

Flag Introduction

Why are there so many different world flags? What are the most common symbols on flags? What do the colors on the flags mean? So many questions. Well, first let's see why people started using flags. In earlier centuries certain groups of people had decorated spears and decorated staff which showed their cultural symbols. Later people also used ribbons, leather or silk decorations on the spears to distinguish their group from another group.

Why do countries have flags?

Flags show that we belong to a community, organization or nation and that we share beliefs, goals, rules and regulations.

Flags are national symbols. Every country has a specific flag as their national symbol. When Neil Armstrong was the first man to land on the moon and made the first steps on the moon in 1969, he erected an American flag on the moon. Beside, you can see a picture of this historic event.

Neil Armstrong, the first man on the moon



Sir Edmund Hillary and the sherpa Tenzing Norgay, the first men to climb and reach the top of the world's highest mountain, Mount Everest, put up the British 'Union Jack' when they reached the summit of Mount Everest in May 1953.

Tenzing Norgay on Mount Everest 1953

Hillary was in fact from New Zealand and Norgay from Nepal, but as they went on an expedition financed and organized by Britain, they put up the Union Flag of the United Kingdom.

Universal Symbols in World Flags

Now, which symbols are most used in flags? All cultures use certain symbols which are meaningful to them, some of the symbols are even universal meaning they are the same all over the world.

- **Sun:** The circle of the sun symbolizes unity and energy. Japan is referred to be the "land of the rising sun" and uses the sun (simplified as a circle) in its national flag. Another country using this powerful symbol: Argentina.

- **Moon:** The moon is usually displayed in crescent shape to distinguish it from the symbol of the sun. In combination with a star, the moon represents divinity and especially the Islam.



Tunisia has three powerful symbols in its national flag: the red crescent moon and one red star rest in a white circle representing the sun, which you see in the picture to the right. Other countries using this symbol: Turkey, Singapore.

- **Stars:** Constellations of stars often represent energy, especially when depicting the night sky or star constellation

The flag of the USA is called "Stars and Stripes". Other countries use the stars as symbols: Australia, New Zealand, Brazil.



- **Cross:** In ancient times the cross only symbolized the different points of the compass, in the 4th century however the cross was also taken as the symbol of faith.

Countries using this symbol: England, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland

- **Triangle:** The three points of a triangle represent the Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) in Christianity. The triangle often also symbolizes strength and power. Countries using this symbol: Bahamas, Eritrea, Sudan, American Samoa and others.

Meaning of Colors Flags

Colors within flags differ from country to country and state to state; the colors presented hold deep-seeded meaning and representation.

- **Black:** Often used to represent determination, ethnic heritage and/or the defeat of enemies. It can also be used as a symbol of death or mourning.
- **White:** Seen as a symbol of peace, purity and harmony, and has also been used to represent surrender in times of battle.
- **Red:** Stands for power, revolution, vibrancy and war (symbolic of bloodshed). Other meanings include courage and domination, while it can also be viewed as an alert of danger.
- **Blue:** Signifies determination, liberation, alertness and good fortune.
- **Green:** Often seen as a symbol of agricultural influence, as well as prosperity and fertility. It can also be viewed as youthfulness and hope.
- **Yellow (or Gold):** Has long been viewed as a symbol of wealth and energy, as in the sun. It can also be used to represent happiness.
- **Orange:** Viewed as representation of courage and sacrifice.

<https://www.kids-world-travel-guide.com/world-flags.html>

Designing Your Flag

Activity: [Short Video of the History of Maine's flag and what its symbols means](#)

After reading about flags and their meanings, you may begin on your island flag. Your design must:

- Be original,
- Possess more than one color,
- Have a written explanation explaining your color choices
- State the meaning of any symbol added to the flag.

Finally, you must present an image of your flag. This can be done online, on paper or even with fabric! Examples of student map flags created both on the computer.



Sample writing:

Flag Explanation: Bresclandia

This is the flag of Bresclandia, a small island part of an archipelago in the Mozambique Channel. The most recent version of the flag was created in 1820, when the three islands joined to create an archipelago, named Gymnastland. It consists of two main colors, blue and green. Its two other colors are purple and yellow. It is made up of three stripes, two large on the outside and one smaller in the middle. Its first stripe is blue, symbolizing the water surrounding the island. It also symbolizes the calmness, trust and loyalty of the island. The smaller middle stripe is purple, which symbolizes the island's passion, independence and power. It stands out as a unique color, which makes the island people feel unique, well like their flag and island. The third larger stripe on the flag is green, which symbolizes its nature, fertile land and large island rainforest. It also shows safety and peace to the civilization. Finally, there are three yellow stars on the top right hand corner of the flag. These three stars symbolize each of the islands in the archipelago. The larger one in the middle represents Bresclandia, the one on the left represents Lolandia, and the star on the right represents Clarklandia. These three stars are yellow, which symbolizes the archipelago's happiness and energy, It also symbolizes the bright sun shining down on the archipelago, which gives it warm weather year around.