

# Kansas Symbols



## 1861 - Great Seal of the State of Kansas

The state seal design was presented by state Senator John J. Ingalls. It contains elements such as a steamboat, cabin, a man plowing his field, Native Americans hunting bison, a wagon train, 34 stars, and the state motto *Ad Astra per Aspera*.

## 1903 - State Flower and Floral Emblem

The state flower is the Wild Native Sunflower, or *Helianthus annuus*. It's prevalence in Kansas is apparent as the state has earned the nickname "the sunflower state". There are many species of sunflowers in Kansas. They are an important food resource for many creatures.

## 1925 - State Banner

The state banner was horizontally hung and had the name of the state and the state seal surrounded by a sunflower. There were complaints, and two years later the state flag was established. The banner was simplified in 1953 to a sunflower with a blue background.

## 1927 - State Flag

The state flag contains the state seal and a sunflower over a bar that is both gold and light blue. In 1961, the flag was modified to have "Kansas" written on the flag. Later, the design of the state seal as portrayed on the flag was altered slightly.

## 1935 - State March

The Kansas March was composed by Duff E. Middleton and became the official state march of Kansas in 1935. A second state march was added in 1992 called "Here's Kansas".

## 1937 - State Bird

The Western Meadowlark is the state bird of Kansas. It was the choice of a vote by over 121,000 school children in Kansas. The Western Meadowlark is yellow, black, brown, and white, and has a black "v" on its chest. Its diet is comprised of insects, seeds, and grains. It is the state bird of five other states in addition to Kansas.

## 1937 - State Tree

The Cottonwood tree, also sometimes called the eastern cottonwood, is the state tree of Kansas, and is found in every county in Kansas. The tree grows fast and reaches the size of about 70-100 feet in height and spans 50-70 feet. Early settlers used the tree for buildings. Today it is used for shipping crates and pallet boxes, and the pulp is used to create paper.

## 1947 - State Song

"Home on the Range" was originally written by Smith County, KS resident Brewster Higley in the early 1870s. It was later set to music by Daniel E. Kelley. The song would go on to be sung by cowboys and used widely even into modern times.



### **1955 - State Animal**

The American Buffalo, or American Bison, is the official state animal of Kansas. It is now also the national mammal of the United States. The buffalo was important to Native Americans, especially the plains tribes. In the 1800s, millions of buffalo were killed, eventually leaving just a few hundred. The species, once in danger of extinction, now numbers in the hundreds of thousands thanks to conservation efforts. The buffalo is approximately six feet tall and can weigh over a ton. They are also fast when necessary.



### **1976 - State Insect**

The Honeybee is an important pollinator that produces honey. Honey is produced by the insects for food for the hive, but they produce much more than they need. This overproduction allows humans to enjoy the tasty food. In 1976, the honeybee became the state insect after school children created a petition.



### **1986 - State Reptile**

The Ornate Box Turtle is the state reptile of Kansas. The turtle lives about 32-3 years, and resides in prairies and pastures. It's protected in several states, including Kansas. In Kansas, there is a law against removing turtles from the wild and keeping them as pets.



### **1990 - State Soil**

Harney Loam Silt became the state soil after a five year effort. It is the most prevalent soil in Kansas and many crops are grown upon it. "Harney" originates from a Wichita word that meant "Pawnee Indian".



### **1994 - State Amphibian**

The Barred Tiger Salamander is the state amphibian of Kansas. Efforts to recognize the animal were led by a second grade class in Wichita, KS. The salamander has a tiger-like look due to the yellow spots on its body. While the adult life is more terrestrial, its larval stage is completely aquatic.



### **2010 - State Grass**

Little Bluestem is a grass that is native to all of Kansas and a majority of North America. It can grow up to 5 feet tall, and is a good source of food for animals such as cattle and bison. It has bluish-green or grayish-green blades in early summer, and develops flowering stalks by late summer.

### **2014- State Flying Fossil and State Marine Fossil**

The Tylosaurus and Pteranodon were made state fossils since Kansas provides the most complete specimens of both. Tylosaurus was a large lizard that lived in the sea and grew to around 45 feet. It was a mosasaur, not a dinosaur. The Pteranodon was a Pterosaur, a flying creature with a large wingspan of around 12-18 feet.

### **2018 - State Rock**

Limestone (greenhorn) was made the state rock of Kansas through the work of Overland Park fourth grader, Casey Fiend. He had the support of State Representative Jan Kessinger who sponsored Friend's bill. Limestone is a sedimentary rock, made significantly from the skeletal remains of organisms. It is often used for building materials.

