

In the Senate Chamber

Fact: The friezes in the Senate Chamber are Neoclassical in their design, meaning they are meant to look like Greek and Roman art.

Symbols of the Senate - Friezes

Explore the idea of allegories and symbols in art. Then create your own allegorical image.

Words to Know

Frieze: a narrow piece of decoration along a wall.

Allegory: a story, play, poem, picture, or other work in which the characters and events represent particular qualities or ideas that relate to morals, religion, or politics

Neoclassical: made in a style that is based on the art and building designs of ancient Greece and Rome.



Senate Chamber Friezes

How can an image help tell a story? The United States Senate Chamber has several symbols and images that remind the Senators of their history, their duties, and their goals.

One set of images are the carved panels, called friezes, that live above each of the main doors. The panels are called Wisdom, Courage, and Patriotism.

The panels are called Wisdom, Courage, and Patriotism because they are allegories. An allegory is a story, poem, or picture that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning, typically a moral or political one. Allegories are typically filled with symbols and you might find them in both visual arts and literature!

In the Senate Chamber

Friezes

Look at the pictures of the three friezes. List the symbols in the image that might show deeper meaning for the concept that they are representing. We've provided a symbols guide for reference.

Symbols List and Meanings:

- Owl: Intelligence
- Stars: Inspiration, importance
- Sun: Clarity and enlightenment, power
- Torch: Hope, life, enlightenment
- Snake: Evil
- Club: Strength
- Eagle: Strength and power
- Sword: Power, protection, authority
- Laurel: Victory



Wisdom

Courage



Patriotism



Design an Allegorical Frieze for Your Room

Think of an important message that you want to represent in a frieze. You can use a singular word that is important, like Wisdom, Courage, or Patriotism, or a full sentence or quote. Then think about what allegorical images you might use to represent that meaning. You can use something important to you or you can check the internet for traditional symbols in art. Draw your images together as one picture just like the friezes! You can use the space below or a separate piece of paper.



When you're done, hang your allegory above a door like the friezes in the Senate Chamber!

Share your work online. Tag us @EMKInstitute and use the hashtag #Civicsathome