Cowboy vs. Cowflop
- Further Information

Support Materials for Students

- Discussion Questions
- Video Note-Taker
- Student Worksheet

THE STATUE OF LIBERTY

pbslearningmedia.org/collection/iconic-america/t/statue-of-liberty

THE STATUE OF LIBERTY AS A SYMBOL

- Grades 6-8, 9-12
- Written by: Jennifer Morton

About the Lesson

Learn about the Statue of Liberty and its ties to emancipation. This clip from *Iconic America* examines the original meaning of the Statue of Liberty and how that meaning has changed over time.

Students take a closer look at the statue and notice many of the details that help to make the statue so iconic. They will also examine the Statue of Liberty as a symbol for immigration and abolition in the United States.

Support Materials for Teachers

- Teaching Tips
- Activity: Symbol for Immigration
- Activity: Design and Details
- Further Information

Support Materials for Students

- Background Reading
- Discussion Questions
- Video Note-Taker
- Student Worksheet

LEGACY OF “THE NEW COLOSSUS”

- Grades 6-8, 9-12
- Written by: Jennifer Morton

About the Lesson

The Statue of Liberty was a gift from the French to the United States to celebrate Franco-American relations and the abolition of slavery at the end of the Civil War. Emma Lazurus, a Jewish American poet, was commissioned to write a poem for an auction to raise funds for the statue pedestal. Her poem was written in 1883 and largely forgotten until her friend Georgina Schuyler rekindled interest in it, and had it placed on a plaque on the pedestal in 1903.

Students read Lazurus’ poem “The New Colossus” and analyze how it helped define the Statue of Liberty as a symbol of immigration.

Support Materials for Teachers

- Teaching Tips
- Activity: The New Colossus
- Further Information

Support Materials for Students

- Discussion Questions
- Vocabulary
- Video Note-Taker
- Student Worksheet

Production still from *Iconic America*,
Episode: “The Statue of Liberty”



THE AMERICAN BALD EAGLE

[pbslearningmedia.org/collection/
iconic-america/t/bald-eagle](https://pbslearningmedia.org/collection/iconic-america/t/bald-eagle)

THE AMERICAN BALD EAGLE: IMAGERY AND SYMBOLISM

- Grades 6-8, 9-12
- Written by: The Yuri Education Project

About the Lesson

Investigate the bald eagle as a symbol of environmentalism and patriotism in the U.S. and learn about the part it plays in Dakota communities.

Students will use the accompanying clip from "The American Bald Eagle" episode of the *Iconic America* series to explore primary source documents, historical analysis, and stories to gain an understanding of how an icon can have multiple meanings to a variety of people.

Support Materials for Teachers

- Teaching Tips
- Activity: How the American Bald Eagle Represents Many Ideas
- Activity: America of Many Perspectives

Support Materials for Students

- Discussion Questions
- Video Note-Taker
- Student Worksheet: How the American Bald Eagle Represents Many Ideas
- Student Worksheet: America of Many Perspectives

STONE MOUNTAIN

pbslearningmedia.org/collection/iconic-america/t/stone-mountain

HISTORY OF STONE MOUNTAIN

- Grades 6-8, 9-12
- Written by: Jennifer Morton

About the Lesson

Learn about Stone Mountain, Georgia—home of the largest Confederate monument. The monument is a relief carving of three famous Confederates—Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, and Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson. The monument is carved into a unique, enormous granite outcropping and was started in 1915 and not completed until 1972.

Students will explore arguments over the potential future of Stone Mountain from opposing points of view and calculate the massive size of the relief carving.

