

QuickStudy



HISTORY

# Flag Day



## BACKGROUND

- Flag Day, an annual national celebration first established in 1916 by President Woodrow Wilson, is celebrated on June 14.
- Though the origin of Flag Day dates back to the late 19th century, its inspiration goes further back to 1777.
- On June 14 of that year, in Philadelphia, the Continental Congress passed a resolution specifying that the American flag carry 13 stripes and 13 stars. The colors would represent hardiness and valor (red), purity and innocence (white), and vigilance, perseverance, and justice (blue).
- Flag Day was observed for the first time in 1877, the 100th anniversary of the adoption of the United States' red-white-and-blue banner; students first said the Pledge of Allegiance in 1892, the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus's arrival in the Americas.
- The concept of a specific day to annually recognize the American flag came a few years later—in 1885, a Wisconsin schoolteacher, B.J. Cigrand, arranged for the students in his school district to observe the resolution on June 14 as "Flag Birthday."
- In 1889, George Balch, a kindergarten teacher in New York City, planned similar festivities for his school's students.
- Following the suggestion of Colonel J. Granville Leach (at the time, historian of the Pennsylvania Society of the Sons of the Revolution), the Pennsylvania Society of Colonial Dames of America on April 25, 1893 adopted a resolution requesting the mayor of Philadelphia and all others in authority and all private citizens to display the flag on June 14.
- Leach went on to recommend that, thereafter, the day be known as "Flag Day," and on that day, school children be assembled for appropriate exercises, with each child being given a small flag.
- In 1893, Philadelphia became the first city to celebrate Flag Day, and the following year, New York was the first state to observe June 14.
- After decades of expanding community observances, Wilson established Flag Day on May 30, 1916.
- Still, many communities did not celebrate Flag Day until 1949, when President Harry Truman signed into an Act of Congress that National Flag Day be observed every June 14.
- In 1983, the world's largest flag was displayed in Washington, D.C. The flag, which measured 411 feet by 210 feet, weighed seven tons. Each star measured 13 feet across.

## FLAG HISTORY

- The flag of the United States today has 13 stripes (seven red and six white) and 50 white stars on a blue field (five rows of six and four rows of five).
- The stripes represent the 13 original colonies.
- The stars represent the states that are bound together into one country.
- The flag of today grew out of many earlier flags raised in days gone by over American soil.
- From the time America was discovered, different flags flew over different parts of the country: Spain, France, Holland, Sweden, and England.
- An English flag, known as the Red Ensign, waved over the 13 colonies from 1707 to the Revolution. The Red Ensign was the merchant flag of England. It was red with a union in the upper corner combining the cross of St. George with the diagonal cross of St. Andrew. **(1)**
- The flag that became known as the Grand Union flag was raised over George Washington's headquarters outside Boston on Jan. 1, 1776.
- The Revolutionary War had started the year before and the colonies needed a flag of their own.
- The Grand Union flag retained the union of the English flag; six white stripes broke the red field into seven red stripes—a total of 13 stripes. **(2)**
- The first official flag of the new nation was created by a resolution of the Continental Congress meeting in Philadelphia. The resolution was passed in 1777 on June 14—the date we celebrate each year as Flag Day.
- The resolution specified "that the flag be 13 stripes alternate red and white; that the union be 13 stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation."
- Since the resolution did not state how the stars were to be arranged, flag makers arranged them in different ways. The one adopted was made by Betsy Ross and had the stars in a full circle. **(3)**
- The flag that waved over Fort McHenry in Maryland when it was bombarded Sept. 13-14, 1814, was a 15-star and 15-stripe flag, due to two stripes and stars being added to the original 13 on May 1, 1795; this flag became famous as the Star Spangled Banner and inspired Francis Scott Key to write America's national anthem. **(4)**
- The Flag of 1818 had the stripes reduced to 13. Five more stars had been added, for a total of 20.
- When still more states joined the United States, it became evident that the flag would get to be an awkward shape if more and still more stripes were added. Therefore, on April 4, 1818, Congress passed a law that restored the design back to the original 13 stripes. It also provided that a star be added to the blue field for each new state.

