

## Lesson Plan:

# Make Your Own Union Bug



**Suggested Time:** 30 minutes.

**Recommended Age:** Elementary through middle school.

**ACTION:** Distribute [worksheets](#) to the class.

**Suggested Dialog:** *Today we will be making our own union bugs! But what is a union bug? Or a union label? Let's break it down. We've already been talking about unions. Who can remind us of what a union is?*

**Take a few answers**

Ex.) a group of workers who do the same kinds of jobs, they fight for safe workplaces and better pay

*Now what about a label? Where do you find labels? What do they do?*

**Take a few answers**

Ex.) Tags inside clothing, cans of food. Gives information about the product.

*A union bug or label is a symbol that tells us a product was made by unionized workers. This means that the workers who made this product have a say in their wages and working conditions through their union.*

**ACTION:** Pass around objects with a union bug on them (i.e. shirts, buttons, signs) or display the examples from the last page. Examples are also on the [worksheets](#).

## OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to...

1. Identify a union bug/label and its components
2. Explain the purpose of a union bug
3. Create and explain their own union bug design
4. Collaborate with peers to simulate group unity and collective power

## ACTIVITY PREPARATION



Share this activity plan with the educator or program sponsor beforehand.



Print or upload the [worksheet](#) and union bug examples (see last page).



Watch the video and read the article linked below.



Prepare materials (markers, crayons, examples of bugs)



Set up a way to display the YouTube video for students.

**Note:** a union label/bug is different than products marked as “fair trade” or “ethically manufactured.” These labels do not guarantee a product is union made.

**Continued Dialog:** *Union labels are sometimes sewn into clothes that are made by union members. Union bugs are most popular on printed items like posters, yard signs or even business cards. But why is it called a union bug? Any guesses?*

**Take a few answers.**

*The term bug refers to the size of the symbol, which is often small, like a fly. Can you spot AFSCME's bug on your worksheet?*

**Have students search for AFSCME's bug on their handouts.**

Answer: Bottom right corner. Union bugs are often placed in the bottom corner of a page.

*Union bugs might also be found on products like T-shirts or cups. Not all union-made products have a bug. Products that do have a union bug or label help us identify high-quality products and support union workers. That's why we "look for the union label..." which was a slogan started by the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU). Let's watch a video on union bugs...*

**ACTION:** Play the video "Look for the union bug." (3 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4dp8XAdBgPo>

**Note:** If you're not familiar with the 1970's Look for the Union Label campaign, prepare yourself for questions by learning more. Check out the 2019 article, ["Look for the Union Label": A History of the ILGWU's Iconic Jingle](#) from the New York Historical Society.

*What did you think of the video? Where might you find a union bug?*

**Take a few answers.**

Ex.) Yard signs or mailers during election season.

*The union bug or label provides a way for shoppers (and voters) to easily identify union-made products. Buying union-made products is an easy way to support unions and help workers gain power. Once you find a union bug or label, look a little closer. What information does the union bug include?*

**Take a few answers.**

Ex.) Name of the union, location of the worksite, shop number, drawing or graphic.

## Continued Dialog: *What can you include in your own union bug?*

Take a few answers.

*In your bug, consider adding...*

- *the name of your class or group (i.e., Ms. Johnson's class, the Boys & Girls Club)*
- *your state or region*
- *your grade level*
- *a drawing or graphic of something important to your class*

**Note:** Write the instructions and the list above on the board or on a poster. Encourage them to use their own ideas too! However, be careful to **exclude any personally identifiable information** like student names or addresses.

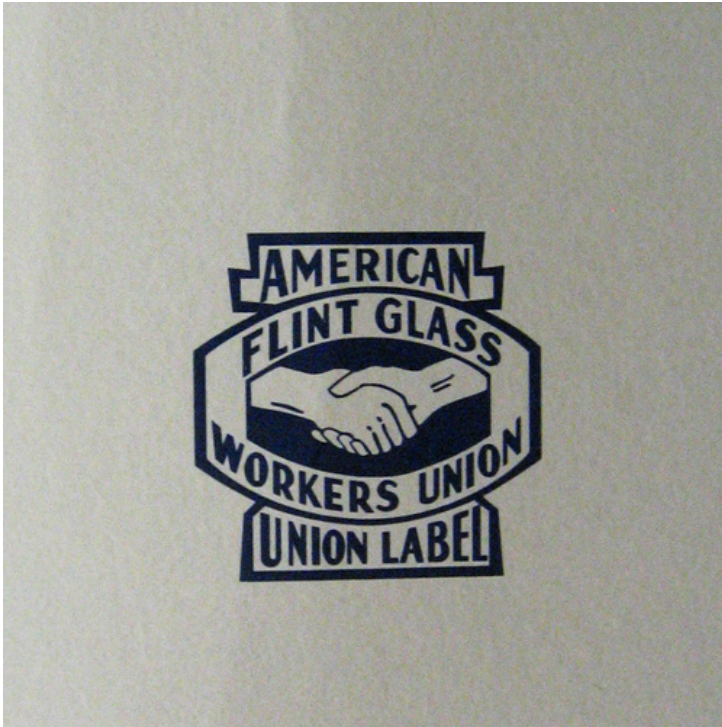
### **Activity: Make Your Own Union Bug!** (15-20 minutes)

Let students work in groups to create their own “union bug.” Students can use the space provided on their handout, one of the templates on the back of the handout, blank sheets of paper or online tools to make their designs. Encourage them to get creative and be sure to provide supplies (paper, markers, stencils, colored pencils, etc.).

- Split students into small groups.
- Ask groups to brainstorm ideas for a “union bug” to represent their class or organization. Groups should work together to design their bug.
- After completing their designs, ask each group to present their “union bug” design to the class.

**Optional:** Have students vote on their favorite design. The winning design can become the “union bug” for the class. Encourage students to incorporate their class’s “union bug” on their work throughout the year.

- Photocopy the winning design and create a full page of miniature versions of their union bug. After printing the page, cut out each union bug so it can be glued or taped to students’ papers or projects. As an alternative, try printing the bugs onto sheets of small labels (e.g., ½” x ¾”)
- Turn the winning design into a digital sticker, which students can add to their online homework or projects.

**A****B****C****D**

A.) "[American Flint Glass Workers Union Label](#)" by [Beige Alert](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#).

B.) "[Allied Printing Union Label from Lafayette, IN, @kylevanhorn's home town.](#)" by [kvanhorn](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#).

C.) "[Close-up of the ILGWU union label sewn into a garment](#)" at [The Kheel Center for Labor-Management Documentation and Archives](#) in the ILR School at Cornell University, from the collection "International Ladies Garment Workers Union Photographs (1885-1985)" by an unknown photographer is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#).

D.) AFSCME's Union Bug