Support Materials for Teachers

- Teaching Tips
- Activity: Stone Mountain Opposing Viewpoints
- Activity: Measuring Stone Mountain Carving
- Further Information

Support Materials for Students

- Discussion Questions
- Video Note-Taker
- Student Worksheet: Stone Mountain Opposing Viewpoints
- Student Worksheet: Measuring Stone Mountain Carving

Production still from *Iconic America*,
Episode: “The Golden Gate Bridge”

THE GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE

pbslearningmedia.org/collection/iconic-america/t/golden-gate-bridge

AMERICAN CROSSROADS

- Grades 6-8, 9-12
- Written by: Antonio M. Gomez

About the Lesson

Learn about how the American story is closely tied to the evolution of our transportation infrastructure. From ports, canals and rivers to the transcontinental railroad, street cars and eventually automobiles and air travel. The development of our economy and society has paralleled the expansion of our transit system.

Students will explore how transportation innovation through the automobile reflects our national values of independence and mobility, while assessing if a car-based transit system is efficient or sustainable. Finally, they will imagine what the next iteration of American transit innovation could be.

Support Materials for Teachers

- Teaching Tips
- Activity: American Crossroads

Support Materials for Students

- Discussion Questions
- Further Information
- Student Worksheet
- Vocabulary



QUESTIONS TO HELP INITIATE DISCUSSION

This section is divided into episodes, to serve as a springboard for classroom discussion around the series.

FENWAY PARK

- What is the history of Fenway Park? How has it evolved over time?
- What makes Fenway an American icon?
- What is the significance of Fenway Park in American sports history? How has it shaped the identity of the Boston Red Sox and the city of Boston?
- How has Fenway Park been impacted by modernization and changes in the sports industry? What are some of the challenges associated with preserving the historical significance of Fenway while also keeping up with modern demands?
- In this episode, we learn about Tom Yawkey and his disinterest in Jackie Robinson and his racist views towards acquiring any Black players under his ownership. How did that impact the Boston Red Sox? How did that shape the team? How has the team moved beyond Tom Yawkey's legacy?
- How can we use the story of Fenway Park as a way to educate people about the history and culture of baseball in America?
- What are some ways that we can preserve and protect Fenway Park for future generations?

THE HOLLYWOOD SIGN

- What is the history of the Hollywood Sign? How did it come to be one of the most iconic landmarks in America?
- What is the significance of the Hollywood sign in American culture? What does it symbolize?
- How has the Hollywood sign changed over time? What are some of the preservation efforts that have been made to protect the sign?
- What is the future of the Hollywood sign in American culture? How do you think its meaning and significance will evolve over time?
- What is the Hollywood dream? And has that dream of breaking into Hollywood been available for everyone?
- How have racism and sexism impacted the careers of individuals in the entertainment industry?
- How have movements like [#MeToo](#) and [#OscarsSoWhite](#) impacted the conversation around racism and sexism in Hollywood? What changes have occurred in the industry as a result of these movements?
- What is the future of Hollywood in terms of diversity and representation? How do you think the industry will continue to evolve and change?
- Is Hollywood still the cultural beacon it once was? Why or why not?

