



Lesson 15.3 “The New Hampshire Yankee”

Unit 15: Forging a Modern Identity

Lesson Objectives

- Students will use a three-step process to analyze primary source material and define the characteristics and values of the New Hampshire “Yankee” identity.
- Students will think critically to identify civic values in advertising art and organize their observations in writing.
- Students will compare 20th-century images to the symbol used by New Hampshire today and write about or discuss the evolution of the state’s identity.

Lesson Competencies

- I can analyze primary and secondary sources and draw appropriate conclusions.
- I can use sources (pictures, primary and secondary sources, discussion) to expand my understanding of the topic/text and locate information to support my point of view. (ELA 6)
- I can interpret and use information delivered orally or visually and respond by asking relevant questions, summarizing key points, or elaborating on ideas. (ELA 7)

Essential Questions

How has New Hampshire come to be the way it is?

Focus Questions

How did New Hampshire’s identity evolve in the 20th century?

Estimated Time

One 40-minute class session

Materials & Equipment

Group or class set of “New Hampshire Yankee Image Set”
“Quick Connect” handout for projection or distribution
Class set of “Quick Connect: The New Hampshire Yankee” worksheet
Class set of “Media and Art: Values, Identities, Actions” worksheet
Group or class set of “Chippa Granite Image Set”



Educator Introduction & Rationale

As Americans coped with the rapid pace of change in the 20th century, the quintessential New England town became the ideal the country looked to for stability and reassurance. Developed in the 19th century, the idyllic town center with church, town hall, school, and town common, houses with picket fences, and yards full of apple trees, evoked feelings of a simpler time in the 1950s. People throughout the United States romanticized life in New England, which seemed to harken back to a simpler time before world wars and economic collapses. New Hampshire embraced this New England Yankee identity and recognized that the traditional town center and Yankee values like thrift, hard work, and independence were not only part of the state's history but also an opportunity.

Granite Staters had acknowledged the importance of tourism since the mid-19th century, but during the 1950s the state launched a coordinated, nationwide campaign to promote the Granite State to out-of-state visitors, both tourist sites and New Hampshire-made products. The State Planning and Development Commission hired artist Alice Cosgrove to design promotional materials for the state. Around 1952, Cosgrove created a poster to promote winter sports that starred a charming, freckle-faced, bright-eyed young boy wearing a blue snowsuit. The figure was so popular that the state ran a contest for children to choose his name, and New Hampshire's kids came up with "Chippa Granite." Whether skiing, drinking milk, or visiting a farm, Chippa quickly became a friendly symbol of New Hampshire tourism and agriculture. Chippa Granite's wholesome image not only boosted New Hampshire's tourism industry, it associated the state with simple, rural pleasures, not unlike those celebrated in the earliest Old Home Weeks. Please see the [Educator Overview](#) for more information.

This is the third lesson in Unit 15: Forging a Modern Identity. This lesson can stand alone from the unit. In this lesson, students first discuss the word "Yankee" and its history. They define a "New Hampshire Yankee" as it emerged in the 1940s through analyzing primary sources, including art by Tasha Tudor and historic covers of *Yankee Magazine*. They finish the lesson looking at Alice Cosgrove's Chippa Granite images using a thinking routine entitled "Media and Art: Values, Identities, Actions" and then reflect on New Hampshire's image today by looking at the state's official tourism website, VisitNH.gov.

There are reinforcement activities for students considering how mascots bring people together and inviting alternate study of the Chippa Granite images. Two extension activities extend the Values, Identities, and Action thinking routine and extend discussion of mascots, asking if they should change with the times. Please adapt all the material in this lesson, as necessary, to meet the needs of the students in your classroom. Please note, lesson vocabulary and definitions are at the end of the document. You may wish to preview these with your students.

Learning Activity

Actuation

What is a Yankee? Ask students if they have heard of the term “Yankee.” When have they heard it? What do they think it means? Where do they think the word comes from?

Possible outcome: Students may think of the baseball team, the New York Yankees, or the song “Yankee Doodle Dandy.” Some may even have heard of the New England-focused magazine, *Yankee*. Students may identify it as a nickname for people from a certain part of the United States. It is unlikely that students at the elementary level will recognize the term as one used to describe a thrifty person from small town New England who values hard work and independence.

Direct Instruction & Discussion

New Hampshire Yankee. Share with students that the origin of the word is a mystery, but

- “Yankee” has been used as a nickname for people from the northern United States since the American Revolution.
- It started out as an insult, used by the British to describe the inexperienced American soldiers.
- During the Civil War, Southerners used the word “Yankee” to negatively refer to Northerners.
- During World War I and World War II, all Americans were referred to as “Yanks” by other countries, but in a way that made Americans feel proud.
- After World War II, the term was mostly used to describe people from New England who were thrifty problem-solvers who stuck to their beliefs.
- It became a term of pride for people in New England that they could rally around.

