

## Lesson 1

# Origin of the United States Flag

*Inspiring Patriotism in all citizens regardless of age,  
meaningfully, and everyday.*



## Lesson 1

### Origin of the United States Flag

Enduring Understandings:		
To understand the origin of the United States flag		
Essential Questions:		
What is the origin of the United States flag? How did the design of the United States flag evolve?		
Vocabulary/Targeted Skills:		
origin, evidence, originate, bombardment, proprietors, superintended, precaution, ancestors, approbation		
Unit Assessment/Culminating Unit Activity:		
Create an action plan sponsored by students and teachers for the school to develop and maintain proper flag etiquette and education for the school and community.		
Lesson: Origin of the flag	Time: 45 – 60 minutes	
NGSS Standard(s):		
SS5C24 Evaluate the importance of civic responsibilities in American Democracy.		
Common Core Standards:		
<a href="#">CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.8</a> Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text.		
<a href="#">CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.3</a> Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.		
<a href="#">CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1</a> Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.		
<a href="#">CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.1</a> Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.		
<a href="#">CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.4</a> Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a <i>grade 5 topic or subject area</i> .		
Content Purpose:		

## Lesson 1 Origin of the United States Flag

<p>Students will learn about the origin of the American flag through primary and secondary sources.</p>
<p>Language Purpose:</p> <p>Student will write and explain which document is more believable and why using the words <i>evidence</i> and <i>document</i>.</p>
<p>Assessment/Evaluation (for this lesson):</p> <p>Students will write 2-3 paragraphs answering the document based question “In regards to the origin of the American Flag, which document is more believable and why?”</p>
<p>Reading Materials/Primary Source links:</p> <p><a href="http://amhistory.si.edu/starspangledbanner/making-the-flag.aspx">http://amhistory.si.edu/starspangledbanner/making-the-flag.aspx</a></p> <p><a href="http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2010-07-02/news/bs-md-backstory-1960-flag-20100702_1_48-star-flag-blue-canton-fort-mchenry">http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2010-07-02/news/bs-md-backstory-1960-flag-20100702_1_48-star-flag-blue-canton-fort-mchenry</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2002719536/">http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2002719536/</a></p> <p>Materials needed: copies of Historical Context for each student, copies of documents A, B, C, and D for each group or each student, copies of student organizer for each student</p>
<p>Suggested Procedures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Read through the Historical Context essay with the students to build context.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read it through once, modeling fluency</li><li>• Read it through a second time think aloud style; encourage students to write notes in the margins, circle things they do not understand, etc.</li><li>• Have students share a few notes or ask about things they do not understand (class discussion)</li><li>• Have students read it through a third time for meaning</li></ul></li><li>2. Allow students to work in pairs or teams of four to analyze documents A, B, C, and D. (Make sure to give them the vocabulary words and definitions so that they don't use the time looking up the words.)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 5 minutes of document analysis, with NO TALKING; again, encourage students to write notes, circle things that they notice or have questions about</li><li>• After the 5 minutes, allow the pair or team to share and discuss their findings</li></ul></li><li>3. Allow students to continue working with their partner or team to complete the “Origin of Flag” organizer.</li><li>4. Independently, have the students answer the question “Which document is more believable and why?” using the sentence starters provided. It is suggested to have them write at least 2-3 complete sentences, providing specific evidence to support their</li></ol>

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answer/opinion. As long as they have provided specific evidence, there are no wrong answers.

References:

Ferris, J. L. G. (1932). Betsy ross, 1777. In (LOT 4579). Cleveland, Ohio : The Foundation Press, Inc. Retrieved from <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2002719536/>

## **Historical Context**

### **Origin of the United States Flag**

January 1, 1776, under the leadership of George Washington, the Continental Army was restructured. It was on this same date that George Washington ordered the Grand Union flag be hoisted at Prospect Hill. This flag had 13 stripes of red and white, representing the 13 colonies, with a British Union Jack in the upper left corner. This Grand Union flag is said to be the first true American flag. It's important to note that at the time, most Americans (colonists) were fighting for respect and representation, not for independence, so having a flag with a British emblem showing a continued loyalty to the crown was appropriate.



There is a great deal of controversy over the next American flag. According to Marc Leepson, author of "Flag: An American Biography", "Virtually every historian who has studied the issue believes that Betsy Ross did not sew the first American flag. Yet a significant number of others who have looked into the matter...believes that Betsy Ross did, indeed, stitch the first American flag." Depending on the report, about six months later, in June 1776, or a year and a half later in June 1777, Betsy Ross sewed the first American flag. Reportedly, she based this on designs suggested by George Washington and his committee. However, several authors have written that she changed the suggested 6 pointed star to the 5 pointed star that we see on our flag today.

