

Flag Day



NATIONAL MUSEUM *of the*
UNITED STATES NAVY



In this packet, we will be learning the history and importance of the United States Flag! We are then going to learn more through hands on easy and fun activities that can be done in the classroom or at home.

Contact the National Museum of the U.S. Navy
for Field Trip and School Visit opportunities!

*This packet is intended for elementary schools, to be used in groups of three or fewer and/or individually.

Origins of Flag Day

What is Flag Day and why does the United States celebrate it on June 14? Well, on this date in 1777, the Second Continental Congress adopted the design for its first national flag.

While this did happen on June 14, 1777, the United States did not recognize this day as a holiday until 1885, when a Wisconsin teacher taught his students to celebrate the Flag's birthday. Hearing about this, a gentleman named William Kerr started the American Flag Day Association.

Years later, President Woodrow Wilson officially announced that June 14 will forever be a national holiday to celebrate the history and importance of the United States Flag.

Fun Fact:

The Second Continental Congress were the same men who also signed the Declaration of Independence!

[FLAG DAY.]

By the President of the United States

A Proclamation.

MY FELLOW COUNTRYMEN: Many circumstances have recently conspired to turn our thoughts to a critical examination of the conditions of our national life, of the influences which have seemed to threaten to divide us in interest and sympathy, of forces within and forces without that seemed likely to draw us away from the happy traditions of united purpose and action of which we have been so proud. It has therefore seemed to me fitting that I should call your attention to the approach of the anniversary of the day upon which the flag of the United States was adopted by the Congress as the emblem of the Union, and to suggest to you that it should this year and in the years to come be given special significance as a day of renewal and reminder, a day upon which we should direct our minds with a special desire of renewal to thoughts of the ideals and principles of which we have sought to make our great Government the embodiment.

I therefore suggest and request that throughout the nation and if possible in every community the fourteenth day of June be observed as FLAG DAY with special patriotic exercises, at which means shall be taken to give significant expression to our thoughtful love of America, our comprehension of the great mission of liberty and justice to which we have devoted ourselves as a people, our pride in the history and our enthusiasm for the political programme of the nation, our determination to make it greater and purer with each generation, and our resolution to demonstrate to all the world its vital union in sentiment and purpose, accepting only those as true compatriots who feel as we do the compulsion of this supreme allegiance. Let us on that day rededicate ourselves to the nation, "one and inseparable", from which every thought that is not worthy of our fathers' first vows in independence, liberty, and right shall be excluded and in which we shall stand with united hearts, for an America which no man can corrupt, no influence draw away from its ideals, no force divide against itself,—a nation signally distinguished among all the nations of mankind for its clear, individual conception alike of its duties and its privileges, its obligations and its rights.

In Witness Whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

DONE at the City of Washington this thirtieth day of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and sixteen, and of the independence of the United States of America the one hundred and fortieth.

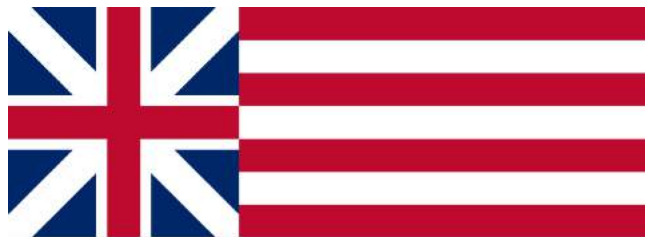
WOODROW WILSON

By the President:
ROSEMARY LAMMING,
Secretary of State.

[No. 1335.]

The U.S. Flag and Navy History

On July 4, 1776, this flag became the first national flag of the United States. John Paul Jones, the Father of the U.S. Navy, is believed to have raised this flag in 1775 as the Navy banner when Commodore Esek Hopkins assumed command of the new Navy. An English spy reported that one of Commodore Hopkins' ships was flying "English colours, *but more striped.*" This flag was also raised on Prospect Hill, near Cambridge, Massachusetts, on January 1, 1776, as the flag of the Continental Army. The basis of the design is uncertain. Never officially adopted, the flag was replaced by the emblem described in the Continental Congress resolution of June 14, 1777.