1



2



3



4



## PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Those pledging allegiance to the American flag promise loyalty and devotion to the nation. Each word has a deep meaning.

*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*

*I promise to be true  
to the sign of our country  
a country made up of 50 states, each with certain rights  
a country where the people elect others to make laws for them  
the flag means the country  
a single country whose people believe in a supreme being  
the country cannot be split into parts  
with freedom and fairness  
for each person in the country—you and me*

# OFFICIAL FLAG ETIQUETTE

- The United States Flag Code adopted by Congress provides the rules for honoring and displaying the flag. The code itself states: "The flag represents a living country and is itself considered a living thing." For this reason, it should be given the fullest respect.
- The flag of the United States of America should be flown every day when weather permits. If made of weather-resistant material, it can be flown around the clock in any weather if properly illuminated.
- The flag should be displayed on or near administrative buildings of public institutions and in or near polling places and schoolhouses.
- The flag, when carried in a procession with another flag or flags, should be either on the marching right—that is, the flag's own right—or, if there is a line of other flags, in front of the center of that line.
- The flag should not be displayed on a float in a parade except from a staff.
- The flag should not be draped over the hood, top, sides, or back of a vehicle or of a railroad train or a boat. When the flag is displayed on a motorcar, the staff shall be fixed firmly to the chassis or clamped to the right fender.
- No other flag or pennant should be placed above or, if on the same level, to the right of the flag of the United States, except during church services conducted by naval chaplains at sea, when the church pennant may be flown above the flag during church services for the personnel of the Navy.
- No person should display the flag of the United Nations or any other national or international flag equal, above, or in a position of superior prominence or honor to, or in place of, the flag of the United States at any area within the U.S., or any territory or possession thereof.
- The flag of the United States, when it is displayed with another flag against a wall from crossed staffs, should be on the right—the flag's own right—and its staff should be in front of the staff of the other flag.
- The flag of the United States should be at the center and at the highest point of the group when a number of flags of states, localities, or pennants of societies are grouped and displayed from the staffs.
- When flags of states, cities or localities, or pennants of societies, are flown on the same halyard with the flag of the United States, the latter should always be at the peak. When the flags are flown from adjacent staffs, the flag of the United States should be hoisted first and lowered last. No such flag or pennant may be placed above the flag of the United States or to its right.
- When flags of two or more nations are displayed, they are to be flown from separate staffs of the same height. The flags should be approximately equal size. International usage forbids the display of the flag of one nation above that of another nation in time of peace.
- When the flag is displayed from a staff projecting horizontally or at an angle from the windowsill, balcony, or front of a building, the union of the flag should be placed at the peak of the staff unless the flag is at half-staff. When the flag is suspended over a sidewalk, it should be hoisted out, union first, from the building.
- When displayed either horizontally or vertically against a wall, the union should be uppermost and to the flag's own right—that is, to the observer's left. When displayed in a window, the flag should be displayed in the same way, with the union or blue field to the left of the observer in the street.
- When the flag is displayed over the middle of the street, it 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.
- When used on a speaker's platform, the flag, if displayed flat, should be displayed above and behind the speaker. When displayed from a staff in a church or public auditorium, the flag should hold the position of superior prominence, in advance of the audience, and in the position of honor at the clergyman's or speaker's right as he faces the audience. Any other flag so displayed should be placed at the left of the clergyman or speaker or to the right of the audience.
- The flag should form a distinctive feature of the ceremony of unveiling a statue or monument, but never as a covering for a statue or monument.
- When the flag is used to cover a casket, it should be so placed that the union is at the head and over the left shoulder. The flag should not be lowered into the grave or allowed to touch the ground.
- When the flag is suspended across a corridor or lobby in a building with only one main entrance, it should be suspended vertically with the union of the flag to the observer's left upon entering. If the building has more than one main entrance, the flag should be suspended vertically near the center of the corridor or lobby with the union to the north, when entrances are to the east and west, or to the east when entrances are to the north and south. If there are entrances in more than two directions, the union should be to the east.