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On June 14, 1777, Continental Congress passed the first Flag Act which stated the flag would have 13 red and white stripes; and 13 stars in a blue field, representing a new constellation.

Below is page 463, showing the date of the journal entry on page 464.

June, 1777

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M'Donald, Allan M'Donald, Alexander M'Donald, Reynold M'Donald and Allan M'Donald, Jun<sup>r</sup> who surrendered themselves prisoners of war, were encouraged to expect to be supported by the United States, in the rank of gentlemen, during their confinement; and the ordinary allowance to prisoners, of two dollars per week, being incompetent for that purpose, that there be allowed to the said prisoners, respectively after the rate of 3 69/90 dollars per week, for their subsistence from the time of their confinement; and the farther sum of 73½ dollars for necessary expences incurred, by them, in their attendance upon Congress, by leave of General Schuyler, to solicit a further allowance, the difference of subsistence and expences both amounting to the sum of 678 60/90 dollars:

That they have taken into consideration the memorial of Robert Erwin, waggon master, referred to them by Congress, and are of opinion, that his account for pay, clerks' wages, &c. &c. from the 12 July, 1775, to the 19 May, 1777, is just and reasonable, and that a warrant should issue in his favour for the sum of 1,350 dollars, the amount of his account.<sup>1</sup>

*Resolved*, That Congress agree to the said report.

The several matters &c ||to this day referred, being postponed,||

Adjourned &c ||to ten o'clock to-morrow.||

SATURDAY, JUNE 14, 1777

*Resolved*, That an order be drawn on the commissioner of the loan office for the State of Rhode Island, in favour of Mr. John Murray, assignee of David Flowers, for five thousand dollars, and charged to the account of Colonel

<sup>1</sup>This report, dated June 12, is in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*, No. 136, 1, folio 229.

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*Journals of Congress*

William Kennon, the same being in full of three bills, No. 5, 7, 12, drawn by him, agreeable to letters of advice from J[ohn] Rutledge, president of South Carolina, dated Charleston, 14 April, 1777:<sup>1</sup> and

That another order for fourteen thousand dollars be drawn on the said commissioner, in favour of the said J. Murray, and charged to the account of Joseph Trumbull, Esq<sup>r</sup> commissary general, the same being in full of his draught in favour of the said J. Murray, dated Middlebrook, 9 June, 1777, agreeable to his letter of advice of the said date.

A letter, of the 20 May, from Amos Throop, at Providence, was read:

*Ordered*, That it be referred to the Marine Committee.

*Resolved*, That 300 dollars be advanced to Captain John Steel; 450 dollars to Captain Matthew Irwin; and 500 dollars to Captain Samuel Kearsley, for the use of their respective independent companies; they respectively to be accountable.

*Resolved*, That the Marine Committee be empowered to give such directions respecting the continental ships of war in the river Delaware, as they think proper, in case the enemy succeed in their attempts on the said river.

*Resolved*, That the flag of the ||thirteen|| United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white: that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation.

The council of the State of Massachusetts bay having represented by letter to the president of Congress, that Captain John Roach, some time since appointed to command the continental ship of war the *Ranger*, is a person of doubtful character, and ought not to be entrusted with such a command; therefore,

<sup>1</sup>This letter is in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*, No. 72, folio 353.

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**Words and Definitions**

Use the words below to assist you with the Historical Context and Document: (transcribed) Letter from Caroline Pickersgill Purdy to Georgiana Armistead Appleton, Baltimore (1876).

**origin:** the first stage of something or someone existing; the beginning of something

**evidence:** something that tends to prove or disprove

**originate:** to begin or start; to take its origin

**bombardment:** to attack

**proprietors:** the owner of a business

**superintended:** to oversee and direct; to supervise

**precaution:** a measure taken in advance to secure safety

**ancestors:** family

**approbation:** official approval

**Student Organizer**

**Central question: How did the United States flag originate?**

<b>Questions?</b>	<b>Document A: Betsy Ross, 1777</b>	<b>Document B: Carolyn Purdy letter</b>	<b>Document C: Heft article</b>	<b>Document D: Receipt for flag</b>
Who wrote the article or created the picture?				
When was this article or picture created?				
How do you know when?				
What new evidence does this document contain?				
Reasons to trust				
Reasons not to trust				

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**Which document is more believable and why? Choose one of the sentence starters below and be sure to use the words *document* and *evidence* in your response:**

I think document A is more believable because...

I think document B is more believable because...

I think document C is more believable because...

I think document D is more believable because...

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**Document A: Betsy Ross, 1777**



Direct link to photo: <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2002719536/>

Title: Betsy Ross, 1777 / J.L.G. Ferris.

