

Pledge of Allegiance

“I pledge allegiance”

“to the flag”

“of the United States of America”

“and to the Republic”

“for which it stands,”

“one Nation”

“under God,”

“indivisible,”

“with liberty and justice”

“for all.”

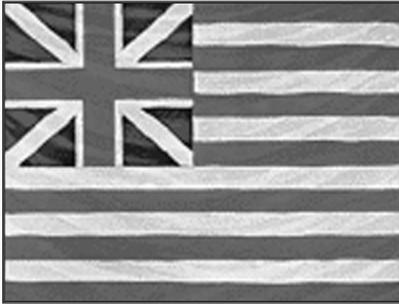
Flag Questions and Answers

Question	What did you learn from the flag expert?
1. What is the significance of displaying the flag at half-staff?	
2. How are unserviceable flags destroyed?	
3. Are there penalties for vandalizing the flag?	
4. What is appropriate behavior when the flag is hoisted, lowered, or passed?	
5. What is the proper method for folding the flag?	

For reflection: *The flag of the United States is a symbol of the nation. The flag represents the many freedoms, rights, and responsibilities that we share as Americans. As the symbol of our country, the flag should be treated with care and respect. What can you do to treat the flag with respect?*

Flag Timeline

Grand Union Flag 1775



The first flag of the colonists to look like the present Stars and Stripes was the Grand Union flag. Its design consisted of 13 stripes, alternately red and white, representing the Thirteen Colonies, with a blue field in the upper left-hand corner bearing the red cross of St. George of England with the white cross of St. Andrew of Scotland.

As the flag of the revolution, it was used on many occasions. It was first flown by the ships of the Colonial Fleet on the Delaware River. On December 3, 1775, it was raised aboard the ship *Alfred* by John Paul Jones, then a Navy lieutenant. Later the flag was raised on the liberty pole at Prospect Hill, which was near George Washington's headquarters in Cambridge, Massachusetts. It was the unofficial national flag on July 4, 1776, Independence Day; and it remained the unofficial national flag and ensign of the Navy until June 14, 1777, when the Continental Congress authorized the Stars and Stripes. It was only by degrees that the Union flag of Great Britain was discarded. The final break between the Colonies and Great Britain brought about the removal of the British Union from the canton of our striped flag and the substitution of stars on a blue field.

Don't Tread On Me 1775



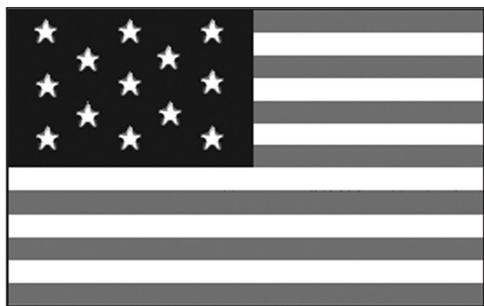
Flags with a rattlesnake theme were popular with colonists. The slogan "Don't Tread on Me" almost always appeared on rattlesnake flags. The flag seen here, the Gadsden flag from 1775, had a yellow field with a rattlesnake in the center, ready to strike. Below the snake was the motto, "Don't Tread on Me."

In December of 1775, an anonymous Philadelphia correspondent wrote about the symbolic use of the snake. He began the letter by saying:

I recollected that her eye excelled in brightness that of any other animal, and that she has no eye-lids. She may, therefore, be esteemed an emblem of vigilance. She never begins an attack, nor, when once engaged, ever surrenders. She is, therefore, an emblem of magnanimity and true courage.

It was probably the deadly bite of the rattler, however, that was foremost in the minds of flag designers, and the threatening slogan "Don't Tread on Me" added further to the design.

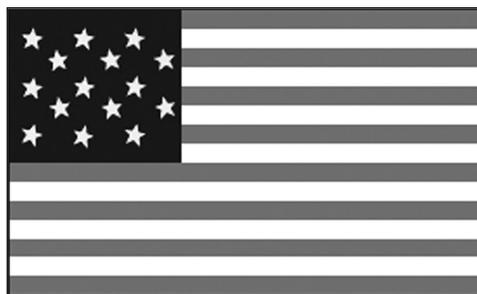
Stars and Stripes 1777



On June 14, 1777, the Continental Congress passed a resolution to establish an official flag for the new nation. The resolution read: “Resolved, that the flag of the United States be made of thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation.”

