



Topic: NYS Symbols, Ideas Become Laws, Students Making Change

Issue: Special Edition April 2025

NYS Social Studies Framework:

- 4.4b Students will investigate the steps necessary for a bill to become a law in New York State.
- 7.5b Students will examine how checks and balances work by tracing how a bill becomes a law.
- Social Practices F2

NYS Next Generation ELA Learning Standards:

<https://www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/programs/curriculum-instruction/nys-next-generation-ela-standards.pdf>

Grades 4 & 5 R1, R4, R8. Grades 6-8 R1, R4. Grades 4-8 W1.
CRSE

Notes about icons:



This icon is paired with observation questions to help student's remember that to observe is to just look at what is in the document.



This icon is paired with inference questions to help students remember that to infer is to use what they observed paired with their own background knowledge to draw a conclusion.



This icon is paired with questions that require thinking about the worldview of those involved. This is to remind students to put on their "Worldview Glasses" and see things from the point of view of the people involved.



This icon is paired with questions that ask students to synthesize information from more than one source.

Understanding the Online Resources:

- Take a Closer Look & Learning Activity Differentiated - activities that use the same documents as in the print version, but are scaled more to 7th grade.
- Learning Activity Extensions - resources that are directly related to the Learning Activity on page 4 of the magazine.
- Learning Activity Extras - resources that are related to the topic, but can be done separately.
- Document Teaching Resources - resources that are standard and could be used with any any issue.

Big Ideas in this Issue:

New York State has many official symbols. Many of them were ideas that came from school children. There is a process through the NYS Legislature that must be followed for an idea to become law. Students can participate in this process and make real change.

Activities in this Issue

Page 3 - "Take a Closer Look"

Students will take a look at the first page of a petition that the Apple Muffin Gang submitted with their idea to make the apple muffin official. They will underline text that explains why they think this is a good idea, then they will infer why having hundreds of signatures on a petition is a good idea. This can be a short answer on the lines provided, or a longer answer on a separate sheet of paper using text details.

Page 4 - "Learning Activity"

This is a kick-off page for having students work through the process of getting their idea to a law maker. The page offers information about the NYS government, and has students finding out the names and emails of their representatives using the provided government website.

Learning Activity Extensions - Online

- Idea brainstorming page. This page has students brainstorm ideas, write a first draft of a claim, and record any questions they need to have answered in order to persuade someone of the value of their idea.
- Claim & Supporting Details page. This organizer allows students to work on their claim and supporting details. Two versions are available, one with open boxes and one with lines.

Learning Activity Extras - Online

- For and Against Activity. This activity has 3 pages. Students will read two letters, with two different points of view on the matter of the Beaver becoming the official state animal of NYS. They will identify the claim and supporting details in each. A key with possible responses is included.
 - This activity could be a spring board to having students create their own claims to write persuasive essays (see organizer in the Learning Activity Extensions).
 - **NOTE:** In Boe's letter, the fifth paragraph is "punny" - filled with Beaver related puns, including "damming" - just a heads up in case you wish to redact that sentence. This letter is actually meant to be tongue-in-cheek, but Governor Carey took it seriously at first, recalling the bill.
- Graphic organizers of how a bill becomes a law in NYS using the Apple Muffin and Ladybug bills as examples.
- Model Business Letter. "Ladybug Kris's" 9-year journey to see the ladybug become the official insect all began with a business letter assignment. Archie provides a model letter with his idea for a special day. Two versions are available; one with blank boxes for students to identify the parts of a business letter, and one with the boxes filled in to be a teaching tool. **NOTE:** "Ladybug Kris" was in 5th grade in 1980 - she still remembers the teacher who gave this assignment, and talked about how it ended up impacting her life. Just a reminder that as teachers we have that power to positively impact our students well past our time in our classrooms.
- "The Ladybug: New York is its Home" - a poem by an AP reporter. In speaking with him he shared that he wanted a creative way to share this light-hearted news. It is included as an example of being creative in getting one's message out. It could also be looked at to review poetry skills.
- "The Rest of the Story" - read about how Kristina Savoca's community celebrated here when the ladybug was finally made the state symbol. One version is a basic "5 Ws & H", the other asks for a text supported summary.
- "Lobbying" - read about how the Apple Muffin gang lobbied; brainstorm how to lobby.
- New York State Symbols matching game cards & key.



Connections

ELA:

Picture Books:

- *Be Strong* by Pat Zietlow Miller
- *Stillwater and Koo Save the World* by Jon Muth
- *Malala's Magic Pencil* by Malala Yousafzai
- *All the Way to the Top* by Annette Bay Pimentel
- *The Other Side* by Jacqueline Woodson
- *The Three Questions* by Jon Muth
- *Something, Someday* by Amanda Gorman
- *Sophia Valdez, Future Prez* by Andrea Beaty

Background Information:

- News Story about the Apple Muffin Gang: <https://cnycentral.com/news/local/todays-political-climate-may-need-another-apple-muffin-gang>

Websites:

- How does NYS Government Work? PBS Video - <https://ny.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/how-does-ny-government-work-video/ny-and/>
- The New York State Senate - <https://www.nysenate.gov/>
- The New York State Assembly - <https://nyassembly.gov/>