Tell students that in the middle of the 20th century the United States was going through a difficult time. Two world wars and the Depression had left people feeling unsettled by change by 1945. In New Hampshire, people were also facing the decline of farming and the textile industry. In order to guide themselves through this time, many people started asking:

- What did it mean to be from New Hampshire?
- What made New Hampshire special?
- Maybe the idea of a “Yankee” identity was something that could make people feel connected, kind of like a mascot?

Teaching tip: Ask students if they can think of any mascots that they like. What are they mascots for? How do they make the students feel? This activity is expanded in Reinforcement.

Guided Practice

Quick Connect: The New Hampshire Yankee. Display or project the images from the “New Hampshire Yankee Image Set.” Before beginning this activity, select three questions from the Quick Connect handout (one from each section) to use to guide a discussion about what defined a “New Hampshire Yankee” in the mid-20th century.



Display these questions in a way that student ideas can be recorded beneath them. A chart template with sample questions is provided; choose the questions that are best for your class.

Students can walk around to view the image set, look at it in groups at tables, or discuss together as a class. Alternatively, assign different groups or students one image and bring their ideas together afterwards.

Once students have had a chance to discuss images and answer the questions, work together to summarize the observations to answer this question: What feelings and values were part of being a New Hampshire Yankee?

At an appropriate point in the discussion, students may be interested to hear about *Yankee Magazine's* adaptations during World War II. Due to rations and a desire to show patriotism, the magazine downsized from a 9 x 12-inch size to a 6 x 9-inch size and paused publishing for a time. When, in July 1945, the magazine was ready to publish again and fulfill paused subscriptions, they included this quote as opening words to showcase their ideals:

With this issue Yankee returns to the old stand. We are back because our faith in the simple, everyday, honest things of life is as strong as ever.

Independent Practice

Civic values in art and advertising. Explain to students that one way the state of New Hampshire tried to get people to share the values that came with being a New Hampshire Yankee was through advertisements for the products and activities that made New Hampshire unique.

Tell students they will independently examine images from a popular mid-20th-century state advertising campaign that featured a mascot who became very familiar to people in New Hampshire and across the country. The character used in this ad campaign was named Chippa Granite by school children in New Hampshire. Can they guess why children named him that?

Chippa was originally created by Alice Cosgrove, the first woman artist to be hired by the state's Planning and Development Commission, to advertise the booming ski industry. The character was then used to promote all kinds of things, from visiting New Hampshire, to buying New Hampshire products, and even to encourage drinking milk!

Choose at least three Chippa Granite images that will most appeal to your students and set them up in different sections of the room. Distribute "Media and Art: Values, Identities, Actions." Review the categories and questions so that students understand the terms and vocabulary. Instruct students to select one of the images to look at closely and answer the questions about it on the chart. Review as best for your class.



Teaching tip: This activity is adapted from a Thinking Routine created by Project Zero at Harvard University Graduate School of Education. The “Dig Deeper” questions recommended by Project Zero are not included in this version but are suggested as an extension activity and may be better suited for older students.

Reflection

New Hampshire’s 21st-century mascot. It is important to explain to students that the idea of being a “New Hampshire Yankee” was popularized as an ideal. It was not the reality for everyone who lived in New Hampshire in the 20th century, as it did not include economic or cultural diversity. However, some of the values that were promoted then are still important to people who live in the region now.

Reflect with students about how what it means to be from New Hampshire has changed and what has remained the same. Project the homepage of VisitNH.gov. Explain to students that this website represents how the state government presents itself to the rest of the country (and world) as a place to work, visit, and live in the 21st century. Post these questions for students to answer, in writing or discussion, as a closing reflection for the lesson.

- Look closely at the welcome sign used today to represent New Hampshire. What do you notice about it?
- How is that symbol different from the Chippa Granite ads?
- What do the symbols have in common? Do they have shared values?
- How does this new symbol include more people in the identity of being from New Hampshire?

Teaching tip: If you don’t have the ability to show the VisitNH website, print out copies of the “Welcome to New Hampshire” state border sign and discuss together.