The 1777 resolution gave no instruction as to how many points the stars should have, nor how the stars should be arranged on the blue union. So, some flags had stars scattered on the blue field without any specific design, some had them arranged in rows, and some had them in a circle. The first Stars and Stripes had the stars arranged in staggered formation in alternate rows of threes and twos on a blue field. Much evidence exists pointing to Congressman Francis Hopkinson as the person responsible for its design. The only President to serve under this flag was George Washington. This flag was to last for a period of 18 years.

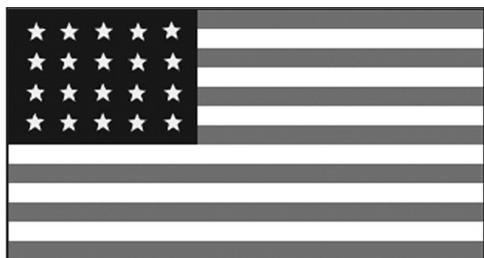
Fifteen Stars and Stripes 1795



On May 1, 1795, after Kentucky and Vermont were admitted to the Union, a resolution was adopted by the U.S. Congress expanding the flag to 15 stars and 15 stripes. This flag was the official flag of our country from 1795 to 1818. It inspired Francis Scott Key to write “The Star-Spangled Banner” during the bombardment of Fort McHenry in 1814. It was the first flag to be flown over a fortress outside the United States when American Marine and Naval forces raised it above the pirate stronghold in Tripoli in what is now Lebanon, on April 27, 1805. It was the ensign of American forces in the Battle of Lake Erie in September of 1813 and it was flown by General Jackson in New Orleans in January of 1815.

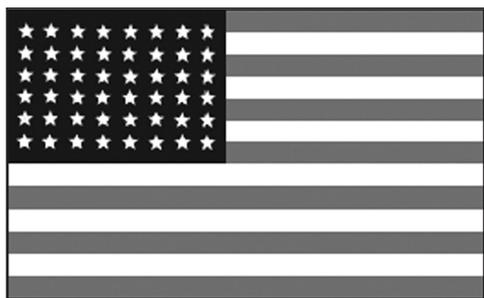
The National Museum of American History has undertaken a major conservation project of the enormous 1814 garrison flag that survived the 25-hour shelling of Ft. McHenry in Baltimore by British troops.

Thirteen Stripes 1818



Realizing that the flag would become too bulky with a stripe for each new state, Capt. Samuel C. Reid, USN (U.S. Navy), suggested to Congress that the stripes remain 13 in number to represent the Thirteen Colonies, and that a star be added to the blue field for each new state coming into the Union. So, in April 1818, President James Monroe accepted a bill requiring that the flag of the United States have a union of 20 stars, one for each state. The stars would be white on a blue field, and upon admission of each new state into the Union one star would be added to the union of the flag on the Fourth of July following its date of admission. The 13 alternating red and white stripes would remain unchanged. This act succeeded in prescribing the basic design of the flag, while assuring that the growth of the nation would be properly symbolized.

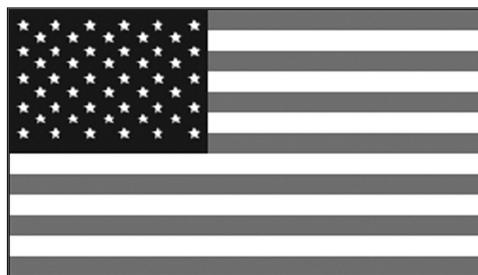
Forty-Eight Stars 1912



As new states were added to the union, the president of the day gave orders on how they were to be arranged. Congress did not say how the stars should be arranged, so

there were variations of the flag until President Taft fixed the position of the stars in 1912. In that year, the growth of the country resulted in a flag with 48 stars upon the admission of Arizona and New Mexico. This flag flew from 1912 to 1959, and was carried into battle by American troops in World War I, World War II, and the Korean Conflict.

Fifty Stars 1960



Alaska added a 49th star in 1959, and Hawaii a 50th star in 1960. With the 50-star flag came a new design and arrangement of the stars in the union, a requirement met by President Eisenhower in Executive Order No. 10834, issued August 21, 1959. A national banner with 50 stars became the official flag of the United States. The flag was raised for the first time at 12:01 a.m. on July 4, 1960, at the Fort McHenry National Monument in Baltimore, Maryland. This was the flag that American troops carried in Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, and continue to carry today.

The flag consists of 13 horizontal stripes, 7 red alternating with 6 white. The stripes represent the original 13 colonies; the stars represent the 50 states of the Union.

