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# “Cradle of Liberty”

## Standard/Objective

- Apply knowledge of how groups and institutions work to meet individual needs and promote the common good. (NCSS)
- Students will understand the strategic role the New England practice of democracy played in the formation of the colonial rebellion.

## Materials

copies of both sides of the *Faneuil Hall* photo card; copies of the historical background information (page 28)

## Discussion Questions

- How important is it to exchange ideas?
- Can strong speakers affect the spirits and thoughts of a whole community?
- Is a community hampered by a lack of sizable meeting places?
- How was New England different from the other colonies during the pre-war years?

## Using the Primary Source

New England was famous for its town hall meetings and efforts at creating and maintaining pure democracy. Faneuil Hall was built in 1742 as a marketplace, but contained a large meeting room that served the people of Boston for town gatherings. By the mid-1770s, the hall was often filled with discussion of taxation, representation, and independence. As a result of these activities, Faneuil Hall was called the “Cradle of Liberty.”

Students should note the size of the building as it appeared in 1789. As one of the largest structures in Boston, the building was very important as a central marketplace. Work with the students to help them draw conclusions regarding how the town meeting style assisted the Patriots’ cause. Also have the students research and discuss Samuel Adams and how he became successful as a leader and orator at the town meetings.

Have students research Samuel Adams’ writings and then produce fictional plays in which a number of Adams’ letters fall into General Gage’s hands. Students can show the dedication of Adams in his quest for independence and the work and emotions of Gage as he tries to prevent rebellion.

## Extension Idea

- Students can research the items sold at Faneuil Hall in the 18th century and then contact Faneuil Hall to obtain information of its 21st century merchants and wares. Likewise a comparison can be made between the hall’s meetings of the 18th and 21st centuries. The Boston Chamber of Commerce and National Park Service at the Hall would be good contacts for further information. Students can present their findings in a “Faneuil Hall, Then and Now” display.

# “Cradle of Liberty” (cont.)

## Historical Background Information

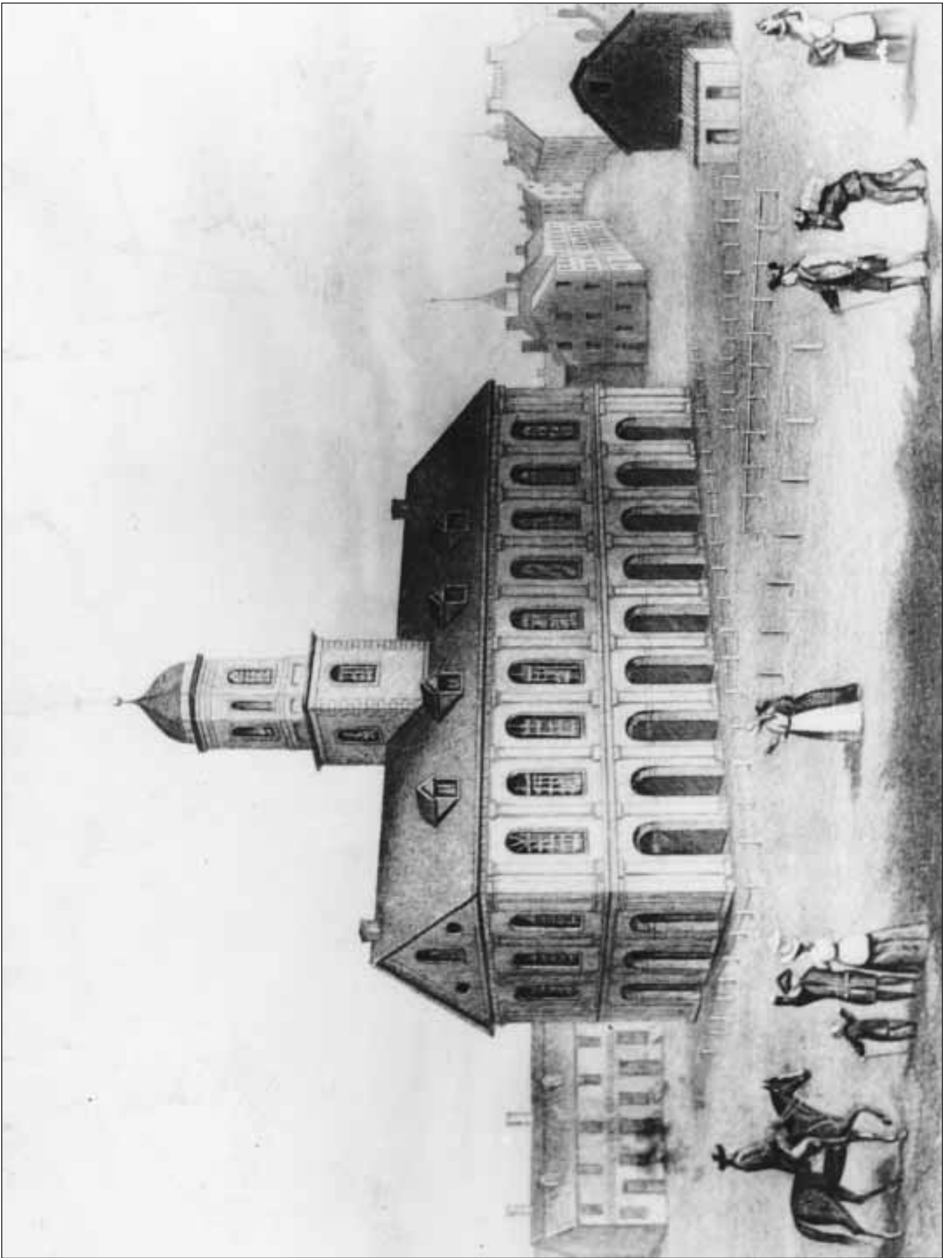
Faneuil Hall was named for Peter Faneuil, a wealthy 18th century Boston merchant. Faneuil built the hall as a central market, overcoming several previous failures by Bostonians to construct such a structure. The building, located upon a landfill near the old town dock, includes a large meeting space for town gatherings. The hall opened for business in 1742.