### **2018 - State Mineral**

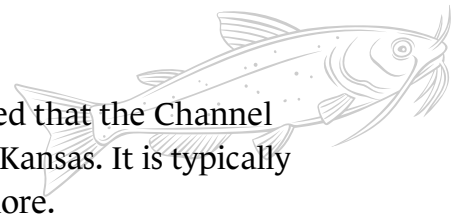
Galena was made the state mineral thanks to efforts of fourth grader Casey Friend. Galena, a lead ore, has been mined throughout history, including in Ancient Egypt.

### **2018 - State Gemstone**

Jelinite Amber, once called Kansanite, has only been found in Ellsworth County, Kansas. It became a state symbol due to the efforts of fourth grader Casey Friend from Overland Park.

### **2018 - State Fish**

During Casey Friend's quest to add additional state symbols, it was suggested that the Channel Catfish become the state fish. The channel catfish is extremely common in Kansas. It is typically around 2-4 pounds, although in rare cases it can be 10-20 pounds or even more.



### **2019 - Official Red Wine Grape and White Wine Grape**

Despite Kansas' history of prohibition, it has a rich history of vineyards. In 1901, there were 5,000 acres of vineyards in the state. Later, as prohibition was lifted and Kansas' laws remained strict, vineyards began to decrease. After the passage of the Farm Winery Act in 1985, vineyards have once again increased in recent years. In 2019, Chambourcin, a French American hybrid, was made the State Red Wine Grape. It is light to medium in body with a fruity aroma. Vignoles was made the State White Wine Grape the same year. It produces a variety of wines from sweet to dry.

### **2022 - State Fruit**

The Sandhill Plum, also known as the Chickasaw plum or American plum, is the state fruit of Kansas. This tart fruit is a popular choice for making jams and jellies. When it ripens, the plum changes from a green color to an orange-red blush color and eventually to a dark red.

### **2023 - State Land Fossil**

The *Silvisaurus condrayi*, or woodland lizard, was designated as the state land fossil by Governor Laura Kelly. It was discovered in May 1955 by a rancher checking on his cattle. This lizard lived from the early to late Cretaceous period. It is the only known dinosaur from the Dakota Formation in Kansas. The 3-foot-tall, 10-foot-long lizard of the forest had a fierce appearance but was a gentle herbivore.

# Symbols Matching Game

Symbols help provide Kansans with a sense of place and identity. They are things that have come to represent Kansas over time. Official state symbols are those that have the seal of approval from the state legislature and the governor. These are written into law.

Kansas has 23 official state symbols including the sunflower, bison, honeybee, and more.

1. Print cards on cardstock.
2. Cut out the matching cards provided.
3. Color the cards (optional).
4. Flip the cards over so the image is facing down.
5. Take turns flipping two cards over to see if they match.
6. Collect matching cards to earn points. Whoever earns the most points, wins.