For reflection: *You have now created a timeline showing some of the flags that have flown over the United States. From creating this timeline, what have you learned about the development of the American flag and what it means?*

Birth of the 50-Star Flag*

*All the spunky high school kid wanted was a better grade in history.
But before it was over, the nation got a new flag.*

BY JUNE HUFFMAN

The scene, perhaps, has been repeated in American classrooms thousands, if not millions of times, in our history. The student-teacher confrontation over grades. On this occasion, however, time proved that both were right and the United States, as a result, would get a new flag.

Robert Heft, designer of our 50-star American flag, is a robust, enthusiastic American who travels 100,000 miles a year promoting Old Glory's history and Americanism to groups ranging from members of The American Legion to elementary school children.

But the flag, which was designed in 1958 on his grandparent's living room floor in Lancaster, Ohio, would have been an unheralded event if not for Heft's determination and foresight as an 18-year-old high school student.

Actually, the 50-star design was an American History project which earned a B-minus because it "lacked originality." When Heft complained, his teacher, Stanley Pratt, challenged him to have Congress accept his design, then the grade would be changed.

At that time Alaska was seeking admission to the Union. But Heft designed a 50-star flag because he assumed if Alaska gained admission, Hawaii would soon follow.

With this in mind, Heft designed his own flag. He snipped and stitched and spent \$2.87 for a piece of white iron-on material from which he cut 50 stars. He devoted his entire weekend to the project, developing blisters from the scissors. Devastated by

his B-minus grade, Heft vowed to have it changed—somehow!

"I shipped the flag to the governor of Ohio explaining that this is what the flag should look like when we have 50 states," Heft said. "It was returned, so I sent it to my congressman, Walter Moeller, informing him to keep it handy, just in case there was a need.

"Every time I saw something in the paper about new statehood I forwarded the article to him as a reminder that I had a flag ready."

Alaska was admitted into the Union on Jan. 3, 1959, and Hawaii on Aug 21, 1959. Statehood can be granted anytime, but a star can only be added on July 4th, thus the 49-star flag was only good for one year, and the 50-star flag was needed—just as Heft had anticipated.

Moeller didn't forget the pesky kid from home, and entered the flag for consideration. Heft's teacher had been right, the flag was not exactly original. Of the 109,000 submissions 90,000 were exactly like Heft's; however, they were just paper sketches.

Two weeks following his high school graduation, Bob Heft was tipped off by Moeller that President Eisenhower would be calling.

The White House tried phoning him at home, but his grandmother thought it was a prankster. Finally, when the President reached Heft at his new job he was asked if he recalled sending a 50-star flag. "Vaguely," the designer replied naively.

"Moreover, when the President said my design was chosen and invited me to attend

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the dedicatory ceremony, I put him on hold,” Heft recalled. He requested time off, then said, “Dwight, are you there?” From the Oval Office Eisenhower chuckled at the 18-year-old’s informality.

Heft packed a borrowed suitcase, drove his red Plymouth Valiant to Washington, parked it among the limousines, and spent four days at the White House before accompanying Eisenhower to the ceremony.

Dignitaries milled around, military bands performed, and 100,000 spectators filed into the bleachers.

“Golly, this is okay,” Heft remembered thinking. To generate conversation he whispered to the Chief Executive, “How do you like your job?” Ike flashed his famous grandfatherly grin and answered, “It is a challenge.”

“At 12:01 EST they raised my flag over the Capitol. It was thrilling, but I fidgeted and squirmed, secretly wanting to go home to have my grade changed,” Heft reminisced recently.

Bob Heft is now mayor of Napoleon, Ohio, and lectures extensively as a flag historian. He concludes his sessions with a stirring Pledge of Allegiance to his original flag.

As for the prototype flag Heft made in his grandparent’s living room, it has logged more than 2½ million miles, has flown over all the state capitols, the White House during four administrations, the Betsy Ross House in Philadelphia, Fort McHenry where Francis Scott Key wrote the Star-Spangled Banner, the Arizona Memorial in Hawaii, and over 88 American embassies. Shot at while flying over the American Embassy in Vietnam, the flag was returned with one red stripe neatly patched.

Oh yes, as NBC and CBS filmed the event for the news, Heft finally received an “A” from his teacher.

June Huffman, a freelance writer from Grand Rapids, Ohio, has been a member of American Legion Auxiliary Unit 232 for more than 39 years.

Information Chart

Use this chart to investigate the “Birth of the 50-Star Flag” article. There may be more than one answer to each question.

<p>Who? Who is the article about?</p>	
<p>What? What happened—what events are described in the article?</p>	
<p>When? When did the events described in the article happen?</p>	
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