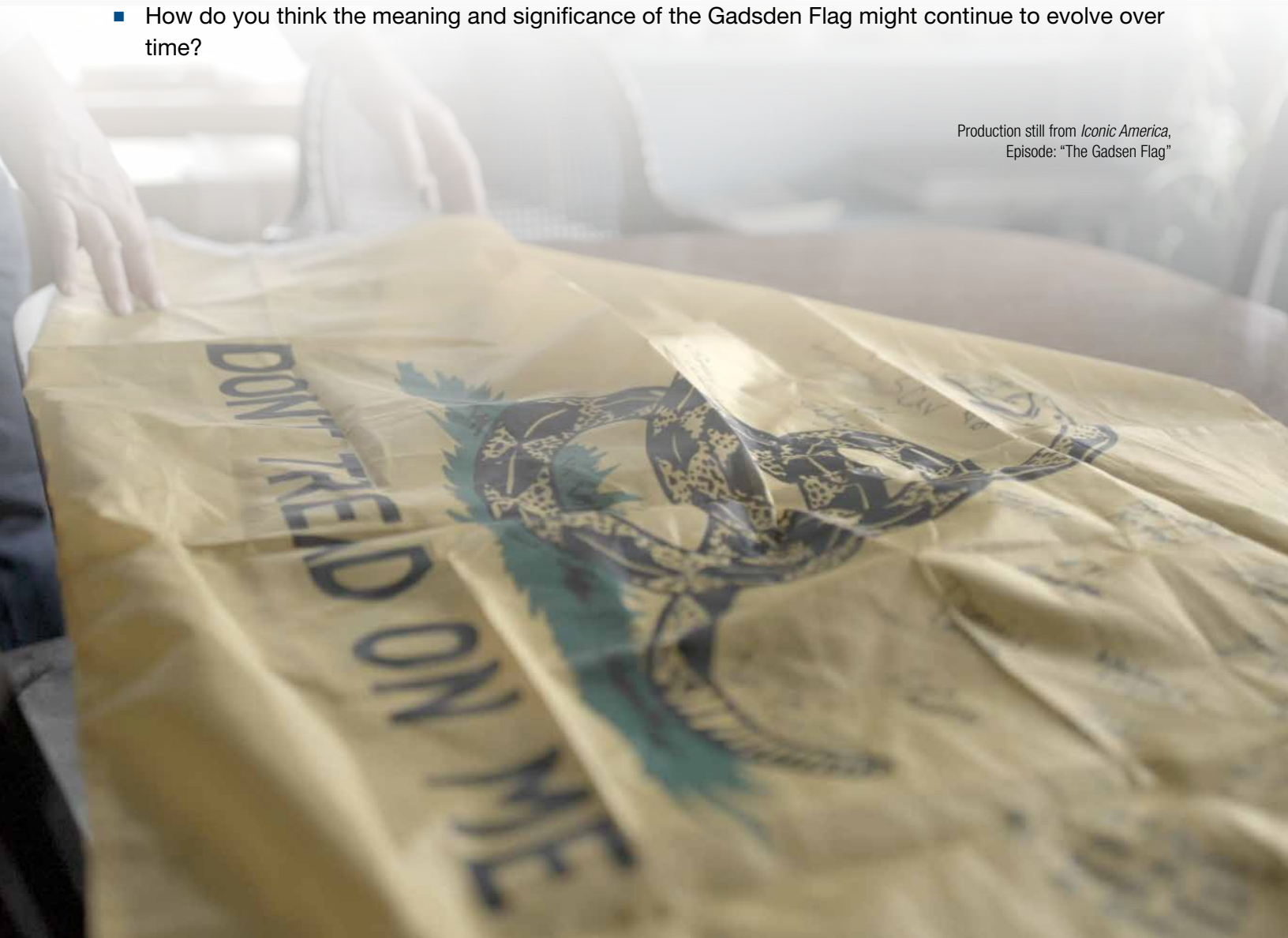


Production still from *Iconic America*, Episode: "The Hollywood Sign"

THE GADSDEN FLAG

- What is the history of the Gadsden Flag? How has this flag been used throughout American history?
- What is the significance of the Gadsden Flag in the context of the American Revolution? How was it used as a symbol of resistance against British rule?
- How has the Gadsden Flag been used in modern times? What political or social movements has it been associated with?
- How do different people interpret the Gadsden Flag? What do some see as its positive qualities, and what do others see as problematic?
- What is the controversy surrounding the Gadsden Flag? How has it been associated with extremist groups or as a symbol of hate? What are some of the arguments for and against the use of the Gadsden Flag in public spaces or by public officials?
- Do you think the Gadsden Flag reflects American values, ideals, or culture? Is it a symbol that should be rejected or embraced?
- How do you think the meaning and significance of the Gadsden Flag might continue to evolve over time?

