



GREATER BANNER ELK HERITAGE FOUNDATION

Banner House Museum

Heritage Trunks Classroom Tools

CIVICS AND GOVERNMENT MAKE YOUR OWN FLAG



Civics and Government

	Essential Standard	Clarifying Objectives	
2.C&G.1	Understand the purpose of governments.	2.C&G.1.1	Explain government services and their value to the community (libraries, schools, parks, etc.).
		2.C&G.1.2	Explain how governments establish order, provide security and create laws to manage conflict.
2.C&G.2	Understand the roles and responsibilities of citizens.	2.C&G.2.1	Exemplify characteristics of good citizenship through historical figures and everyday citizens.
		2.C&G.2.2	Explain why it is important for citizens to participate in their community.

<http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/docs/curriculum/socialstudies/scos/k-2.pdf>

MATERIALS (FOR EACH STUDENT):

- Drawing Paper
- Crayons, colored pencils or markers
- Handouts of State Flags-Examples of Symbolism
- Optional: Activity Worksheet

HISTORY STORY:

Jefferson Davis was sworn into office as the President of the provisional government of the new Confederate States of America on 18 February 1861 in Montgomery, Alabama. The flag that floated over the scene was that of the state of Alabama. The states which had so recently left the almost hundred-year-old United States to form their own government had no flag to represent their new nation.¹

The new country's Provisional Congress appointed six of their members to a committee to select a new flag from among the dozens of proposals which had been submitted to the Congress...According to the final report of the committee to Congress, the search was a difficult one. The committee, they wrote, had 'given this subject due consideration, and carefully inspected all the designs and models submitted to them. The number of these has been immense, but they all may be divided into two great classes.

'First. Those which copy and preserve the principal features of the United States flag...' 'Second. Those which are very elaborate, complicated, or fantastical...'²

¹ Philip Katcher, *Flags of the Civil War* (Oxford: Osprey Press, 2000), 8

² Philip Katcher, *Flags of the Civil War* (Oxford: Osprey Press, 2000), 9

DISCUSSION:

If you were forming a new country or government, what would be important to you when you were determining your new flag?

- Would you want it to be similar to another country's or very different from anything that had been seen before?
 - Why?
 - The Provisional Congress' flag committee said, *"It is idle to talk of 'keeping' the flag of the United States when we have voluntarily seceded from them"* ³
 - They also said, *"It must be admitted, however, that something was conceded by the committee to what seemed so strong and earnest a desire to retain at least a suggestion of the old 'Stars and Stripes.'"*⁴
- What are some important things to think about if your flag is similar to another country's flag?
 - Can it be confused with the other flag? Is that good or bad?
- What are the advantages to creating a totally new design?
 - How will people know whose flag that is?
 - Is there anything in your flag that tells who you are?

What are some things to think about when designing a flag?

- Size: Does your flag have to be one size or can it be different sizes for different uses?
- Shape: Square? Circle? Triangle? Rectangle? Vertical? Horizontal?
- Color: Why are you choosing these colors? Do they mean something specific to you? Do they mean something to your new country?
- Images: Are you using only shapes on your flag? What about animals? Plants? Words?
- Production: how will your flag be made? By individual people or in a factory? Does that change your design at all?

³ Philip Katcher, *Flags of the Civil War* (Oxford: Osprey Press, 2000), 9

⁴ Philip Katcher, *Flags of the Civil War* (Oxford: Osprey Press, 2000), 10

- Specific flags: Will you allow different flags for specific uses such as battle flags or state flags? Should they be similar or different from your country's flag?

The Provisional Congress' flag committee said, *"It should be simple, readily made, and above all, capable of being made of bunting...It should be different from the flag of any other country, place or people. It should be significant. It should be readily distinguishable at a distance. The colors should be well contrasted and durable, and lastly and not the least important point, it should be effective and handsome."*⁵

VOCABULARY:

*Because a lot of the information in this activity comes directly from historical documents, there are many words which may not be familiar.*⁶

Bunting: a lightweight loosely woven fabric used chiefly for flags and festive decorations.

Committee: a group of persons appointed or elected to consider or take action on some matter

Concede: to admit something is true after thinking it wasn't

Contrast: to show differences between things

Distinguishable: to stand out or be different

Earnest: a serious state of mind; truthful

Handsome: having a pleasing and usually impressive or dignified appearance

Horizontal: of or relating to the horizon; going "across" when you look at something