Woodrow Wilson's Flag Day Proclamation, May 13, 1916

"Flags of the United States." *Britannica School*,
Encyclopedia Britannica

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The Legend of Betsy Ross

No one knows who really made the first official American flag. According to tradition, the credit for the Stars and Stripes belongs to Betsy Ross. One of her grandchildren claimed that General George Washington, accompanied by Colonel George Ross and Robert Morris, brought a rough sketch of a flag to her Philadelphia upholstery shop in June 1776. Washington supposedly asked her to make a copy of it for the nation that was about to declare its independence. She suggested a few changes, such as the use of a five-pointed star rather than a six-pointed one, and sewed the flag in her back parlor.

Betsy Ross was indeed a real person, and she did make flags for the government. It is most likely that she made the one called the Cambridge flag, or Continental Colors. That flag was raised at Somerville, Massachusetts, on January 1, 1776, as the flag of the Continental Army.

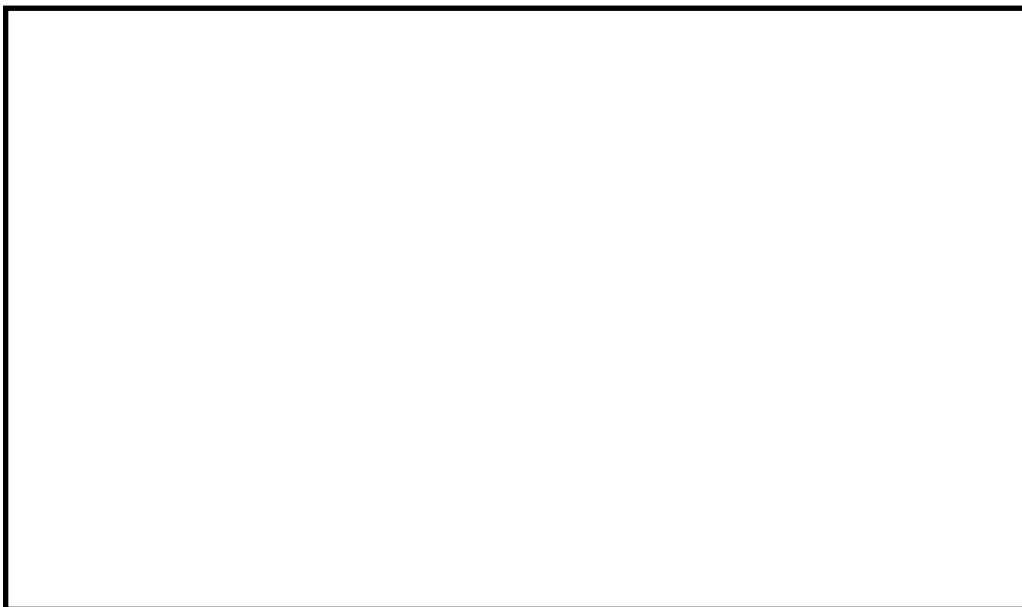
Although the popular legend about the American flag has never been verified, the Betsy Ross home at 239 Arch Street is preserved as the flag's birthplace. The story was first told in 1870 by William Canby, who said that he had heard it directly from Ross, his grandmother. Other Ross descendants supported the claim, and no contrary evidence was ever presented.

"Betsy Ross." *Britannica School*, Encyclopedia Britannica



Betsy Ross, 1777 / J.L.G. Ferris. Created 1932, Library of Congress

Create Your Own Flag!