In the hall’s first years, city and state issues were discussed in it. However, by the mid-1770s, the meeting site was frequently being used to debate the British taxation and trade policies. Increasingly the members of the Boston Committee of Correspondence organized meetings in the hall to discuss the benefits of independence from England.

Following the failure of the Stamp Act in 1765, Britain again placed heavy taxes on the colonies with the 1767 Townshend Acts. America was defiant and sympathetic members of Parliament worked together to bring about the repeal of all Townshend taxes except the tax on tea, which was left in place to show the colonies that they could indeed be taxed. The Committees of Correspondence responded by boycotting all East India Company tea, the source of British tea in the Americas. Parliament then passed the 1773 Tea Act, which declared that only the East India Company could import tea into America. Fearful or sympathetic customs agents allowed the Patriots to return ships to England with the company’s tea. In Boston, however, the custom office stood firm when the *Falmouth*, carrying a load of East India Company tea, docked. Samuel Adams and his fellow patriots in Boston were concerned that if the tea was successfully landed, the colonialists would forevermore be subject to all manner of British tax and oppression. So, unable to convince the royal governor to allow the *Falmouth* to depart, a Boston area meeting was called at the 1,200-seat Faneuil Hall on November 29, 1773. The crowd was so large that the meeting moved to the Old South Church. By December 16, with over 7,000 leaders in daily attendance, any possibility of negotiations with the royal governor had been abandoned. Patriots then boarded the *Falmouth* and two ships that had joined her and poured all of the tea from the ships into Boston Harbor. Word spread quickly of the Bostonians’ defiance and Faneuil Hall, the site of the initial assembly and many previous similar debates, soon gained the nickname, “Cradle of Liberty.”

Faneuil Hall again served liberty advocates in the 19th century when abolitionists (those opposing slavery) met there to continue freedom’s march. The hall continued as Boston’s wholesale food distribution center until the 1960s. In the 1970s, the hall was remodeled to provide food to tourists. The building is staffed by National Park Service rangers and sits behind Samuel Adams Park. The Faneuil Hall meeting room continues today as a site for community meetings. (The print on the photo card is from an engraving done for *Massachusetts Magazine* in 1789.)