Production still from *Iconic America*,
Episode: "The Gadsden Flag"





THE STATUE OF LIBERTY

- In this episode, David Rubenstein asks, “Why do you think the Statue of Liberty has endured as such a popular symbol of America? Why has it become such a lightning rod for political debate?”
- What is the symbolism of the Statue of Liberty? What does it represent to Americans? How do you think it is perceived by people from different cultures?
- What is the historical context surrounding the construction of the Statue of Liberty?
- How did the Statue of Liberty become a symbol of abolition and slavery?
- What is the significance of the chains and broken shackles at the feet of the statue?
- How has the interpretation of the statue changed over time?
- What is the history of the Statue of Liberty’s relationship with immigrants and refugees?
- How has the Statue of Liberty been used as a symbol of welcome or exclusion throughout the years?
- How has the interpretation of the Statue of Liberty changed throughout history? What political, social, or cultural events have influenced these changes?
- What is the story behind the poem “The New Colossus” by Emma Lazarus, and how does it relate to the Statue of Liberty?
- What is the role of the National Park Service in managing the Statue of Liberty? How has the park’s interpretation of the statue changed over time?
- What role do public monuments and symbols play in shaping collective memory and national identity?

THE COWBOY

- What is the history of the American cowboy? How did this cultural icon come to be?
- What is the lifestyle of a cowboy? How do cowboys work and live on the range?
- How has the cowboy influenced American culture?
- How has the role of the cowboy changed over time? What are some of the modern-day challenges facing the cowboy way of life?
- What are some common stereotypes of cowboys in American popular culture?
- How have Black, Mexican, and women been excluded from the mainstream narrative of the cowboy and the American West? How has this exclusion impacted the way we understand the history of the American West?
- How have Mexican vaqueros (Mexican cowboys) contributed to the history of the American West? What are some examples of famous Mexican vaqueros in history?
- How have Black cowboys contributed to the history of the American West? What are some examples of famous Black cowboys in history?
- How have cowgirls contributed to the history of the American West? What are some examples of famous cowgirls in history?
- What are some of the qualities that are associated with the cowboy?
- How does the cowboy embody American values and ideals?
- How has the cowboy been represented in popular culture? How has that shaped our opinion of the cowboy and what s/he represents?
- How has the cowboy impacted the environment and natural resources? What are some of the challenges associated with balancing the needs of the cattle industry with environmental conservation?
- What is the future of the cowboy in America? How do you think the cowboy way of life will evolve over time?
- How can we use the story of the American cowboy as a way to educate people about American history, culture, and values?

STONE MOUNTAIN

- What is the history of Stone Mountain? Is it significant in a historical sense?
- What is the history of the carving on Stone Mountain?
- How has the controversy surrounding Stone Mountain evolved over time? What are some of the arguments for and against its existence?
- How has Stone Mountain been used as a symbol of the Confederacy and white supremacy? How has it been used to intimidate or exclude African Americans?
- What messages do Confederate monuments—including the carving on Stone Mountain—send to people who see them? How do these messages impact the people who see them, particularly those who have been historically marginalized?
- What is the role of the state of Georgia in managing Stone Mountain? How has the park's interpretation of the monument changed over time?
- How has the controversy over Confederate monuments in general impacted the debate surrounding Stone Mountain?
- How do you think the debate over Stone Mountain reflects larger issues of race and identity in America? How can we have productive conversations about these issues?
- What is the future of Stone Mountain?



Production still from *Iconic America*,
Episode: "Stone Mountain"

THE GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE

- How has the Golden Gate Bridge become a cultural icon, and what does this say about the role of engineering and infrastructure in American culture and society?
- What inspired the construction of the Golden Gate Bridge, and what were some of the challenges associated with building it?
- How has the Golden Gate Bridge impacted the city of San Francisco, and what role has it played in the history and culture of the city?
- What are some of the unique features and design elements of the Golden Gate Bridge, and how have these contributed to its popularity and iconic status?
- How has the Golden Gate Bridge been used as a symbol in American culture, and what meanings and associations have people attached to it over the years?
- What was the historical context and significance behind the construction of the Golden Gate Bridge? What were some of the challenges faced during its construction, and how were these challenges overcome?
- How has the Golden Gate Bridge impacted the economy, growth, and development of San Francisco and the surrounding areas?
- In this episode, David Rubenstein asks: “Are we still capable of building major infrastructure projects like we did in the past?” He reflects on the changes of cost and the timing of putting together such large projects like the Golden Gate Bridge. Do you think we could build something like this today?
- Why do you think the Golden Gate Bridge has become so iconic? What helped to make it so famous? Why is it such a recognizable landmark?

