

# DISCOVER AMERICA

## Course 23 - Teacher Guide



**Stars, Stripes, and Stories:  
Unveiling the History  
of the American Flag**

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First Grade

# Teacher Guide



## Key Themes

- American Identity and Unity
- American Symbols

## Core Values

- Community
- Liberty

# Learning Objectives

## Students will be able to:

- Identify the American flag.
- Describe the events that paved the way for the creation of the American flag.
- List two facts about the American flag.
- Explain the historical significance of the American flag, including its role as a symbol of unity, freedom, and national identity.



# The First American Flag - First Grade

## Key Terms

- 01 **Flag Day:** June 14, the anniversary of the adoption of the Stars and Stripes as the official U.S. flag in 1777.
- 02 **honor:** to show respect and admiration for someone or something.
- 03 **Revolutionary War:** the war in which the American colonies won their independence from Great Britain.
- 04 **salute:** to show respect to someone or something.
- 05 **unite:** to come together as one.

# The First American Flag - First Grade

# Introduction

## TELL Students

Today, we are going to learn about a very special flag. Do you know what flag I am talking about? That is right, it is the American flag! Before we dive into our lesson, let's start by reading a wonderful book called *Red, White and Blue, Our Flag Matters to Me and You!* This book will teach us about the colors of the American flag and why they are important. Are you ready to learn? [Read the book or a similar book about the American Flag. As you read to the class, pause at key points to engage the students in discussion. Here are some prompts you can use: Page 1-2 (Red): What color is the first color mentioned in the book? That is right, it is red! Why do you think the author chose red to talk about first? What are some things that are red in our world? Page 3-4 (White): Now, we are talking about the color white. What does the author say white represents on the American flag? Can you think of other things that are white? Why do you think white is an important color for our flag? Page 5-6 (Blue): Finally, we are learning about the color blue. According to the book, what does blue represent on the American flag? What are some things that are blue in our world?]

## ASK Students

What do the colors of the American flag represent? When we see an American flag, what action do we take?

## TELL Students

That is correct! Today, we are going to learn about the American flag. Have you ever thought about why we salute the American flag every day during the Pledge of Allegiance? To **salute** means to show respect to someone or something. Please stand and salute the American flag with me. [Stand and salute the flag.] When we salute the American flag, it means we are showing respect for our country and all the people who live here. We do this by standing up straight, putting our right hand over our heart, and

# The First American Flag - First Grade

# Introduction

saying the Pledge of Allegiance. This is a way of saying how much we love our country!

## ASK Students

Why do we salute the American flag?

## TELL Students

Yes, that is correct! When we salute the American flag, we are showing that we love, respect, and honor our country. To **honor** means showing respect, and admiration for someone or something. When we honor someone, we treat them with kindness, fairness, and appreciation. We can honor our parents, teachers, and even our country by being kind, following rules, and showing gratitude. Let's watch another episode of Star Spangled Adventures to learn more about the American flag.

## WATCH

Star Spangled Adventures Cartoon Ep. 23: The American Flag





# The First American Flag - First Grade

## Lesson

### ASK Students

How do we honor the American flag?

### TELL Students

Yes, one way to honor the American flag is to stand when we say the Pledge of Allegiance. The flag has fifty stars, one for each state, and thirteen stripes for the first colonies. It is a living reminder of America's history and freedom. We learned in the Star Spangled Adventures episode that the American flag has not always looked the way it does today. It has changed twenty-six times over many years.

### ASK Students

Has the American flag always had fifty stars and thirteen stripes?

### TELL Students

That is correct! The American flag has changed over time. Let's learn about the very first American flag! In 1775, there was a lot of excitement in the thirteen colonies. The colonists decided to stand up to Great Britain and fighting started in April during the Battles of Lexington and Concord. This was very important because these battles marked the beginning of the Revolutionary War! The **Revolutionary War** is the war in which the American colonies won their independence from Great Britain.



*Revolutionary War*



*American Flag*



# The First American Flag - First Grade

## Lesson

### ASK Students

What battles marked the beginning of the Revolutionary War?

### TELL Students

By May of 1775, a special group of leaders called the Second Continental Congress began to meet in Philadelphia. These leaders were trying to figure out how to win a war against Great Britain. They knew they needed something to unite them. To **unite** means to come together as one, like when all the pieces of a puzzle fit perfectly together. When people unite, they work together and help each other, just like when friends work together to build a sandcastle at the beach.

### ASK Students

What does it mean when people unite?

### TELL Students

Uniting is like saying, "Let's work as a team!" When you play on a school or sports team, you may have a team flag or jersey to show you are all on the same team. Flags were very important during battles too! In all the noise and confusion, troops needed something to show them where to go.

### ASK Students

Why were flags important during battle?

### TELL Students

On December 3, 1775, something exciting happened that changed things for the American colonies. A brave man named Continental Navy Lieutenant John Paul Jones did something really important. He was on a ship called the Alfred, which was in the Delaware River. Lieutenant Jones decided it was time for a new flag, one that was different from Great Britain's flag.



*Lieutenant John Paul*

### ASK Students

What was the name of the ship that Continental Navy Lieutenant John Paul Jones was on?