Reinforcement

1. **How many mascots?** Divide students into small groups and set a timer for one minute. Ask them to write down as many mascots as they can think of in that time. Remind them that a mascot is a character who represents something. For example, businesses or products, places or events, or sports teams may have mascots. When the time is up, ask groups to share their lists. As a whole group, sort the mascots into categories: place, sports, products. Then, reflect on which mascots were easy to think of and why. How do those mascots make students feel about the products, places, and teams they represent?
1. **Quick Connect with Chippa Granite.** If “Media and Art: Values, Identities, Actions” is too advanced for your students, consider using the Quick Connect handout with the images instead. Project the first image from the Chippa Granite image set and distribute the Quick Connect handout. Ask students to do one Quick Connect Encounter activity and one Quick Connect Investigate activity of their choosing with this image. Consider having them write down their ideas first and turn and talk to another student about their ideas.

Extension

1. **Dig deeper: values, identities, actions.** Older students may be ready to think critically about the idealized imagery of Chippa Granite and other portrayals of “Yankee” life in the 20th century. Use the “Dig Deeper” questions suggested in Values, Identities, and Action to guide a discussion about the people and values not represented by these images.
2. **Should mascots change with the times?** Many school and professional sports teams have changed their mascots or are debating whether or not to make the change. Should mascots always stay the same because they were meaningful to some members of a community in the past? Should they change if some members of a community feel a mascot is offensive or no longer represents a community’s identity? Make a pro and con list about your school’s mascot. If students think it should be changed to something more inclusive, write a letter to the principal.

Supporting Materials

New Hampshire Historical Society Resources

Chippa Granite Image Set

1. Chippa Granite and NH Products, circa 1954
2. Chippa Granite and NH Beaches, circa 1950–1960
3. Chippa Granite and NH Skiing, 1954
4. Chippa Granite and NH Natural Beauty, circa 1950–1960
5. Chippa Granite and NH Potatoes, circa 1950-1960

Other Resources

New Hampshire Yankee Image Set

- Courtesy of the Tasha Tudor Society
 - March Promises, 1957
 - The Hope of Spring, 1957
 - April Sees the Birds Return, 1957
 - April, 1957
- Courtesy of *Yankee Magazine*
 - *Yankee Magazine* Cover, April 1940
 - *Yankee Magazine* Cover, August 1941
 - *Yankee Magazine* Cover, October 1942
 - *Yankee Magazine* Cover, August 1945
 - *Yankee Magazine* Cover, September 1946
 - *Yankee Magazine* Cover, October 1947
 - *Yankee Magazine* Cover, November 1948
 - *Yankee Magazine* Cover, October 1949
- New Hampshire Welcome Sign, circa 2008–2012

New Hampshire Welcome Sign, current, Thomas Pajot at Adobe Stock

Yankee Magazine quote from 1945 found at *NEW ENGLAND NOSTALGIA Yankee Magazine Covers | 1940s*, New England Today LIVING.
newengland.com/today/living/new-england-nostalgia/yankee-covers-1940s/

Project Zero's Thinking Routine Toolbox is an excellent resource for all teachers. Adapted in this lesson was "Values, Identities, Actions" found at www.pz.harvard.edu/resources/values-identities-actions. We highly recommend looking through all the thinking routines available at www.pz.harvard.edu/thinking-routines.

Standards

“Moose on the Loose” Content:

- ✓ Students will understand that New Hampshire responded to conflict and change from outside the state in various ways as well as participated in national events. (3-5.T7.1)
- ✓ Students will understand that throughout the 20th century, New Hampshire’s economic and political life evolved and modernized. They will understand that communities responded to economic cycles, and new immigration began. (3-5.T7.2)

“Moose on the Loose” Skills:

- ✓ Gathering, Interpreting, and Using Evidence (3-5.S1.1, 3-5.S1.2)
- ✓ Effective Historical Thinking (3-5.S3.2)

New Hampshire Social Studies Frameworks:

- ✓ US / NH History: Political Foundations and Development (SS:HI:4:1.3)
- ✓ US / NH History: World Views and Value systems and their Intellectual and Artistic Expressions (SS:HI:4:3.1, SS:HI:4:3.2)

NCSS Themes:

- ✓ Theme 1: Culture
- ✓ Theme 2: Time, Continuity, and Change

C3 Frameworks:

- ✓ Constructing Supporting Questions (D1.3.3-5)
- ✓ Historical Sources and Evidence (D2.His.10.3-5, D2.His.11.3-5, D2.His.12.3-5, D2.His.13.3-5)
- ✓ Gathering and Evaluating Sources (D3.1.3-5)
- ✓ Developing Claims and Using Evidence (D3.4.3-5)

Common Core ELA:

- ✓ Production and Distribution of Writing (W.4.4)
- ✓ Comprehension and Collaboration in Speaking and Listening (SL.4.2)

Lesson Vocabulary

- mascot** (noun) A person or thing who symbolizes an event or organization
- Yankee** (noun) A person from New England who typically works hard, is thrifty, and values independence