Production still from *Iconic America*,
Episode: “The Golden Gate Bridge”





Production still from *Iconic America*,
Episode: "The American Bald Eagle"

THE AMERICAN BALD EAGLE

- What is the history of the Bald Eagle in America? How has it been used as a symbol of national identity?
- Why are bald eagles important to Native American culture? What are some of the traditional meanings and associations that Native Americans have with the bald eagle?
- How has the Bald Eagle been represented in popular culture?
- What is the significance of the Bald Eagle as a symbol of American identity? How has its symbolism changed over time?
- What is the conservation status of the bald eagle today?
- How has the debate over environmental policy impacted the conservation of the bald eagle and its habitat? What are some of the arguments for and against protecting the species?
- How can we balance the protection of the bald eagle with the economic and social needs of communities that rely on natural resources?
- How can we use the story of the bald eagle as a way to educate people about the importance of environmental conservation and protection?
- What is the future of the bald eagle in America? How do you think its meaning and significance will evolve over time?
- What does the bald eagle mean to you?

READING LIST

Want to learn more about *Iconic America*? Here's a list of books to explore and share, which include suggestions from program producers, series contributors and interviewees, PBS Books, and the WETA engagement team. The book lists are organized by program theme, and then alphabetically by the author's last name. **Please note: books listed are appropriate for adult audiences that may include grades 9–12 and 13+.** Please review book suggestions below and make recommendations based on your review as your students' educator.

* Indicates a book from an *Iconic America* interviewee

FENWAY PARK

- *Howard Bryant, *Shut Out: A Story of Race and Baseball in Boston*
- *Paul Goldberger, *Ballpark: Baseball in the American City*
- *Richard Johnson and Glenn Stout, *Red Sox Century: The Definitive History of Baseball's Most Storied Franchise*
- *Bill Lee, *The Little Red (Sox) Book: A Revisionist Red Sox History*
- Sean McAdam, *The Franchise: Boston Red Sox: A Curated History of the Red Sox*
- *Leigh Montville, *Why Not Us?: The 86-year Journey of the Boston Red Sox Fans From Unparalleled Suffering to the Promised Land of the 2004 World Series*
- *Bill Nowlin, *Opening Fenway Park with Style*
- *David Ortiz, *Papi: My Story*
- *Bob Ryan:
 - *The Rivals: The New York Yankees vs. the Boston Red Sox—An Inside History*
 - *When Boston Won the World Series: A Chronicle of Boston's Remarkable Victory in the First Modern World Series of 1903*
- Dan Shaughnessy, *Reversing the Curse: Inside the 2004 Boston Red Sox*
- *Glenn Stout, *Fenway 1912: The Birth of a Ballpark, a Championship Season, and Fenway's Remarkable First Year*

GADSDEN FLAG

- James Bradley and Ron Powers, *Flags of our Fathers*
- *Walter Isaacson, *Benjamin Franklin: An American Life*
- *Hasan Jeffries, *Bloody Lowndes: Civil Rights and Black Power in Alabama's Black Belt*
- *Marc Leepson:
 - *Desperate Engagement: How A Little-Know Civil War Battle Saved Washington, D.C., And Changed American History*
 - *Flag: An American Biography*
 - *What So Proudly We Hailed: Francis Scott Key, A Life*
- *David M. Rubenstein, *The American Experiment: Dialogues on a Dream*

Production still from *Iconic America*,
Episode: "The Gadsen Flag"

