

First Nations Symbolism



Symbol

- An action, object, phrase, or person who represents more than their literal self
- Not what it *literally* is, but the i used in the story
- Example: fire can represent var
 - Knowledge
 - New life
 - Inspiration
 - Death
 - Destruction



Symbols in Literature

- Example: in To Kill a Mockingbird, the mockingbird was a symbol for innocent persons, and connected to the overall idea of the need to protect these persons from harm

My *actual* family crests



(I shine, not burn)

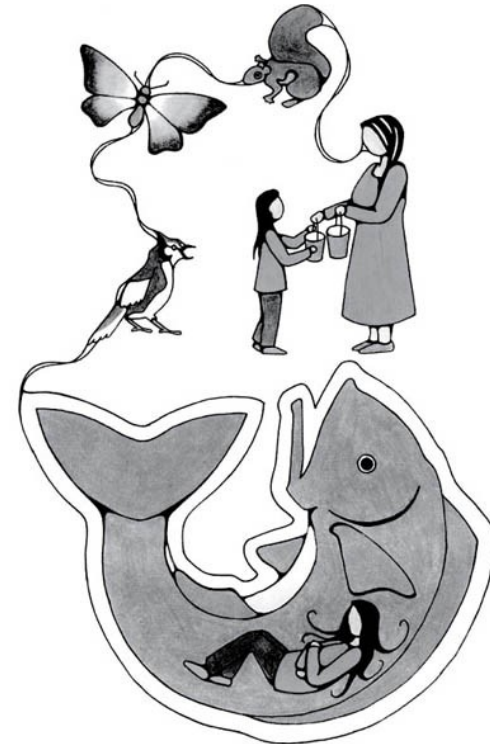
This is peat moss on fire...



(Forget not)

First Nations Animals

- The animals used in First Nations Culture are very *symbolic* and represent abstract ideas. Many of these are defining of personality traits



Bear

- The Bear has a great self awareness and is also able to deliberate about choices or actions. We look to the Bear to show us how to fish the salmon and collect the berries. The Bear symbolizes family and strength.
- The Bear in Northwest West Coastal Native Culture represents strength and learned humility through motherhood and teaching and is an important family crest associated with family and children. Sometime referred to as the protector of the animal kingdom and forests, the Bear is a well respected member of the community and can sometimes be referred to as an elder or a person that has passed on to a new life.
- The characteristics of the bear that are symbolized in Northwest Coast are a short blunt nose with conspicuous teeth, a protruding tongue, small upright ears and claw-like fore and hind paws. There is no tail.
- Symbolizes: family, strength, power



Eagle

- Eagle can be a symbol of power. Eagle belongs to the supernatural world and is next in line to Thunderbird. The down from the eagle is a symbol of peace and would be sprinkled before guests in welcome dances. Eagle feathers are used in ritual and as decoration for masks and other carvings. Eagle's beak is shorter than Raven's and has a downward curve. Often the tongue is evident.
- The Eagle is the ruler of the sky and has the ability to transform himself as he has a connection with our creator. Eagle symbolizes grace, power, and has great intellectual abilities. The gift the Eagle shares is the ability of foresight, and an indication of good times to come.



Heron

- The Heron is considered to be a very good omen representing grace, purity, patience and long life.
- First Nations people took notice of the Heron's inquisitiveness, determination and excellent judgment skills and recognize the Heron as an expert fisher and hunter. Native people believed that sighting a Heron before a hunt was an indication that the hunt would be a victorious one.
- As a water creature the Heron is as well an image of going with the flow, and working with the elements of Mother nature rather than struggling against her. The Heron was thought to communicate with the Supernatural being.
- The Herons are medium to large sized birds with long legs and necks. The bill is generally long and harpoon like. He is depicted in Northwest Coast Aboriginal Cultural art as having long legs and a long beak with a feather on his head.



Salmon

- The Salmon symbolizes instinct, determination and persistence. Salmon is also a symbol of abundance, wealth and prosperity because the Salmon is the primary food source for the people of the Northwest Coast. It is also symbolic of dependability and renewal representing the provider of life. Salmon in pairs is good luck.
- “The Giver of Life.” Salmon is an important food source for the people of the Northwest Coast and accordingly always treated with great respect, and is often the crest figure for twins. Salmon is depicted with no teeth, but often with the hooked upper jaw associated with spawning salmon.

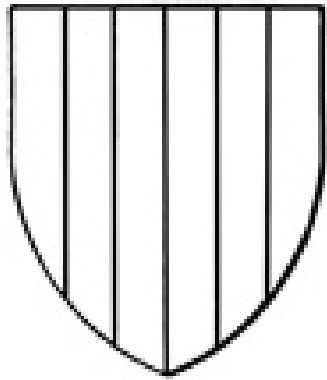


Whale

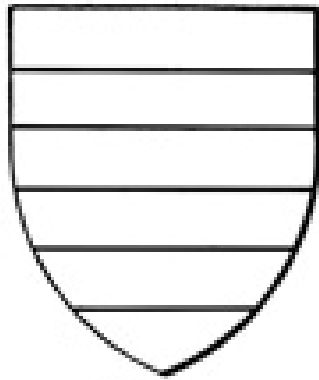
- The Whale is known to help people in need whether we are helpless or wounded. The whale symbolizes kindness, intelligence and compassion.
- The Whale or Orca, is known as the guardian of the sea and guardian of travel and also can also be a symbol for unity and goodness. Killer Whales often travel in family groups known as pods and also hunt in packs like the wolf so are referred to as sea wolves. The Whale is a popular symbol for romance as they mate for life. It is because of this nature that they are known for their strong sense of family values and unity in numbers.