Significant: important

Similar: somewhat the same

Vertical: going straight up or down from a level surface

⁵ Philip Katcher, *Flags of the Civil War* (Oxford: Osprey Press, 2000), 10

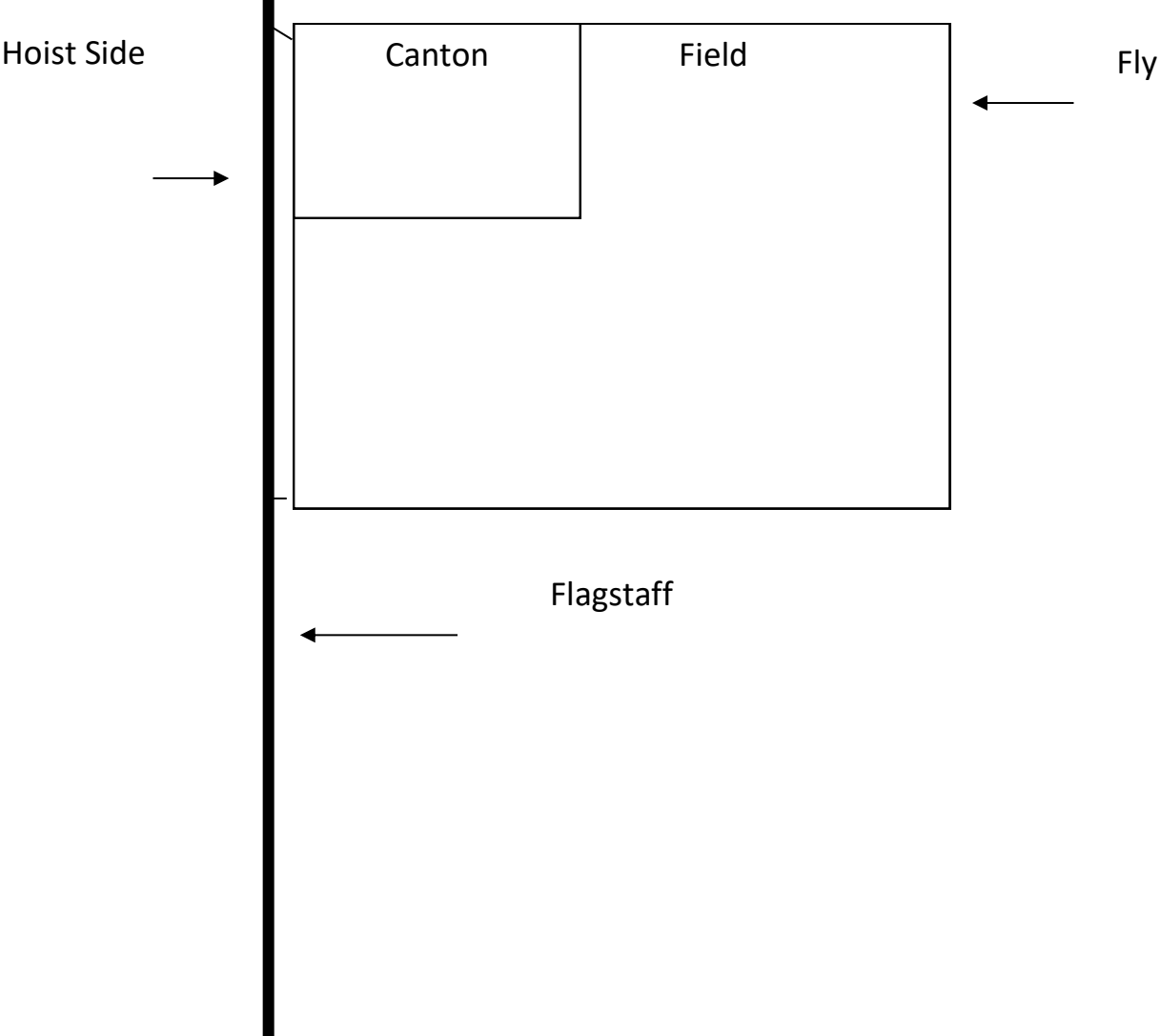
⁶ Most definitions come from <http://wordcentral.com> Merriam-Webster's on-line dictionary for children

ACTIVITY:

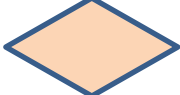










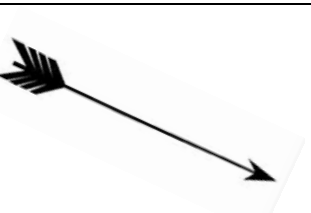
Design a flag for your new country or government. Look at some of the ideas from other flags. Be ready to explain your choices.



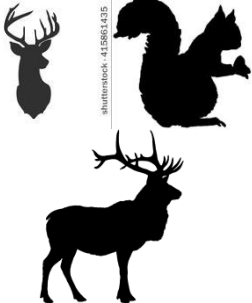


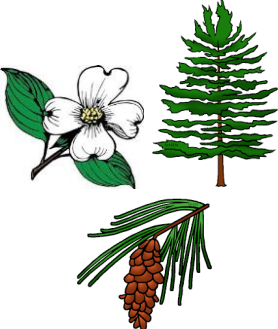

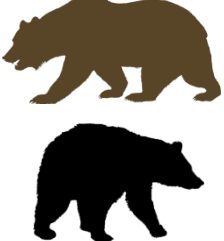
SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION






