

DISCOVER AMERICA

Course 23 - Teacher Guide



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

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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.
- Analyze the importance of the colors and symbols on the American flag, explaining what each represents and why they are significant, as well as evaluate the historical evidence surrounding Betsy Ross's involvement in making the flag.



The First American Flag - Second 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.
- 06 **variation:** a difference or change in something compared to another version of it.

The First American Flag - Second 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

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

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Introduction

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



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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

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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?

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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

Different people made flags in different ways after the Flag Act was passed. They had their own ideas about how the flag should look, so they created variations of it. A **variation** is a difference or change in something compared to another version of it. Even though the flags looked a little different, they all had something in common: the stripes and the blue field stayed in the same places. The stars, however, were arranged differently on each flag. Sometimes they were in rows, sometimes in a circle, and sometimes they made a bigger star.

ASK Students

What types of variations did people make to the flag?

TELL Students

One famous version of the flag is called the "Betsy Ross flag." Legend says that Betsy Ross, who was good at sewing, was asked by the Founding Fathers to make the new American flag. She came up with the idea of arranging the thirteen stars in a circle. But many historians think this story might not be true. They have not found any proof that Betsy Ross made the first flag. Even though the Betsy Ross flag might not have been made by her, it is still one of the most famous versions of the American flag we know today.



Betsy Ross flag

The First American Flag - First Grade

Lesson

ASK Students

What is Betsy Ross known for?

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: Betsy Ross



The First American Flag - Second Grade

Flag Making Craft

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

Materials Needed:

1. Construction paper (red, white, and blue)
2. Scissors
3. Glue or tape
4. Star stickers or star-shaped cutouts
5. Pencils and markers
6. Optional: Printouts of American flag coloring pages

Introduction:

- Gather students and introduce the activity by explaining that they will be making their own American flags today.
- Show them examples of American flags or display pictures of the flag to refresh their memory.
- Briefly review the colors and symbols of the American flag: red and white stripes, blue field with white stars.

Crafting the Flag:

- Distribute the materials to each student or group of students
- Instruct students to use the blue construction paper as the background for their flag.
- Guide them to cut out strips of red construction paper to create the stripes. They can alternate red and white strips to mimic the design of the flag.
- Next, provide star stickers or star-shaped cutouts for the students to place on the blue field.
- Encourage them to arrange the stars in rows, just like on the American flag.
- For added creativity, allow the students to use markers or pencils to draw additional details

on their flags, such as patriotic symbols or their own designs.

Discussion:

- Once students have completed their flags, gather them together for a group discussion.
- Ask students to share what they learned about the American flag while making their crafts.
- Prompt them to explain the significance of the colors and symbols on the flag.
- Encourage students to share their favorite part of the activity and what they enjoyed most about making their flags.





















Conclusion:

- Conclude the activity by praising students for their creativity and participation.
- Remind them of the importance of the American flag as a symbol of unity and freedom.
- Encourage students to proudly display their flags at home or in the classroom.

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Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down: American Flag Edition

Instructions: After learning about the American flag and its history, let's play a fun game to test our knowledge! Listen carefully to each statement I make. If you think the statement is true, give a thumbs up. If you think the statement is false, give a thumbs down. Are you ready? Let's begin!

1. Statement: The American flag has only changed its design once since it was first created.  
2. Statement: The colors of the American flag are red, white, and green.  
3. Statement: The American flag has fifty stars and thirteen stripes.  
4. Statement: Betsy Ross was asked by the Founding Fathers to design the first American flag.  
5. Statement: The first American flag was called the Grand Union Flag or the Continental Colors.  
6. Statement: The American flag represents unity, pride, and the values of the United States.  
7. Statement: The American flag was created during the Revolutionary War.  
8. Statement: Flag Day is celebrated on July 4th.  
9. Statement: The Betsy Ross flag has thirteen stars arranged in a circle.  
10. Statement: The American flag has changed its design twenty-six times since its creation.  

Discussion: After each statement, discuss why it is true or false and review the correct information.

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Answer Key

1. Thumbs Down (False)
2. Thumbs Down (False)
3. Thumbs Up (True)
4. Thumbs Up (True)
5. Thumbs Up (True)
6. Thumbs Up (True)
7. Thumbs Up (True)
8. Thumbs Down (False)
9. Thumbs Up (True)
10. Thumbs Up (True)

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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>