# Faneuil Hall

## Historical Background Information

Peter Faneuil built Faneuil Hall in 1742 as a central market place near Boston Harbor and within the city's downtown core. The second floor of the building contained a 1,200 seat meeting room. For 20 years, the room was used to discuss local and community issues in the tradition of the New England town meeting style. Increasingly, after 1765, meetings in the hall addressed the issue of Britain's tax and trade policy. In 1773, the hall was the site of the initial meeting of Bostonians to debate the Tea Act. The meeting grew so large that it had to reconvene in the much bigger Old South Church. Following two weeks of debate it was clear the Massachusetts Royal Governor intended to unload the tea for sale in the colony. So, the Sons of Liberty, disguised as Mohawk Indians, threw 342 chests of tea into the Boston Harbor. Because Faneuil Hall had been the site of the initial debate and many other patriotic debates the building earned the nickname, "Cradle of Liberty."



## Analyzing History

### Knowledge

How big does the hall appear to be? How many people could the meeting room hold?

### Comprehension

How can Faneuil Hall's 200-year success as a food distribution center be explained by its location?

### Application

What impact did the first-floor market at Faneuil Hall probably have upon the use of the hall to promote the Patriots' cause?

### Analysis

From the early days of their founding, New England towns relied on town meetings to consider, debate, and decide important issues. How did this tradition of town meetings help the Patriot's cause?

### Synthesis

Thomas Jefferson was well known throughout the colonies as a great writer. Consider and state at which type of communication Samuel Adams was most effective. Why was he so well suited to foster rebellion in New England?

### Evaluation

Which medium is best for a speaker to inspire action that involves great risk.

- a) Face to face   b) Print   c) Radio   d) Television   e) Internet

## Historical Writing

### Fiction

Write a short story that reveals the thoughts of the custodian of Faneuil Hall in 1773.

### Nonfiction

Research and write a paper on Samuel Adams' speeches at Faneuil Hall.

## History Challenge

Write a comparative essay on the use of Faneuil Hall by 18th century Patriots and 19th century abolitionists.

# “Don’t Tread on Me”

## Standard/Objective

- Explain and give examples of how language, literature, the arts, architecture, other artifacts, traditions, beliefs, values, and behaviors contribute to the development and transmission of culture. (NCSS)
- Students will understand the role Benjamin Franklin’s editorial cartoon played as a symbol in unifying the American colonies.

## Materials

copy of the facsimile *Join or Die Snake*; copies of the historical background information (page 56); copies of the student activity sheet (page 57)

## Discussion Questions

- In what ways do things like songs, symbols, mottoes, color schemes, slogans, or mascots unify groups of people?
- How important are these things in unifying a group of people? Consider sports mascots, team colors, or team songs.
- Why was it important that the American colonies establish new symbols?
- What success would an individual colony have had in rebellion against Britain?

## Using the Primary Source

The “Join or Die” political cartoon drawn by Benjamin Franklin in support of the Albany Plan of unifying the colonies was America’s first political cartoon. This source can be used in a number of ways. Completing research as a class on the Albany Plan can lead to further exploration and can serve as a review of the French and Indian War’s role in fostering the rebellion. The snake used in the political cartoon could be used for a geography lesson on the colonies. (For example, find out what the NE means.) A cultural lesson also could be developed that examines Franklin’s reasoning for not including the prison colony of Georgia in his sketch. Further cultural lessons could be developed from the widespread use of a snake and later a rattlesnake as an American symbol of liberty and unity. In addition, the debate over the use of the eagle, turkey, or snake as a national emblem could make a good study. The cartoon could also form the foundation for study in the history of American flags. Further, the status of the snake today as a symbol of American liberty and natural rights can bring the source into a 21st century setting. Finally, the impact of political cartoons can be explored. Thus the activity provided on the student activity sheet is just one of many angles to take with this rich primary source.

## Extension Ideas

- Contact your nearest military base. Ask if an historian or recruiter can provide a presentation on the history of American flags and their proper display. Many posts have a number of historical flags they may be able to bring. There have also been traveling tours of historical American flags.
- Students can study the life of evangelist George Whitefield (pronounced *Whit-field*) who died in 1770. Some scholars have called Whitefield, “the forgotten founder.” Whitefield’s preaching throughout the colonies for three decades prior to the war is credited with uniting the Americans as much or more than Franklin’s efforts. In fact, Whitefield was so revered that members of the 1776 American expedition to conquer Canada, in a misguided attempt to secure God’s favor, exhumed his grave for artifacts.

