



## The Arrowhead: Symbol of the National Park Service

**Grade level:** 4th Grade

**Time spent:** 30 minutes

**Curriculum standards:** Every Kid in a Park (<https://everykidoutdoors.gov/index.htm>)

**Mental Map/Outline:**

1. **Introduction-** Explain logos and what they mean.
2. **Topic 1-** The National Park Service logo is an arrowhead. Explain the arrowhead's five elements that represent the National Park Service Mission.
3. **Activity-** Draw your own logo/symbol to help represent the National Park Service and their mission.

**Props & Supplies:** Pictures included.

**Photos:** Attached at end of lesson plan, under additional notes. All photos show resources found in Dinosaur National Monument that embody the elements of the arrowhead. Photos could be changed to meet resources found in other National Park units.

**Program Theme:** How can a symbol teach us about what it represents?

**Introduction:**

**Q:** To be asked by the teacher/ranger to students.

Begin activity by asking questions surrounding logos/symbols to get class in the correct mindset for thinking of a logo/symbol and how it represents an organization!

**Q:** Ask students what are some company logos you know? (Apple, Nike, etc.)

**Q:** What are those companies' actual logos? (Apple, Swoosh, etc.)



**Q:** What do the logos for these companies represent? (Greek God of Victory, etc.)

Explain that each logo has thought behind it and it represents more than the company name. Explain how the National Park Service (NPS) is similar with their logo. Today, we will learn about the arrowhead, the five elements it contains and how those elements represent the National Park Service.

**Topic 1:** The arrowhead symbol and the five resources it represents.

### **Topic 1 Information & Notes:**

The Arrowhead is the logo of the National Park Service which contains five elements that represent the core values the National Park Service preserves and protects.

We are going to build the arrowhead together (with help from attached slides).

Though these elements are unique, they represent resources we protect, such as wildlife. Therefore, we don't necessarily find that exact resource/animal in every park.

### **Five Elements of the National Park Service Arrowhead**

#### **1. Arrowhead: Cultural History**

- The first part is the arrowhead itself. The arrowhead forms the foundation of the arrowhead symbol.
- **Q:** What do you think the Arrowhead represents? Who used arrowheads?
- Native Americans used arrowheads as a tool to hunt food and to survive. Our logo is this shape because it represents the people who have lived in and used national parks throughout history: Native Americans, homesteaders, early rangers, and visitors like you. We protect and share stories of these people. This symbol of cultural history represents past and modern cultures. Some NPS sites protect historic homes of presidents or important cultural leaders, or battlefields that influenced our history. In Dinosaur National Monument, we protect petroglyphs & pictographs from the people of the Fremont culture. We also protect historic homesteads from early ranchers, and historic buildings like the Quarry Exhibit Hall.

#### **2. Mountain: Landforms and Scenery**

- The next part of the symbol is the mountain.



- **Q:** What resource that we protect do you think the mountain represents?
- It represents the natural features that are protecting in NPS sites. Mountains are some of the most iconic features of the NPS, like Mt. Rainier. But the NPS also protects other natural features like the Grand Canyon. Here in Dinosaur National Monument, we protect everything from deep river canyons, to mountains, and rock formations like Steamboat Rock.

### 3. **Sequoia Tree: Plants**

- The sequoia tree is one of the most iconic plants found in our National Parks and is the next part of the Arrowhead.
- **Q:** What resource do you think the Sequoia tree represents?
- The sequoia tree was chosen to represent the wide variety of plants found in NPS sites. Within Dinosaur National Monument, we have diverse plants from Ponderosa pines to Juniper trees, sagebrush to wildflowers. Teachers can highlight how there is a wide variety of plant life within one protected area.

### 4. **Bison: Wildlife**

- The Bison is also an iconic animal and is the next element of the Arrowhead
- **Q:** What resource do you think the Bison represents?
- The bison represents all wildlife in NPS sites. Animals are all protected in NPS sites and it is an area they often live as a home and a sanctuary. It was chosen because it is one of the most iconic animals in North America, and one that partially owes its survival to the NPS. Encourage students to list off some wildlife that could be found in Dinosaur National Monument (Bighorn sheep, lizards, rabbits, endangered fish, beavers, elk, coyotes, etc).

### 5. **Lake: natural resources lakes and rivers**

- The lake is the final element of the Arrowhead.
- **Q:** What resource do you think the lake represents?
- The lake helps represents water in the form of lakes and rivers found in many NPS sites. In Dinosaur National Monument, the Green and Yampa rivers helped shape the canyons and change how we can visit the monument. These rivers in our park offer recreation and a means of travel



for visitors. Water also supporting other elements of the arrowhead, like plants, animals and the people who lived here in the past.

Finally show them the completed arrowhead and how this logo helps represent the National Park Service and what we help to protect.

The NPS symbol was designed to represent all sites in NPS sites, and many places don't have any of the examples represented on the emblem, like as bison or sequoia trees.

### **Activity:**

Students imagine they have been hired to design a custom symbol for Dinosaur National Monument (or another local NPS unit). They should include each of the five elements but use specific examples that can be found at Dinosaur National Monument. Show a picture available of the Arrowhead for reference. You can also look on the website to for elements found within Dinosaur.