HOLLYWOOD SIGN

- *Leo Braudy, *The Hollywood Sign: Fantasy and Reality of an American Icon*
- *Kim Masters, *The Keys to the Kingdom: The Rise of Michael Eisner and the Fall of Everybody Else*
- *Sam Wasson, *Hollywood: The Oral History*
- Charles Yu, *Interior Chinatown: A Novel (fiction)*

THE COWBOY

- *Michael Grauer, *Rounded Up in Glory: Frank Reaugh, Texas Renaissance Man*
- Julius Lester, Jerry Pickney, *Black Cowboy Wild Horses*
- Miantae Metcalf McConnell, *Black Cowboys in the American West: On the Range, on the Stage, behind the Badge*
- Anna North, *Outlawed*
- *Diana Vela, *Texas Women and Ranching: On the Range, at the Rodeo, and in Their Communities*

STATUE OF LIBERTY

- Robert Belot, *The Statue of Liberty: The Monumental Dream*
- Luce Lebart, *Lady Liberty*
- Elizabeth Mitchell, *Liberty's Torch: The Great Adventure to Build the Statue of Liberty*
- *Esther Schor, *Emma Lazarus*
- *Tracy K. Smith, *Harbor*
- *Tyler Stovall, *White Freedom: The Racial History of an Idea*

THE AMERICAN BALD EAGLE

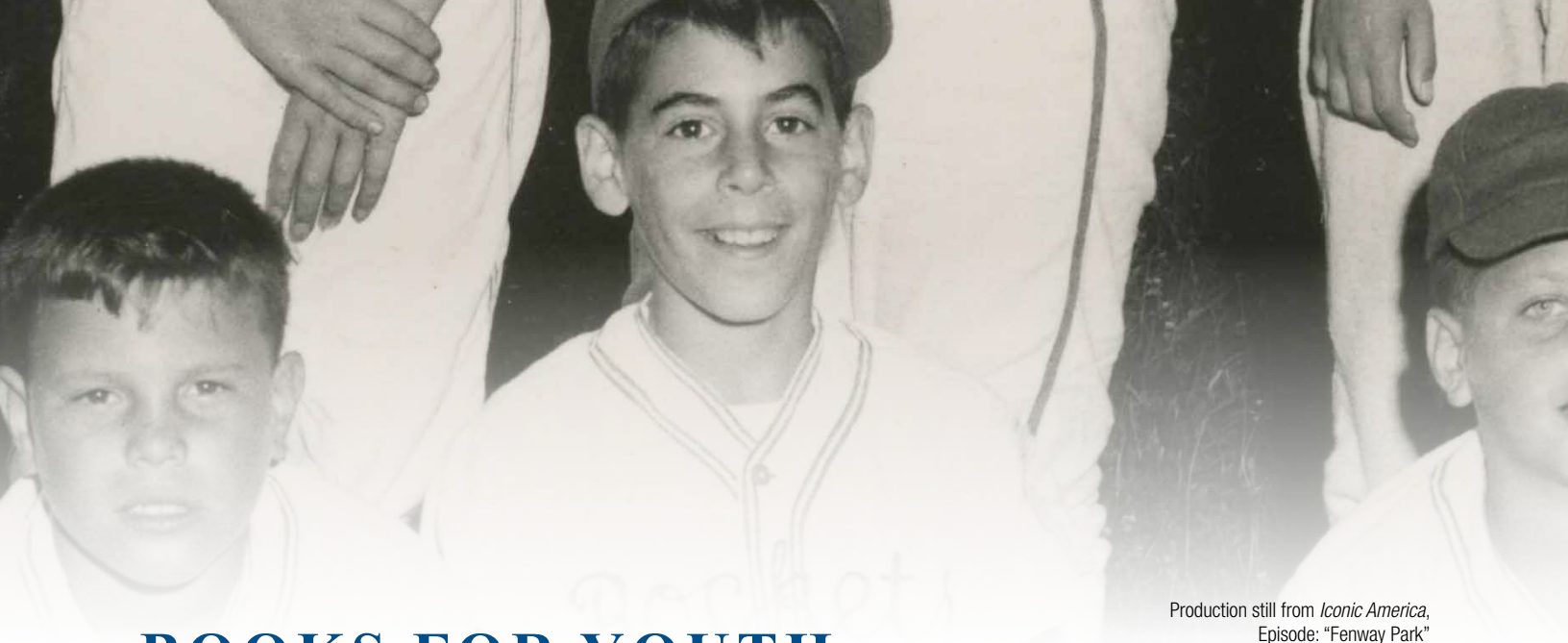
- David A. Clary, *Eagles and Empire: The United States, Mexico, and the Struggle for a Continent*
- Greg Breining, *Return of the Eagle: How America Saved Its National Symbol*
- *Jack E. Davis, *The Bald Eagle: The Improbable Journey of America's Bird*
- Matthew L.M. Fletcher, *The Eagle Returns: The Legal History of the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians*