# “Don’t Tread on Me” *(cont.)*

## Historical Background Information

Benjamin Franklin’s use of a snake as a symbol of American unity began before his famous 1754 “Join or Die” editorial cartoon. In 1751, Franklin wrote a humorous story for his *Pennsylvania Gazette* promoting the shipping of rattlesnakes to Britain in gratitude for the convicts Britain was shipping to America. In his 1754 “Join or Die” cartoon, printed to gather support for the Albany Plan, Franklin symbolically left out the prison colony of Georgia from the geographically designed snake.

Franklin, still a Loyalist in 1754, met with other colonial leaders in Albany, New York, to discuss the growing threat to the colonies from the French and their Indian allies. The group drafted what became known as the Albany Plan, calling for Parliament to create a general government in America with a president and grand council chosen by the colonial representatives. Though the unified government was to be mostly concerned with land, Indian dealings, and defense, it was also to be empowered with the ability to tax and make laws. The “Join or Die” cartoon followed that presentation in Franklin’s newspaper. The plan was poorly received. Had it been adopted, the history of America may have been much closer to the history of Canada. Though Franklin’s cartoon was often reprinted in American papers, the symbol of the snake as a sign of American unity disappeared until the 1770s.

The snake as a symbol returned as tension between the colonies and Britain mounted. In 1774, Paul Revere added a snake fighting a British dragon to the letterhead of the *Massachusetts Spy*. By 1775, the symbol was appearing on money, banners, flags, and uniforms from Massachusetts to Georgia. The Marine Corps, founded that year, carried equipment printed with a rattlesnake. With 13 rattles on its tail, the snake was coiled in defiance upon a yellow field emblazoned with the phrase, “Don’t Tread on Me.” The new United States Navy adopted a flag of similar design called the Gadsden Flag after the first Naval Commodore Christopher Gadsden. A number of groups of colonial militia used rattlesnake flags with their own peculiar adaptations. Several of these original flags remain today.

Scholars believe that Franklin anonymously wrote a letter to the *Pennsylvania Journal* suggesting the rattlesnake as a symbol for America. Franklin was long opposed to the eagle as the American mascot and is on record supporting the turkey. Eventually the more traditional stars, stripes, and eagle were chosen to represent America. However, Franklin’s use of a snake symbol to unify America against threat and the subsequent addition of the “Don’t Tread on Me” phrase is still seen by many as a strong representation of the ideals of liberty.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Benjamin Franklin's Snake

## Background Information

In 1754, Benjamin Franklin represented Pennsylvania at a meeting of colonial leaders in Albany, New York. The assembly drafted a document called the Albany Plan, which advocated the unification of the colonies under a general government. The leaders at that time were concerned about the growing threat from French Canada and its Indian allies. In support of the plan, Franklin printed an editorial cartoon in his newspaper. The cartoon showed a snake geographically representing the colonies with the phrase "Join or Die" below it. It was the first political cartoon in America and was reprinted throughout the colonies.

In 1774, as tensions with Britain mounted, the snake again became a symbol of American unity. It began to appear upon money, buttons, flags, banners, military gear, and in newspapers. The Marine Corps used it early on as a symbol, and the Navy adopted it upon its first flag. Both services' designs showed a rattlesnake, coiled and ready to strike, with the phrase, "Don't Tread on Me" beneath it. Eventually the more common stars, stripes, and eagle became symbols of America. However, even today, the rattlesnake "Don't Tread on Me" design is seen as a clear symbol of the American ideal of liberty.

## Activity

1. Define the following terms:

- mascot— \_\_\_\_\_
- motto— \_\_\_\_\_
- symbol— \_\_\_\_\_
- slogan— \_\_\_\_\_

2. Why do you think these things, along with specific colors, help to unify groups of people such as sports fans, citizens of a country, or people in rebellion?

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3. Research early American flags, including the United States Navy's first flag, the Gadsden Flag. Draw or copy the Gadsden flag and two others. On another sheet of paper, write a paragraph about the history of each flag.