## The flag should especially be flown on the following days:

- New Year's Day, Jan. 1
- Inauguration Day, Jan. 20
- Lincoln's Birthday, Feb. 12
- Washington's Birthday, Feb. 22
- President's Day, third Monday in February
- Easter Sunday (variable)
- Mother's Day, second Sunday in May
- Armed Forces Day, third Sunday in May
- Memorial Day, May 30
- Observed Memorial Day, last Monday in May
- Flag Day, June 14
- Father's Day, third Sunday in June
- Independence Day, July 4
- Labor Day, first Monday in September
- Constitution Day, Sept. 17
- Columbus Day, Oct. 12
- Discoverer's Day, second Monday in October
- Navy Day, Oct. 27
- Marine Corps Birthday, Nov. 10
- Veterans' Day, Nov. 11
- Thanksgiving Day, fourth Thursday in November
- Christmas Day, Dec. 25

# OFFICIAL RULES FOR RAISING/LOWERING FLAG



- Joy is indicated by flying the flag at full staff. You hoist it briskly in the morning, but not earlier than sunrise. You lower it slowly in the evening, but not later than sunset.
- Mourning is indicated by flying the flag at half-staff. You hoist it to the peak first, hold it there for an instant, and then lower it to half-staff—one-half the distance between the top and the bottom of the staff. When ready to take it down, you first raise it to the peak and then lower slowly.
- On Memorial Day, the flag should be displayed at half-staff until noon only, and then raised to the top of the staff for the remainder of the day.
- By order of the President of the United States, the flag shall be flown at half-staff upon the death of principal figures of the United States government and the governor of a state, territory, or possession, as a mark of respect for his/her memory.
- In the event of the death of other officials or foreign dignitaries, the flag is to be displayed at half-staff according to Presidential instructions or orders, or in accordance with recognized customs or practices not inconsistent with law.
- In the event of the death of a present or former official of the government of any state, territory, or possession of the United States, the governor of that state, territory, or possession may proclaim that the national flag shall be flown at half-staff.
- The flag shall be flown at half-staff 30 days from the death of the President or a former President; 10 days from the day of death of the Vice President, the Chief Justice or a retired Chief Justice of the United States, or the Speaker of the House of Representatives; from the day of death until interment of a former Vice President, or the governor of a state, territory, or possession; and on the day of death and the following day for a member of Congress.



# FLAG FOLDING\*

## 1



To properly fold the flag, begin by holding it waist-high with another person so that its surface is parallel to the ground.

## 2



Fold the lower half of the stripe section lengthwise over the field of stars, holding the bottom and top edges securely.

## 3



Fold the flag again lengthwise, with the blue field on the outside.

## 4



Make a triangular fold by bringing the striped corner of the folded edge to meet the open (top) edge of the flag.

## 5



Turn the outer (end) point inward, parallel to the open edge, to form a second triangle.

## 6



The triangular folding is continued until the entire length of the flag is folded in this manner.

## 7



When the flag is completely folded, only a triangular blue field of stars should be visible.

