

**Homework:**

The United States also uses an eagle as a symbol. Read the article below. Compare and contrast the associations Americans have with the eagle on the Great Seal and the associations Nazis wanted Germans to have with the eagle above the entrance to Mauthausen. Do you think Americans are meant to see the eagle as a symbol of an imperial power? The Latin root of "empire," *imperium*, means "absolute authority." How does the idea of a government run by a ruler or king with "absolute authority" compare to Americans understanding of the presidency? Can Americans disagree with their president? With their government? How does the imagery in the Great Seal symbolize America's relationship to other countries?

From Symbols of U.S. Government: The Great Seal of the United States

In the center of the seal is a bald eagle, our national bird. It holds in its beak a scroll inscribed *E pluribus unum*, which is Latin meaning "out of many, one" and stands for one nation that was created from 13 colonies. In one claw is an olive branch, while the other holds a bundle of thirteen arrows. The olive branch and arrows "denote the power of peace and war."

A shield with thirteen red and white stripes covers the eagle's breast. The shield is supported solely by the American eagle to denote that Americans should rely on their own virtue. The red and white stripes of the shield represent the states united under and supporting the blue, representing the President and Congress. The color white signifies purity and innocence; red, hardiness and valor; and blue signifies vigilance, perseverance, and justice. Above the eagle's head is a cloud surrounding a blue field containing thirteen stars, which forms a constellation. The constellation denotes that a new State is taking its place among other nations.

Do you see a pattern of thirteen in the Great Seal?

- 13 stars in the crest above the eagle
- 13 stripes in the shield upon the eagle's breast
- 13 arrows in the eagle's left claw
- 13 olives and leaves in the eagles' right claw
- 13 letters in the motto carried by the eagle, *E Pluribus Unum*

Why thirteen? Thirteen represents the first thirteen states - Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia.

Source:

<http://bensguide.gpo.gov/3-5/symbols/seal.html>

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