STONE MOUNTAIN

- *James E. Clyburn, *Blessed Experiences: Genuinely Southern, Proudly Black*
- Paul Stephen Hudson and Lora Pond Mirza, *Atlanta's Stone Mountain: A Multicultural History (Brief History)*
- *Hasan Jeffries, *Bloody Lowndes: Civil Rights and Black Power in Alabama's Black Belt*
- *Cameron Lippard, *Protecting Whiteness: Whitelash and the Rejection of Racial Equality*
- Kirk Savage, *Monument Wars: Washington, D.C., the National Mall, and the Transformation of the Memorial Landscape*

THE GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE

- Donald MacDonald, *Golden Gate Bridge: History and Design of an Icon*
- *David M. Rubenstein, *The American Experiment: Dialogues on a Dream*
- Harvey Schwartz, *Building the Golden Gate Bridge: A Workers' Oral History*
- Kevin Starr, *Golden Gate: The Life and Times of America's Greatest Bridge*



Production still from *Iconic America*,
Episode: "Fenway Park"

BOOKS FOR YOUTH

Want your students to learn more about the American iconography presented in the series? Here's a list of books to explore and share! The book list is organized by program theme, and then alphabetically by the author's last name. **Please note: books listed are appropriate for youth readers ranging from age 3 to 12.** Please review book suggestions and age bands below, and make recommendations based on your review as your students' educator.

FENWAY PARK

Fenway Fever by John H. Ritter **For ages: 9 to 12**

In honor of Fenway Park's 100th birthday, baseball novelist John H. Ritter delivers an inspiring tale for the sports fan in each of us. This book follows the adventures of twelve-year-old Alfredo "Stats" Pagano and his love for baseball. When Alfredo's favorite team, the Boston Red Sox, starts experiencing a losing streak, he becomes convinced that he holds the key to breaking the curse.

86 Years: The Legend of the Boston Red Sox by Melinda R. Boroson **For ages: 5 to 8**

Told in delightful verse and charming illustrations, takes readers on an exhilarating journey through the storied history of one of baseball's most beloved teams. From the curse of the Bambino to the triumph of the 2004 World Series, this book chronicles the enduring passion, heartbreak, and ultimate redemption of the Boston Red Sox and their fans.

THE HOLLYWOOD SIGN

Where Is Hollywood? by Dina Anastasio **For ages: 8 to 12**

Developed in the 1880s by Midwesterners looking for a sunny winter getaway, Hollywood was a small housing development outside still-small Los Angeles. But everything changed in the early 1900s when filmmakers from New York flocked to the area. Explore Hollywood, through this captivating and engaging book.

THE COWBOY

Black Cowboy, Wild Horses: A True Story by Julius Lester and Jerry Pinkney For ages: 5 and up

This picture book tells an inspiring true story of a lesser-known hero from the Old West - Bob Lemmons, an African American cowboy with an extraordinary gift for taming wild horses. Set against the backdrop of the untamed Texas prairie, readers follow Bob's adventures as he uses his gentle approach and deep understanding of horses to earn their trust and form a unique bond.