# FLAG-FOLDING CEREMONY

- The flag-folding ceremony is a dramatic and uplifting way to honor the flag on special days, like Memorial Day or Veterans' Day, and is sometimes used at retirement ceremonies.
- A typical sequence of the reading, from the U.S. Air Force Academy, is as follows:
  - (Begin reading as the Honor Guard or Flag Detail is coming forward): The flag folding ceremony represents the same religious principles on which our country was originally founded. The portion of the flag denoting honor is the canton of blue containing the stars representing the states our veterans served in uniform. The canton field of blue dresses from left to right and is inverted when draped as a pall on a casket of a veteran who has served our country in uniform.
  - In the Armed Forces of the United States, at the ceremony of retreat, the flag is lowered, folded in a triangle fold and kept under watch throughout the night as a tribute to our nation's honored dead. The next morning, it is brought out and, at the ceremony of reveille, run aloft as a symbol of our belief in the resurrection of the body.
  - (Wait for the Honor Guard or Flag Detail to unravel and fold the flag into a quarter fold—resume reading when Honor Guard is standing ready): The first fold of our flag is a symbol of life.
  - The second fold is a symbol of our belief in the eternal life.
  - The third fold is made in honor and remembrance of the veteran departing our ranks who gave a portion of life for the defense of our country to attain a peace throughout the world.
  - The fourth fold represents our weaker nature, for as American citizens trusting in God, it is to Him we turn in times of peace as well as in times of war for His divine guidance.
  - The fifth fold is a tribute to our country, for in the words of Stephen Decatur, "Our country, in dealing with other countries, may she always be right; but it is still our country, right or wrong."
  - The sixth fold is for where our hearts lie. It is with our heart that we 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.
  - The seventh fold is a tribute to our Armed Forces, for it is through the Armed Forces that we protect our country and our flag against all her enemies, whether they are found within or without the boundaries of our republic.
  - The eighth fold is a tribute to the one who entered into the valley of the shadow of death, that we might see the light of day, and to honor mother, for whom it flies on Mother's Day.
  - The ninth fold is a tribute to womanhood, for it has been through their faith, love, loyalty, and devotion that the characters of the men and women who have made this country great have been molded.
  - The tenth fold is a tribute to father, for he, too, has given his sons and daughters for the defense of our country since they were first born.
  - The eleventh fold, in the eyes of a Hebrew citizen, represents the lower portion of the seal of King David and King Solomon, and glorifies, in their eyes, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
  - The twelfth fold, in the eyes of a Christian citizen, represents an emblem of eternity and glorifies, in their eyes, God, the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost.
  - When the flag is completely folded, the stars are uppermost, reminding us of our national motto, "In God We Trust."
  - (Wait for the Honor Guard or Flag Detail to inspect the flag—after the inspection, resume reading): After the flag is completely folded and tucked in, it takes on the appearance of a cocked hat, ever reminding us of the soldiers who served under General George Washington, and the sailors and Marines who served under Captain John Paul Jones who were followed by their comrades and shipmates in the Armed Forces of the United States, preserving for us the rights, privileges, and freedoms we enjoy today.

\*Courtesy of <http://www.usflag.org/foldflag.html>.

# SHOWING RESPECT FOR THE FLAG



1



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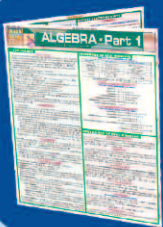
- The flag should never be displayed with the union down, except as a signal of dire distress in instances of extreme danger to life or property.
- The flag should never touch anything beneath it, such as the ground, the floor, water, or merchandise.
- The flag should never be carried flat or horizontally, but always aloft and free. **(1)**
- The flag should never be used as wearing apparel, bedding, or drapery. **(2)** It should never be festooned, drawn back, nor up, in folds, but always allowed to fall free. Bunting of blue, white and red, always arranged with the blue above, the white in the middle, and the red below, should be used for covering a speaker's desk, draping the front of the platform, and for decoration in general.
- The flag should never be fastened, displayed, used, or stored in such a manner as to permit it to be easily torn, soiled, or damaged in any way.
- The flag should never be used as a covering for a ceiling.
- The flag should never have placed upon it, nor on any part of it, nor attached to it, any mark, insignia, letter, word, figure, design, picture, or drawing of any nature.
- The flag should never be used as a receptacle for receiving, holding, carrying, or delivering anything.

- The flag should never be used for advertising purposes in any manner whatsoever. It should not be embroidered on such articles as cushions, handkerchiefs and the like, printed or otherwise impressed on paper napkins, boxes or anything that is designed for temporary use and discarded. Advertising signs should not be fastened to a staff or halyard from which the flag is flown.
- No part of the flag should ever be used as a costume or athletic uniform. However, a flag patch may be affixed to the uniform of military personnel, firemen, policemen, and members of patriotic organizations. The flag represents a living country and is itself considered a living thing. Therefore, the lapel flag pin, being a replica, should be worn on the left lapel near the heart. **(3)**
- The flag, when it is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning. **(4)**
- Any rule or custom pertaining to the display of the flag may be altered, modified, or repealed—or additional rules may be given—by the President whenever he deems it to be appropriate or desirable; any such alteration or additional rule shall be set forth in a proclamation.

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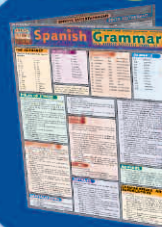
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