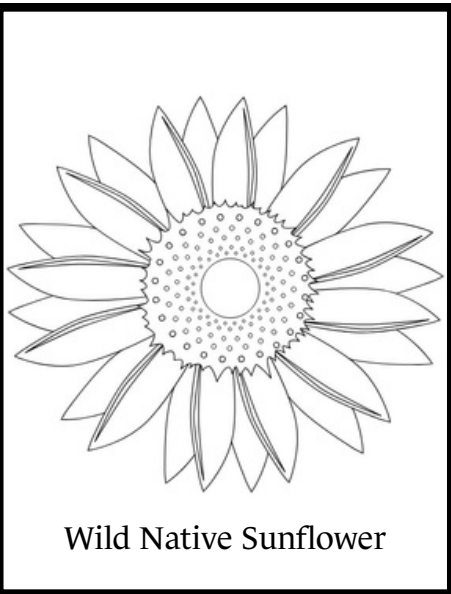
State Seal



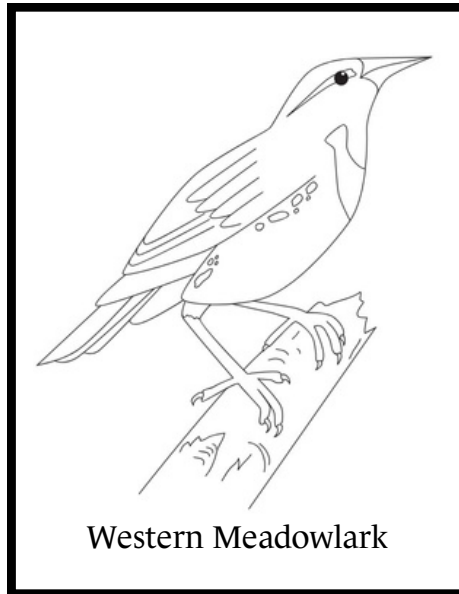
State Seal



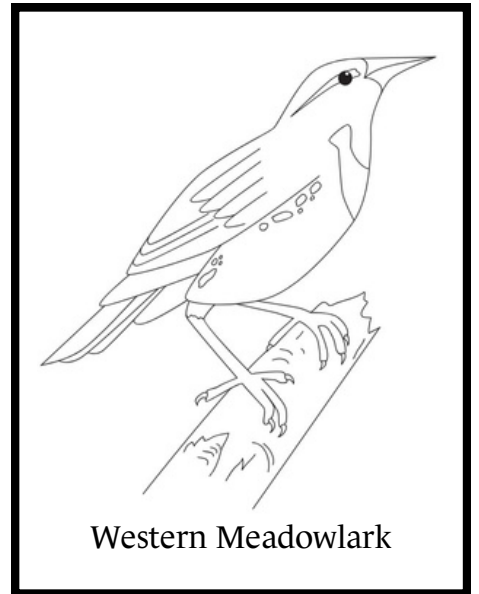
Wild Native Sunflower



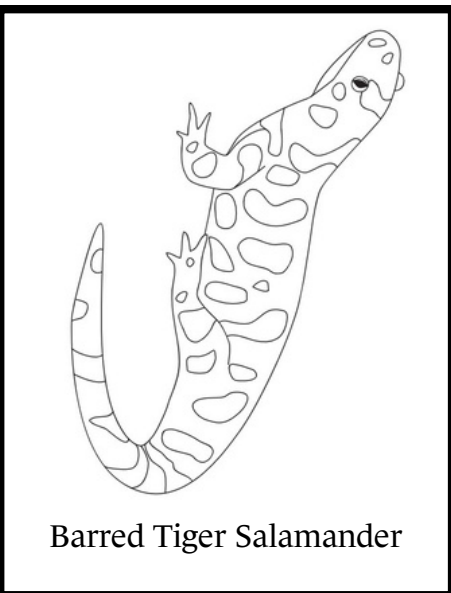
Wild Native Sunflower



Western Meadowlark



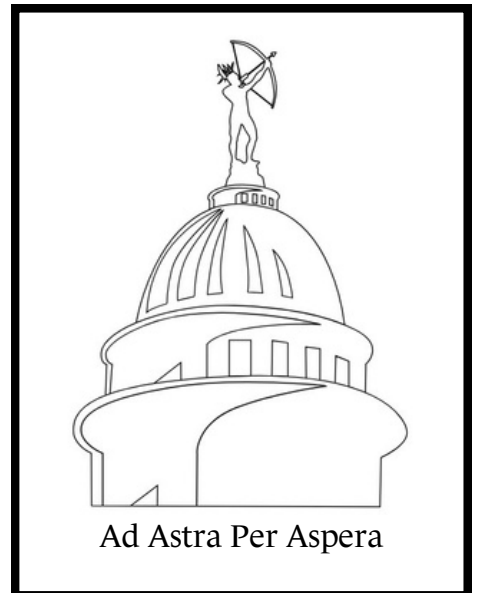
Western Meadowlark



Barred Tiger Salamander



Barred Tiger Salamander

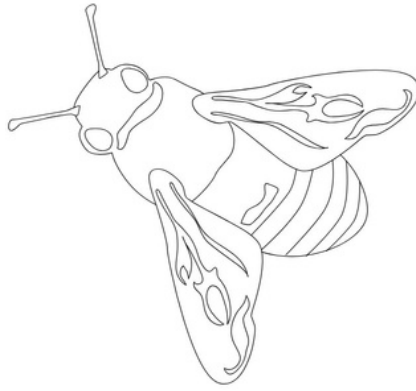


Ad Astra Per Aspera

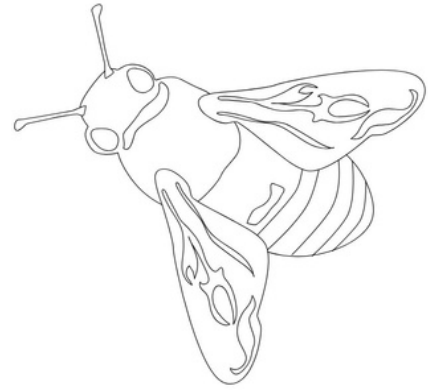




