

## GROUPWORK – The Great Seal

- Read the following documents and prepare both a poster AND an oral presentation about the Great Seal
- Also **prepare 5 questions** to ask to your classmates to make sure they listened and understood what you explained.

### Guidelines :

- Describe with precision the Great Seal and explain what each element represents
- Make a list of the 13 colonies
- When was it created ?
- Where can we see it ? When is it used ?



Eagle = strength and power  
Head turned to olive branch = peace  
In its beak : the motto = « Out of many », one in latin  
Olive branch = peace  
13 leaves + 13 olives  
13 stars, 13 stars = 13 original colonies uniting to form 1 nation  
13 arrows = prepared to defend liberty  
White = purity and innocence  
Red = hadiness and valour  
Escutcheon : protecting the eagle. Colours = valor and virtue

## Great Seal of the United States: 1782

The Great Seal of the United States is a symbol of our independent Nation and self-government. It appears on official documents such as proclamations, warrants, treaties, and commissions of high officials of the Government.



The Continental Congress first created a committee to design a seal for the United States on July 4, 1776, the same day that they adopted the Declaration of Independence. Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and John Adams created a design that was eventually rejected, but one element was adopted: the motto E Pluribus Unum, which is Latin for "Out of Many, One."

In 1780, James Lovell of Massachusetts and John Morin Scott and William Churchill Houston of Virginia developed a second design which was also rejected by Congress. Some elements, such as the olive branch, the thirteen stars, and the shield with red and white stripes on a blue field, were used in the final design. In 1782, a third committee used the eagle for the first time. The Secretary of the Continental Congress, Charles Thomson, created a fourth design that was then slightly changed by William Barton. The Continental Congress approved this design on June 20, 1782. The design used the eagle that holds a scroll in its beak with the E Pluribus Unum motto; in one claw is an olive branch, a symbol of peace, and the other claw holds thirteen arrows, a symbol of war.

### Great Seal of the United States facts and figures:

- The Great Seal is used as our national coat of arms.
- The Great Seal is used officially as decoration on military uniform buttons, on plaques, and above the entrances to U.S. embassies and consulates.
- Both the seal and the reverse, which is never used as a seal, appear on the one-dollar bill.
- The Secretary of State is the official custodian of the Great Seal.
- Thirteen is an important number used in the Great Seal. It represents the original colonies and first 13 states: Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Virginia.
- There are also 13 stars in the crest above the eagle; 13 stripes in the shield; 13 arrows in the eagle's left claw; 13 olives and leaves in the eagle's right claw; and 13 letters in the motto E Pluribus Unum.