Real Cowboys by Kate Hoefler For ages: 3 to 6

In Kate Hoefler's realistic and poetic picture book debut about the wide-open West, the myth of rowdy, rough-riding cowboys and cowgirls is remade.

The True West: Real Stories About Black Cowboys, Women Sharpshooters, Native American Rodeo Stars, Pioneering Vaqueros, and the Unsung Explorers, Builders, and Heroes Who Shaped the American West by Mifflin Lowe For ages: 7 to 11

Did you know that the Lone Ranger was likely inspired by a Black cowboy? Or that some of the most famous sharpshooters in the West were women? Or how a Native American rodeo star could ride even a buffalo? These are no tall tales! In fact, historians estimate that 1 in 4 cowboys were actually Black, Latino, or Native American—or even women! So saddle up for a tour of the Wild West with some of history's most unsung heroes and discover how the great Western story is really everyone's story.

THE STATUE OF LIBERTY

Emma's Poem: The Voice of the Statue of Liberty by Linda Glaser For ages: 4 to 7

Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free . . . In 1883, Emma Lazarus, deeply moved by an influx of immigrants from Eastern Europe, wrote a sonnet that was to give voice to the Statue of Liberty.

The Story of the Statue of Liberty by Betsy & Giulio Maestro For ages: 5 to 8

An outstanding picture book that tells the story of one of America's most beloved landmarks.

THE GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE

The Crook Who Crossed the Golden Gate Bridge by Steve Brezenoff For ages: 8 to 11

A children's mystery novel that takes readers on an exciting adventure following a group of friends that start investigating a sudden wave of pickpocketing while on a school field trip in San Francisco.

Production still from *Iconic America*,
Episode: "The Cowboy"



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

TRAVEL JOURNAL

The *Iconic America* Interactive Travel Journal allows students to discover, visit, and explore sites featured in the series without ever leaving the classroom! Each interactive journal page includes graphics, animations, and short informational videos, so students can visit landmarks such as Fenway Park and the Hollywood Sign to learn more about what makes them unique and important. The segments are self-paced and can be supplemental to lesson plans or used as a single, modular opportunity to make these landmarks and national symbols more relatable to students.

(right) Excerpt of the Statue of Liberty journal page, where students learn more about the famous parts of Lady Liberty that make her so special.



EPISODE GUIDES FOR TEACHERS

Created by the team at [YURI Education Project](#), Freda Lin and Cathlin Goulding, Ed.D, the *Iconic America* Collection is accompanied by episode guides that include:

- **Introductory Guide**
 - This guide will ground educators on how to teach about icons
 - It will include 1–2 activities to use with students
- **Episode Guides**
 - 8 total, one per episode
 - One-page in length, providing teachers with timecodes for where they can pause episodes and ask discussion questions



YURI creates educational resources and experiences for cultural institutions, teachers, and PreK–12 students.

EDUCATOR IMPACT SURVEY

Have you used the *Iconic America* lesson plans and modules in your classroom? We'd love to know your experience and feedback!

Click here to take our [survey](#) or scan the code at right.





Production still from *Iconic America*,
Episode: "Stone Mountain"

PRODUCTION CREDIT as of 4.27.23

Iconic America: Our Symbols and Stories with David Rubenstein is a production of Show of Force, DMR Productions, and WETA Washington, D.C. David M. Rubenstein is the host and executive producer. Maro Chermayeff, Jeff Dupre, Joshua Bennett and Sam Pollard are executive producers for Show of Force. John F. Wilson is executive producer for WETA. Bill Gardner is the executive in charge for PBS. Chris Ullman is producer for DMR Productions. Jonathan Scheinberg, Prisca Pointdujour, Sam Lacroix, Alexandra Nikolchev, Sally Rosenthal, Matthew Horovitz, Lizzie Mulvey and Ken Levis are producers for Show of Force. Kate Kelly is producer for WETA. Rick Van Meter is supervising producer. Allison Hanna is archival producer. Gary Lionelli is composer for the original score.

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