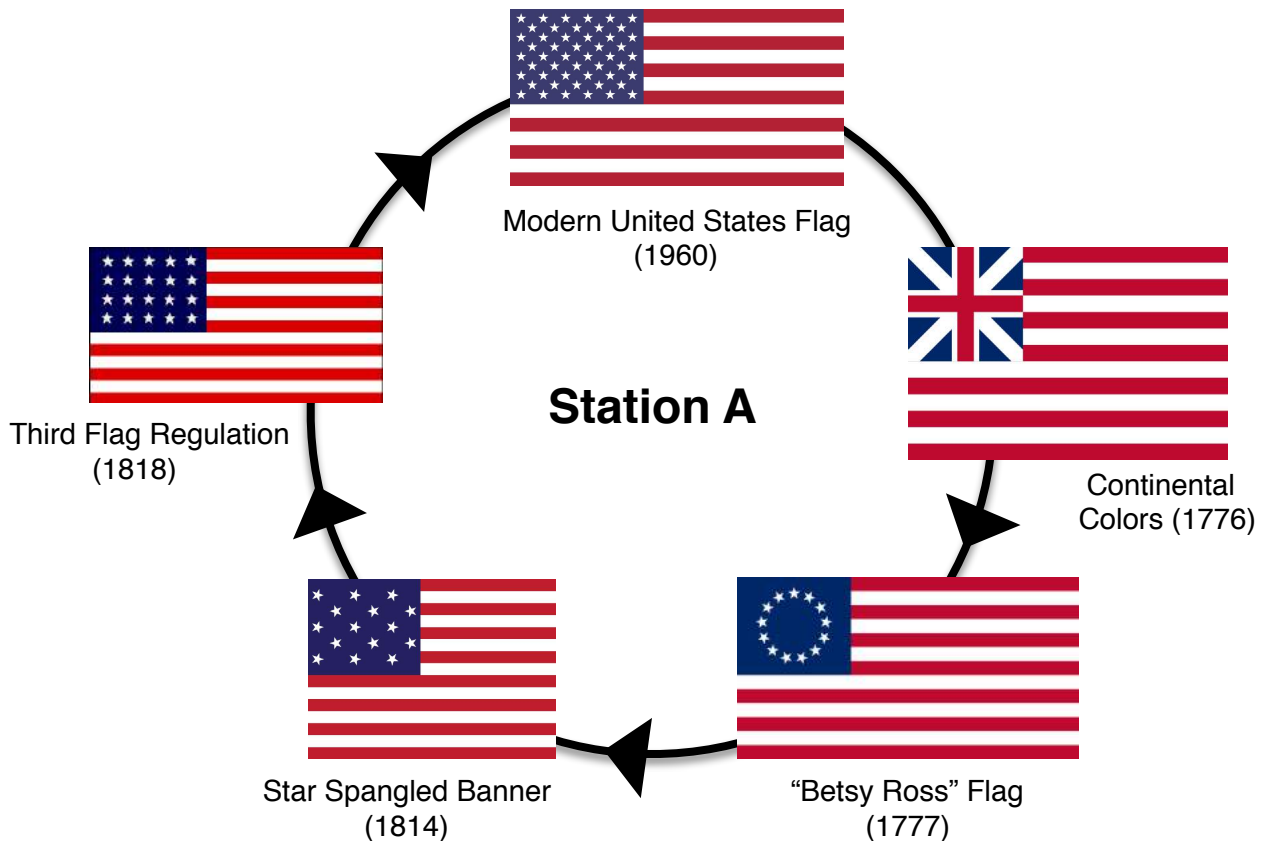
While we don't know if Betsy Ross made the country's first flag, we know that someone did! Can you help out George Washington and create a flag for the new nation?

Remember, we had 13 colonies at that point.



Chronology of the U.S. Flag

In total, the United States has had 27 official National Flags, and 25 of them these flags have featured the stars and stripes. Below are the five major phases of the history of the United States Flag.



The United States Congress (or Continental Congress for 1777) passed three resolutions over the course of about 200 years on the appearance of the American Flag:

- **Flag Act of 1777 (Continental Congress)**- *Resolved*, That the flag of the thirteen United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation.
- **Flag Act of 1794**- *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress Assembled*, That from and after the first day of May, Anno Domini, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-five[1795], the flag of the United States, be fifteen stripes alternate red and white. That the Union be fifteen stars, white in a blue field.
- **Flag Act of 1818**- *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress Assembled*, That from and after the fourth day of July next, the flag of the United States be thirteen horizontal stripes, alternate red and white: that the union be twenty stars, white in a blue field. *And be it further enacted*, That on the admission of every new state into the Union, one star be added to the union of the flag; and that such addition shall take effect of the fourth day of July then next succeeding such admission.

Answer questions about these resolutions on the back of this page!



Chronology of the U.S. Flag 2

With the help of a parents or a friend, paraphrase, or reword, each Congressional Act into your own words. This will help you with the next activity.

