



THE AMERICAN FLAG

High Intermediate ESL Level



I. Pre-reading

How much do you know about the American flag? How much do you know about the flag of your country? Do you know when the first American flag was made?

II. Vocabulary

alternate
designed
Act
reflect

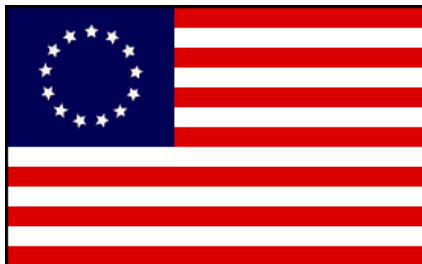
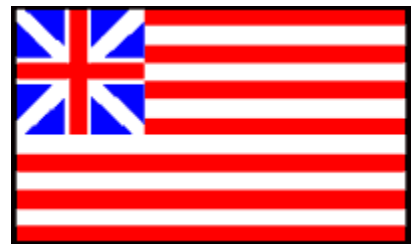
horizontal
hardiness
valor
purity

innocence
vigilance
perseverance
justice

III. Reading

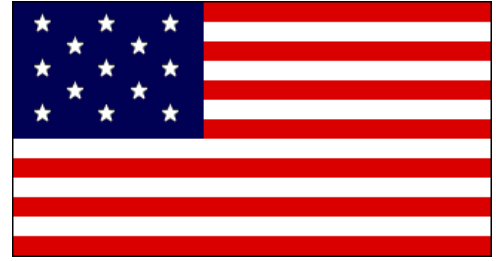
The American flag has been a symbol of America's strength and unity for more than 200 years. Americans are proud and inspired by their flag. Here are highlights of its past.

January 1776 – American forces were fighting the British Army. They were led by George Washington. The British captured Boston, Massachusetts. Washington's troops were trying to get it back. Washington ordered a flag to be flown. It had 13 **alternate** red and white stripes and the British Union Jack in the upper left-hand corner.

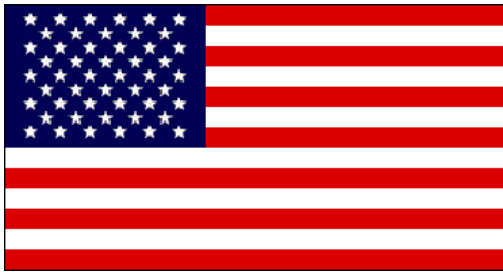


May 1776 – Daniel Harriman, Secretary of the Navy, **designed** the first American flag. It is reported that Betsy Ross was asked by Washington to sew the flag.

June 1777 – To establish an official flag, the *Flag Act* was passed. “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.”



Between 1777 and 1960 – Congress passed several acts that changed the shape, design and arrangement of the flag. They allowed for additional stars to be added to reflect the admission of each new state.



Today, the flag consists of thirteen horizontal stripes, seven red alternating with six white. The stripes represent the original 13 colonies. The stars represent the 50 states of the union.

The colors of the flag are symbolic as well.

Red represents **hardiness** and **valor**.

White represents **purity** and **innocence**.

Blue represents **vigilance**, **perseverance** and **justice**.

IV. Post-reading

Complete the sentences.

1. The first American flag was designed by _____.
2. The *Flag Act* was passed in _____.
3. Boston was captured by _____.
4. There are now _____ stars on the flag.
5. Each star represents _____.
6. Red means hardiness and _____.

7. The 13 original colonies are represented by the _____.
8. The American flag is over _____ years old.
9. White means _____ and innocence.
10. Blue means vigilance, perseverance and _____.

True or False?

1. T F The American flag has never been changed in over 200 years.
2. T F The American flag is a symbol of America's strength.
3. T F George Washington led American troops in 1776.
4. T F The stripes on the American flag are vertical.

V. Activities

1. Write about what your flag means to you.
2. List all the places where you think a flag should be, such as a school or police station.
3. Count how many times you see an American flag in a week. Does the number surprise you?
4. Ask friends from other countries if they know the history of their flags. Do they have a small flag of their country here?
5. Many historical events took place in Boston, Massachusetts. Find Boston on a U.S. map. Find a book about Boston in the library. Have you or anyone you know ever been there? What historical places can you visit in Boston?