# The First American Flag - First Grade

## Lesson

### TELL Students

The new flag, sometimes called the Grand Union Flag, was special. It looked a little like the British flag, but it also had something new. In one corner, there was a small picture of the British flag. The rest of the flag had red and white stripes, just like the American flag we know today. People in the colonies liked the new flag. It was used in all thirteen colonies, replacing the different flags they had before.

### ASK Students

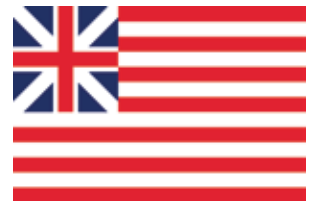
Where do you think this new flag came from? Who do you think made it?

### TELL Students

Some historians think a lady named Margaret Manny, who was a hat maker in Philadelphia, might have designed the flag. There are old records showing that she got materials to make flags before December 1775. Even though we do not know much about her, people think she might have had good reasons for making the flag the way she did.

### ASK Students

What do we know about Margaret Manny?



*Grand Union Flag*

### TELL Students

After Lieutenant Jones ordered the Grand Union Flag to be flown, other soldiers started using it too. General George Washington raised the flag on January 2, 1776, to show that all the colonies were working together against Great Britain. The Continental Congress also used the Grand Union Flag. When they declared independence on July 4, 1776, they did it under the Grand Union Flag. Even though the Grand Union Flag was popular, Congress wanted a new flag that did not look like Great Britain's flag. So, on June 14, 1777, they passed a law called the Flag Act. This law said the flag should have thirteen stripes, red and white, and thirteen white stars on a blue background. This day, June 14, is now Flag Day, when we celebrate our flag! **Flag day** is June 14, the anniversary of the adoption of the Stars and Stripes as the official U.S. flag in 1777.



*George Washington*

# The First American Flag - First Grade

# Lesson

## ASK Students

When is Flag Day?

## TELL Students

The American flag is more than just a piece of cloth waving in the wind. It is a powerful symbol of unity, pride, and the values that make our nation special. When we salute the flag, we are honoring the history of our country, remembering those who fought to protect it, and celebrating the freedoms we enjoy every day. So, the next time you see the American flag, take a moment to think about where it came from and what it means to you as a citizen of the United States.

## WATCH

Learn More with Liberty: Symbolism of the American Flag



# The First American Flag - First Grade

# Flag Design Challenge

**Objective:** To explore the history and symbolism of the first American flag through a creative design activity.

## **Materials Needed:**

1. Blank paper or cardstock
2. Crayons, markers, colored pencils
3. Scissors
4. Glue
5. Optional: Stars stickers or star-shaped cutouts, red and white construction paper

**Introduction:** Begin by reviewing the history of the first American flag, also known as the Grand Union Flag or the Continental Colors. Explain its significance as a symbol of unity for the thirteen colonies.

**Brainstorming:** Lead a discussion about the symbolism of flags and the colors commonly used in flag designs. Ask students what symbols or colors they think represent America and its values.

## **Design Challenge:**

- Divide students into small groups.
- Provide each group with materials such as blank paper, crayons, markers, and optional construction paper.
- Challenge the groups to design their own version of the first American flag, incorporating symbols and colors that represent America and its history. Encourage creativity and imagination!
- For added fun, provide star stickers or star-shaped cutouts for students to add to their flags.

**Presentation:**

- After the design time is up, have each group present their flag to the class.
- As each group presents, ask them to explain the symbolism behind their flag design and why they chose certain colors or symbols.
- Encourage the class to ask questions and offer feedback on each flag design.

**Gallery Walk:**

- Hang up the completed flag designs around the classroom or in a common area.
- Invite students to take a "gallery walk" to view and admire each other's creations.

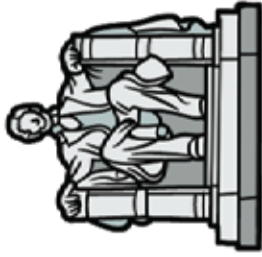
**Reflection:**

- Lead a class discussion reflecting on the activity. Ask students what they learned about the first American flag and how their understanding of its history and symbolism has deepened through the design challenge.

# Matching Activity

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Look at each picture. Cut and paste the correct word.



flag

pledge

Statue of  
Liberty

Lincoln  
Memorial

community

good  
citizen

salute

National  
Anthem

# The First American Flag - First Grade **Resource List**

<https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-01-02-0004>

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-grand-union-flag-free-at-last-and-lighting-up-broadway-110762522/>

[https://www.pdcnet.org/85257D7A006284F7/file/5BF4BBEA7EDEFD82C1257DC60053AE3E/\\$FILE/raven\\_2014\\_0021\\_0000\\_0027\\_0078.pdf](https://www.pdcnet.org/85257D7A006284F7/file/5BF4BBEA7EDEFD82C1257DC60053AE3E/$FILE/raven_2014_0021_0000_0027_0078.pdf)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-15634606>

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/betsy-ross-likely-didnt-sew-the-first-us-flag;>

<https://www.history.com/news/did-betsy-ross-really-make-the-first-american-flag>