1. Flag Act of 1777:

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2. Flag Act of 1794:

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3. Flag Act of 1818:

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Match the Flag with the corresponding Act. Use the stars as guidance.



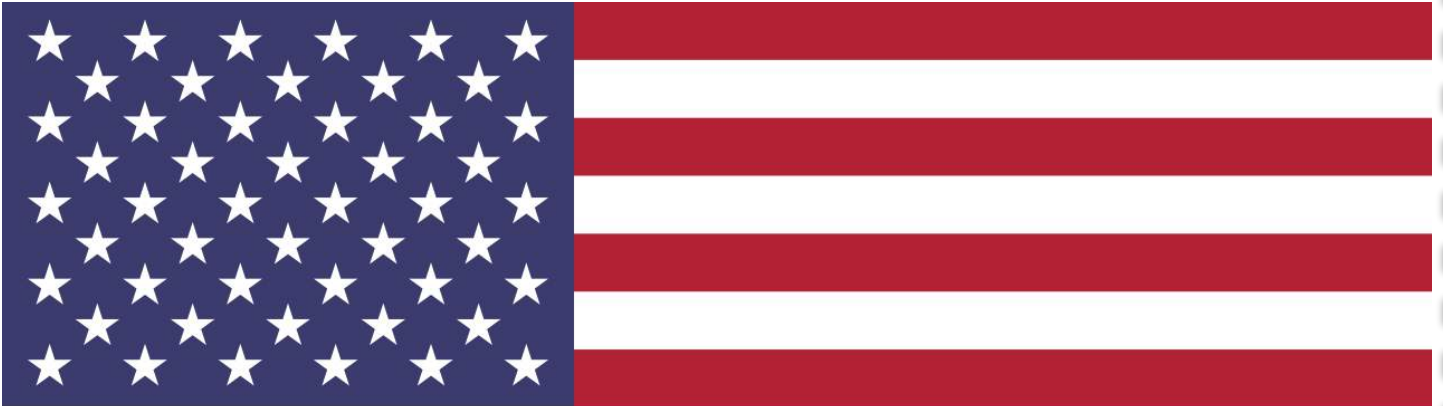
At Station A:

After completing the activities on this page, try to put all the flags on the table in chronological order. The dates are on the back, but don't cheat! Once one of our staff checks your work, you can then mix them all up for the next person!



Symbolism of the U.S. Flag

Station B:



What do the parts and colors of the United States Flag represent?

- The 13 stripes represent the 13 _____.
- The 50 stars represent the 50 _____.

Colors:

- Red- Hardiness and Valor
- White- Purity and Innocence
- Blue- Vigilance, Perseverance, and Justice

Station B:

Using the paper flags on the table, color the flag in your own colors. What do these colors represent? Write the meaning at the bottom, and take it home with you today!

You Should Know:

The flag is often flown at half-staff to show respect for someone who has died. When flown at half-staff, the flag should be raised to the top for an instant and then lowered to the half-staff position. The flag should also be raised to the top before it is lowered at the end of the day.



Flag Etiquette

To honor the Flag, the United States have a series of very important rules and regulations all citizens must follow when handing a flag. Read through some of the rules listed below. Do any of them surprise you? Do you have a flag at home?

1. The flag should be flown only from sunrise to sunset. Upon special occasions, however, it may be displayed at night with a spotlight shown on it.
2. The flag should be displayed on all days when the weather permits, particularly on national and state holidays and on historic and special occasions.
3. The flag should be displayed in or near every polling place on election days.
4. The flag should be displayed during school days in or near every schoolhouse.
5. The flag should always be hoisted briskly and lowered slowly and ceremoniously.
6. When displayed with another flag against a wall from crossed staffs, the flag of the United States should be on the right (its own right) and its staff should be in front of the staff of the other flag.
7. When a number of flags are grouped and displayed from staffs, the flag of the United States should be at the highest point or at the center or the first flag at the right of the center.
8. When flags of two or more nations are displayed, they should fly from separate staffs of the same height and the flags should be approximately equal in size. (International usage forbids the display of the flag of one nation above that of another nation in time of peace.)
9. When displayed over the middle of the street, as between buildings, the flag should be suspended vertically with the union to the north in an east-and-west street or to the east in a north-and-south street.
10. The flag should be displayed at the unveiling of a statue or a monument, but it should not be used as a covering. Blue, white, and red bunting may be used as a drapery.
11. Flags flown from fixed staffs are placed at half-staff to indicate mourning. Only by the order of the president may crepe streamers be affixed to flagstaffs or spearheads in a parade.
12. When used to cover a casket, the flag should be placed so that the union is at the head and over the left shoulder. The flag should not be lowered into the grave or be allowed to touch the ground. The casket should be carried foot first.
13. When displayed from a staff in a church or public auditorium, the flag of the United States of America should hold the position of honor at the speaker's right as he or she faces the congregation or audience. Any other flag so displayed should be placed on the left of the speaker or to the right of the audience.
14. When a flag is no longer fit for display, it should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning. A flag may be washed or dry-cleaned.

