Interpreting Symbols Handout

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Research the historical and cultural context of each artwork. Use the following information to guide your search. Hypothesize about the intended audience for each artwork. What do you think the artist might be trying to communicate to the audience?

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| A black and white photograph of a hammer lying across the blade of a wooden-handled sickle. The two tools cast a shadow to the right side of the image.  Pop Art, Cold War  Andy Warhol, *Hammer and Sickle*, 1971 | A faded American flag.  Early Pop Art, Age of Baby Boomers, Youth Revolution  Jasper Johns, *Flag*, 1954-55 |
| A crossed hammer and sickle wrapped in black fur againt a white background.  Sotz Art, Soviet Union Withdraws Troops from Afghanistan  Leonid Sokov, *Sickle and Hammer*, 1988 | A photograph of a pair of scissors stuck through what appears to be an American flag folded into the shape of a rose.  Post-Reagan Years, Cuts in Welfare and Healthcare in the US  Donald Lipski, "No. 10, from Who's Afraid of Red, White, and Blue," 1990 |
| A water color painting of a black hammer and sickle against a red background.  Post-Soviet Russia, Chechen Conflict | An interpretation of the American flag in which all of the white elements (stars, stripes) have been replaced with white text asking questions such as 'Who is free to choose?' and 'Who salutes longest?'  Post 9-11 Climate in the US, Global Protests of War in Iraq  Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (Questions)* 1991 |

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| **Adjectives:**  List characteristics that describe this work. |  |  |  |
| **Associations:**  Using the word “like” or “as,” list connections you can make to this artwork. |  |  |  |
| **Ideas:**  List the ideas, feelings, and meanings that this artwork conveys. |  |  |  |

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| **Work of Art** | A faded American flag.  Jasper Johns, *Flag*, 1954-55 | A photograph of a pair of scissors stuck through what appears to be an American flag folded into the shape of a rose.  Donald Lipski, "No. 10, from Who's Afraid of Red, White, and Blue," 1990 | An interpretation of the American flag in which all of the white elements (stars, stripes) have been replaced with white text asking questions such as 'Who is free to choose?' and 'Who salutes longest?'  Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (Questions)* 1991 |
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