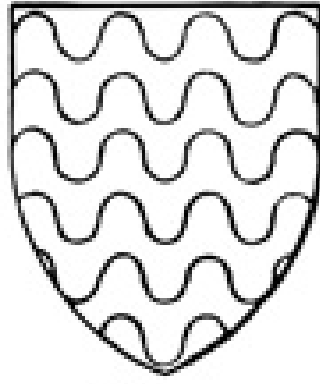
Crest Designs



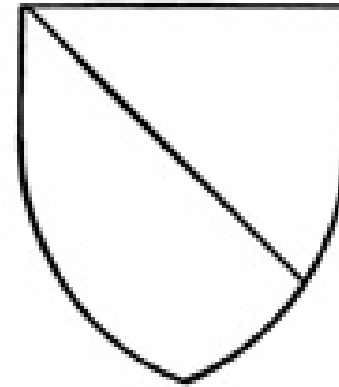
Paly



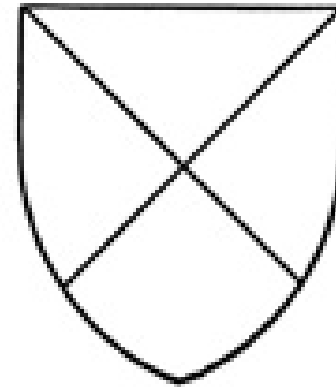
Barry



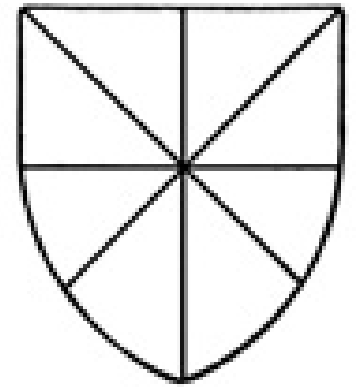
Wavy



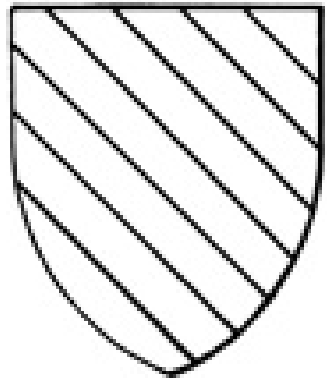
Party-bendwise



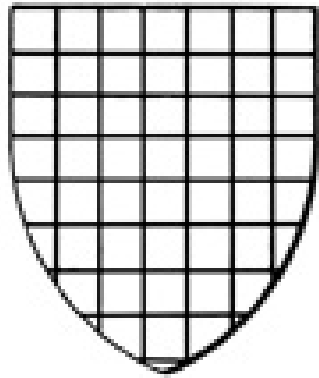
Party-saltirewise



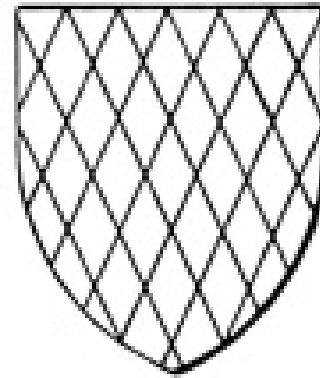
Gyronny



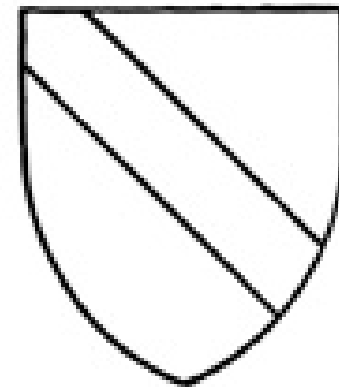
Bendy



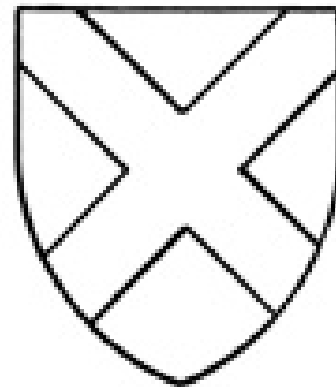
Checky



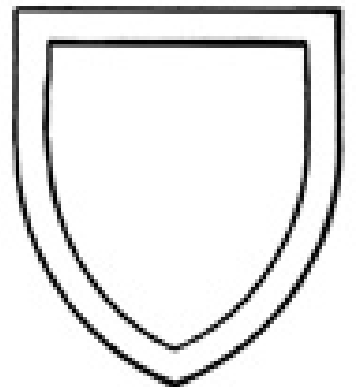
Lozengy



Bend



Saltire



Border

Your Task

- You will receive a blank template to design your family crest
- A family crest is rich with symbolism. It features animals, elements of nature and colours representative of the *values* and *qualities* (personalities) of a family.
- **You will select at least three First Nations animals and two-three colours to represent your family**
- On the back of your crest, you will write a brief explanation of *why* you chose those animals and colours.
- Go to these websites to learn about more symbolism in First Nations culture:
 - <https://bit.ly/3c4ZYmi>
 - <https://bit.ly/2RxAkym>
 - <https://bit.ly/3uDl8xp>