Learn how to fold a flag and how to properly dispose of a flag on the next page!



Flag Etiquette 2

How to properly fold an American Flag

1. **Hold the flag with a partner.**

Folding the flag properly requires two sets of hands.

[1]Hold the flag waist-high so that its surface is parallel to the ground.

2. **Fold the flag in half lengthwise.**

Fold the lower half of the stripe section over the field of stars, holding the bottom and top edges securely. Make a gutter when folding, by folding it just below the grommet. This offset is to ensure the thickness of the flag and to ensure that there is no red showing.

3. **Fold the flag again lengthwise with the blue field on the outside.**

Keep the crease tight and make sure the corners are aligned with the first fold's offset.

4. **Make a triangular fold.**

Bring the striped corner of the folded edge to meet the offset edge of the flag. It's important to start with the folded edge, to make sure the folds align correctly in the end.

5. **Turn the outer end point inward.**

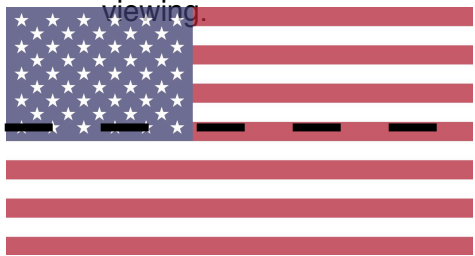
Fold the triangle you've just created, parallel to the open edge, to form a second triangle.

6. **Continue the triangular folding for the entire flag.**

The entire sequence of folds should involve 13 folds, which represent the thirteen original colonies.

7. **Ensure the flag is folded properly.**

When the flag is completely folded, only a triangular blue field of stars should be visible. Tuck the end into the fold to secure the flag in place. Make a 45 degree fold and then tuck the fabrics in. The finished flag must have no red showing, has four stars pointing upward, and square corners so that it can be easily inserted by the relatives of the deceased into a case for viewing.



Don't let the flag touch the ground!!!

How to properly dispose of an American Flag:

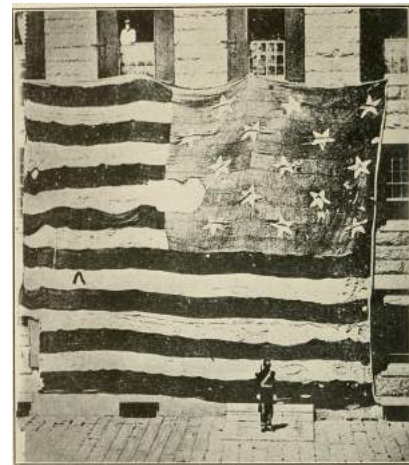
Strict regulations are set for the disposal for used American Flags, but this does not mean it is difficult! Here are some, but not all, options below:

- Flag Burial- Use a nice quality wooden box, and fold the flag like above. This should be done with respect and recommended a short speech for the flag at burial.
- Flag Shredding- Use sharp scissors to slowly separate the thirteen stripes, leaving the blue star-spangled field intact. Burial like above or burning the fabric individually.
- Give your flag to a disposal location- This is the most popular and simplest option. Specific United States government organizations offer services to conduct the ceremony to properly dispose of flags for no charge, upon request. These organizations include your local VFW or American Legion.



Famous U.S. Flags in History

Can you put these famous flags in chronological order?



Bonus!

List the events above, starting at the top left and going clockwise.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