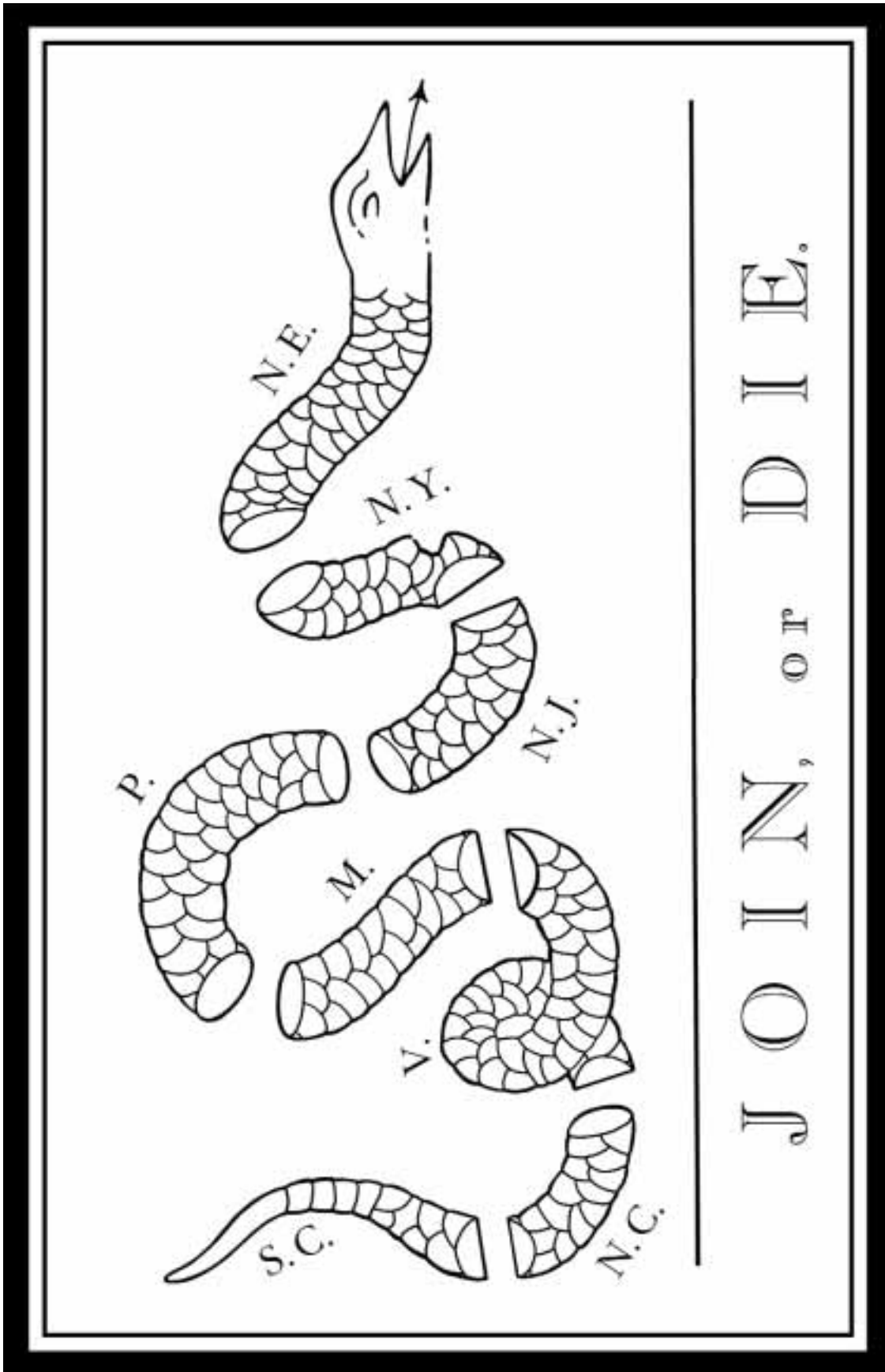
4. Next, draw your own 21st century flag that expresses the American values of freedom and equality. In writing, explain each of the colors, symbols, or phrases that you used in your picture.

## Challenge

Study unifying symbols of other countries and peoples. Choose one, two, or three countries and write a paper that explains the history of their unifying symbols.



# Join or Die Snake



Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Valley Forge



*The Prayer at Valley Forge (National Archives)*

**Directions:** Analyze this copy of the engraving by John C. McRae by answering the following questions.

1. What is the setting of this photo? What time of year is it? Who is the man in the photo?

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2. What does he appear to be doing? What do you think his actions imply about his beliefs? What do you think his actions imply about his needs and the needs of the army at that time?

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3. Why do you think this engraving was made?

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