Students can draw their designs on the blank arrowhead provided at the bottom of this lesson plan. Remind them that neatness and simplicity make for a more easily identifiable symbol and that color can change the design.

Give 10 minutes to create their arrowhead. They can share their arrowhead and what each thing represents.

### **Conclusion of Program:**

The arrowhead symbol helps remind us what the NPS protects and preserves. By looking at this symbol we can think about why national parks are important and why we should continue to protect special places like Dinosaur National Monument.

### **Additional Notes & Tips:**

<https://www.nps.gov/teachers/classrooms/learning-about-the-arrowhead-and-other-symbols.htm>

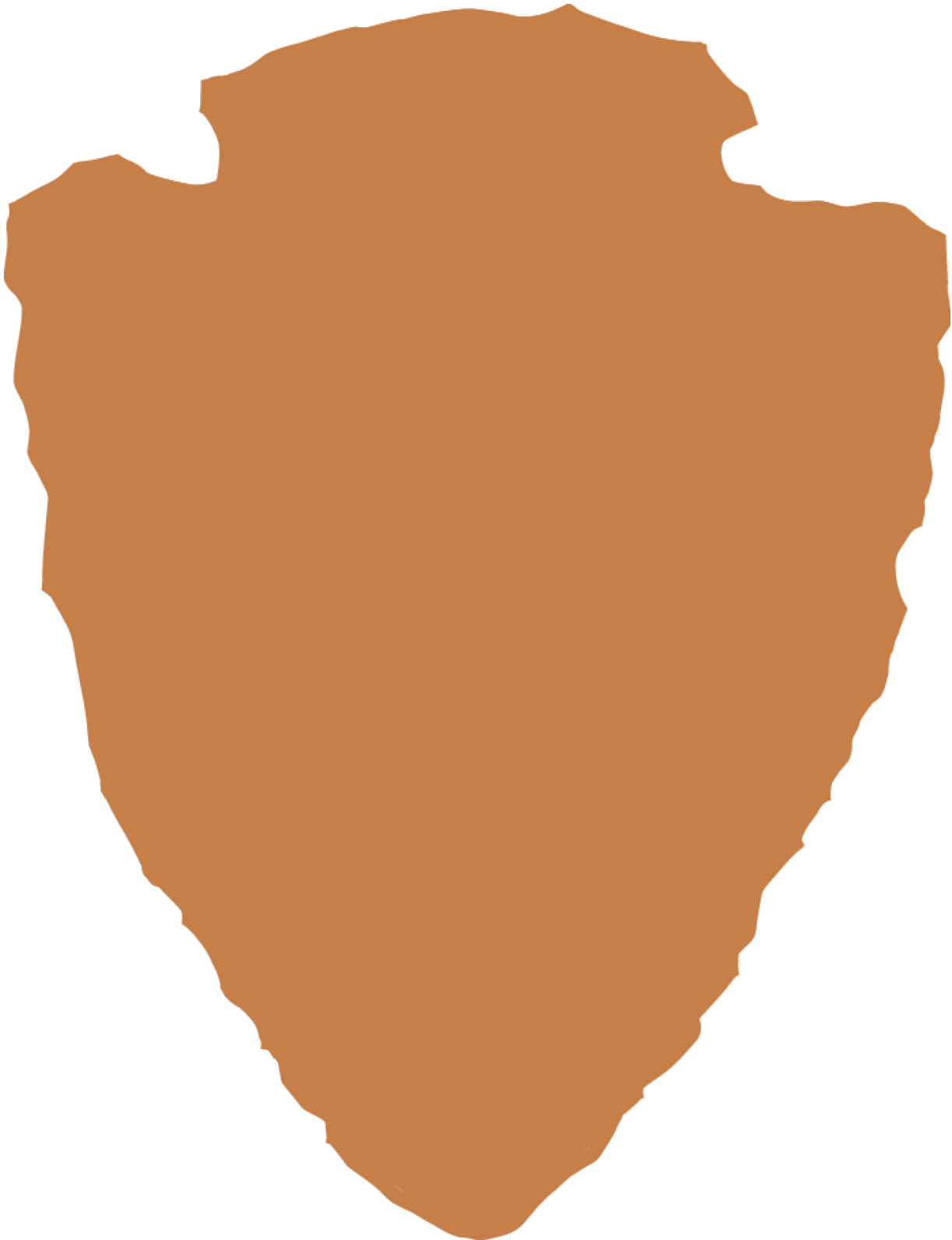
<https://www.nps.gov/teachers/classrooms/upload/Arrowhead-Lesson-plan.pdf>

### **Photos/Slides:**

All pictures are examples of the elements of the Arrowhead found within Dinosaur National Monument!



## 1. Arrowhead: Cultural History







## Petroglyphs



## Josie Morris Homestead Cabin





## Quarry Exhibit Hall





## 2. Mountain: Landforms and Scenery





# Dinosaur

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Dinosaur National Monument





# Dinosaur

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Dinosaur National Monument





## 3. Sequoia Tree: Plants







## Ponderosa Pine



## Juniper Tree





## Sagebrush





## 4. Bison: Wildlife







## Humpback Chub



## Bighorn Sheep





## 5. Lake: Water



# Dinosaur

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Dinosaur National Monument





## All the elements together: National Park Service Arrowhead!







## Make your own Arrowhead