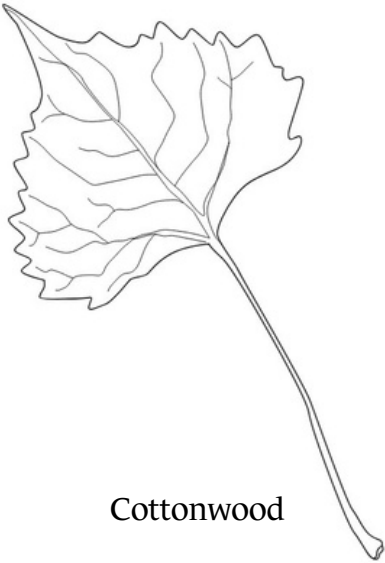
Ad Astra Per Aspera



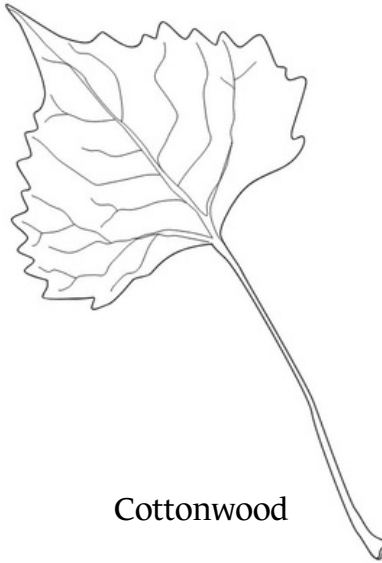
Honeybee



Honeybee



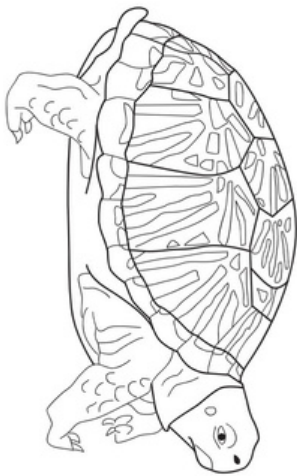
Cottonwood



Cottonwood



Ornate Box Turtle



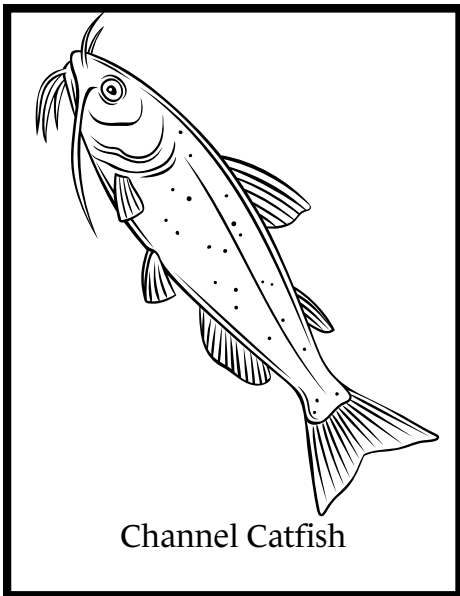
Ornate Box Turtle



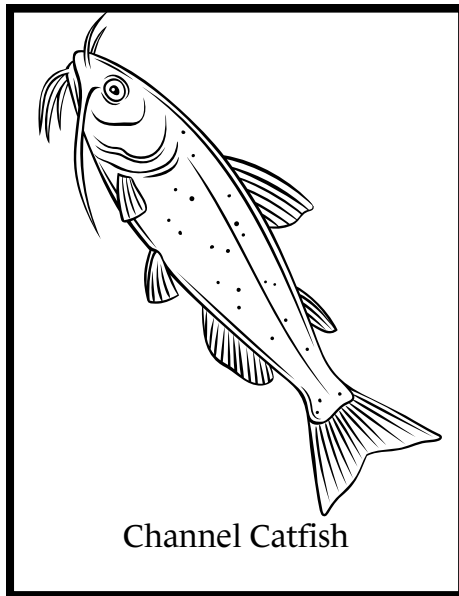
American Bison



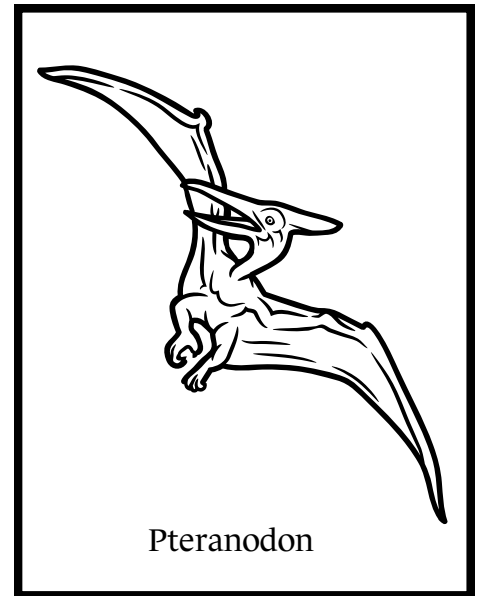
American Bison



Channel Catfish



Channel Catfish



Pteranodon



Pteranodon