Parts of a flag



State Flags—examples of symbolism

	Diamond	Small but valuable (Delaware)
	The color BLUE	Loyalty and justice (Pennsylvania, Wyoming, and US Flag); Sky (Alaska, Wyoming) Almost half of the state flags have a blue field.
	Olive Branch	Peace (Pennsylvania, Oklahoma)
	Ship	Commerce (Pennsylvania)
	Sheaf of Wheat	Agriculture (Pennsylvania)
	Liberty Cap	Liberty (New Jersey and others—originally a “Phrygian cap” given by Romans to freed slaves)
 	Cornucopia	Agriculture (New Jersey)
	The colors dark blue and buff	George Washington’s uniform (Delaware, New Jersey, New York)
	Grapevine with fruit	Transplanted people growing strong in their new home (Connecticut)
	Arrow pointing down	Peace (Massachusetts)
	Arrow pointing up	War (Michigan)

	Scales	Everyone should receive equal treatment under the law (New York)
	Anchor	Coastline (Rhode Island)
	Animals	Some flags show state birds or other animals that are abundant in the area. (Delaware, Vermont, Louisiana, Maine, Wisconsin)
	Stars	Represent original colonies of the nation (Georgia, Ohio) or distinct geographical areas of the state (Tennessee), or number of states in the union when that state was admitted (Arkansas, Oregon, Nevada). One single star represents independence (Texas)
	Torch	Enlightenment and Liberty (Indiana)
	Trees or flowers	Abundant in the state or symbolic of a story associated with the state (Mississippi, Ohio, Maine, Minnesota)
<p>North Carolina</p>	Name of the State	To help outsiders identify the flag (Illinois, Wisconsin)
	Cloud	Difficulty (Missouri)
	Bears	Courage; strength and bravery (Missouri, California); Alaska references Ursa Major, the Great Bear constellation

	Crescent Moon	Small now, but full of potential (Missouri)
	Eagle	United States (Michigan, Illinois)
	Boulder	Strength (West Virginia)
	The color white	Purity and uprightness (Wyoming)
	The Color Red	Blood of the pioneers (Wyoming)
	Beehive	Commerce and hard work (Utah)
 <p>Scotland England</p> <p>Mexico Ireland</p>	Flags of Other Countries	Shows respect for countries whose people settled it as pioneers (Hawaii; Missouri, Iowa)

Evolution of the Flag of the United States of America—*an example of a flag that was meant to change over time*

The origin of the first American flag is unknown. Some historians believe it was designed by New Jersey Congressman Francis Hopkinson and sewn by Philadelphia seamstress Betsy Ross. The colors of the flag are symbolic as well; red symbolizes hardiness and valor, white symbolizes purity and innocence, and blue represents vigilance, perseverance and justice.

Between 1777 and 1960 Congress passed several acts that changed the shape, design and arrangement of the flag and allowed stars and stripes to be added to reflect the admission of each new state. Today the flag consists of 13 horizontal stripes, seven red alternating with six white. The stripes represent the original 13 Colonies and the stars represent the 50 states of the Union.⁷

⁷ <http://www.pbs.org/a-capitol-fourth/history/old-glory/>

Evolution of the National Flag of the Confederacy—an example of how a flag can change for different reasons

First (Confederate) National Flag (March 4 – May 21, 1861)



Orren R. Smith, a North Carolinian is one of the men credited with designing the first national flag of the Confederacy. “His design, he said, came from the Trinity, with three bars standing for the state with its judiciary, legislative, and executive branches; the church; and the press. They were bound by the blue canton, with the stars in a circle signifying mutual defense”⁸

Second (Confederate) National Flag (May 1, 1863 – March 4, 1865)



The “first national flag” caused concern very early on because it looked a lot like the United States flag. From the military standpoint, the similarity between the two flags led to confusion.⁹ Another flag was proposed, but ultimately this design became the second national flag of the confederacy. From the first day the Second National Flag was run up the flag pole, complaints were made...(especially) that when (on) a...windless day, it looked like an all-white flag of truce.¹⁰

Third (Confederate) National Flag (after March 4, 1865)



The third national flag solved the problem of “looking like a truce” flag by adding a red bar at the end of the flag. Designed by Major Arthur L. Rogers, the white of the flag symbolized purity and innocence, and the red fortitude and courage. The cross of St. Andrew indicated descent from British stock, while the red bar was taken from the French flag, as many other Southerners were descended from French stock.¹¹

⁸ Philip Katcher, *Flags of the Civil War* (Oxford: Osprey Press, 2000), 11

⁹ Philip Katcher, *Flags of the Civil War* (Oxford: Osprey Press, 2000), 15

¹⁰ Philip Katcher, *Flags of the Civil War* (Oxford: Osprey Press, 2000), 18

¹¹ Philip Katcher, *Flags of the Civil War* (Oxford: Osprey Press, 2000), 18-19