Creator(s): [Ferris, Jean Leon Gerome, 1863-1930](#), artist

Date Created/Published: Cleveland, Ohio : The Foundation Press, Inc., c1932 July 28.

Medium: 1 photomechanical print : halftone, color.

Summary: Betsy Ross showing Major Ross and Robert Morris how she cut the stars for the American flag; George Washington sits in a chair on the left.

Reproduction Number: LC-USZC4-9905 (color film copy transparency) LC-USZ62-823 (b&w film copy neg., slightly cropped)

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Call Number: LOT 4579 [item] [P&P]

Repository: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA

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Document B (Original): Letter from Caroline Pickersgill Purdy to Georgiana Armistead Appleton,  
Baltimore (1876)

Copy

Baltimore

Mad. Appleton.

Dear Madam.

I have lately seen in the newspapers, that the noted flag, which waved over Ft. Mc Henry in the bombardment of Baltimore: is in your possession, and is to be sent to the Centennial.

I take the liberty to send you a few particulars about the 'Flag'. It was made by my mother, Mrs. Mary Pickersgill, and I assisted her.

My grandmother, Rebecca Young made the first flag of the Revolution, (under General Washington's directions) and for this reason my mother was selected by Commodore Barney, and General Stricker, (family connections) to make this "Star Spangled Banner": which she did being an

secondly

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According to American History Smithsonian website, “Mary Pickersgill's daughter, Caroline Purdy, wrote a letter to Major Armistead's daughter, Georgiana Appleton, in 1876, long after the Star-Spangled Banner was made. She told how her mother “worked many nights until 12 o'clock to complete [the flag] in the given time.” Courtesy American Antiquarian Society.”

**Document C: (Heft article)**

**A half-century ago, new 50-star American flag debuted in Baltimore**

**New flag made its first official appearance anywhere in the world at historic Fort McHenry**

July 02, 2010 | By Frederick N. Rasmussen, The Baltimore Sun

Forty-seven years had passed since the last star had been added to the American flag, before two new designs were flown for the first time over Fort McHenry within months in 1959.

Arizona became the 48th star in 1912, and the new flags adding Alaska and Hawaii each made their debut in Baltimore — both on the Fourth of July.

An executive order signed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower on Jan. 3, 1959, after the admittance of Alaska to the Union, reconfigured the stars on the old 48-star flag to seven rows of seven stars each, staggered horizontally and vertically.

The new 49-star flag was first raised by Fred A. Seaton, secretary of the interior and Eisenhower's special representative. The ceremony was held on July 4, 1959 on the grounds of Fort McHenry.

With the admission of Hawaii on Aug. 21, 1959, a new executive order again caused the flag's stars to be rearranged, with nine rows staggered horizontally and eleven rows staggered vertically.

"This is a truly historic occasion because for the second time within a year, a new state has been admitted to the union," Eisenhower said to assembled guests in a White House Cabinet Room ceremony. "It had been a long time since any state had been admitted, so to have this 49th and 50th membership of our Union in such a short space is truly a unique experience."

The new flag's design began as a history project for Robert G. Heft, who was a 17-year-old high school student in Lancaster, Ohio, in 1958.

Heft had an idea that Alaska and Hawaii would one day be states, and he set out to design a 50-star flag.

Using his mother's sewing machine, Heft had spent 12 hours using a yardstick while applying his new design of 100 hand-cut stars on each side of the blue canton of an old 48-star flag.

His teacher, who had given him a "B-" for the project, promised he'd change the grade if his flag was accepted by Congress.

Eisenhower made a personal phone call to the shocked Heft to tell him that his flag design had been accepted.

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With Executive Order No. 10834, signed on Aug. 21, 1959, Eisenhower selected Heft's flag out of 1,500 designs that had been submitted for consideration.

Heft's teacher made good on his promise and awarded him the coveted "A."

"I never thought when I designed the flag that it would outlast the 48-star flag," said Heft, who later became a teacher and mayor of Napoleon, Ohio, in a 2007 interview with the Grand Rapids Press in Michigan. "I think of all the things it stood for in the past, the things we've done as a nation that we're proud of. It's not a perfect country, but where else would I like to live?" Heft added in the newspaper interview. He died last year.

By presidential order, Seaton was selected to reprise his role of the year before at Fort McHenry, raising the new 50-star flag in a ceremony scheduled for 12:01 a.m. July 4, 1960.

An estimated 40,000 spectators jammed the grounds of the historic fort where 146 years earlier, Mary Pickersgill's original star-spangled banner had flown over Fort McHenry during the British attack in 1814, to witness the raising of the 50-star flag on an 87-foot flagpole.

A red rocket soared high over the fort to announce the first appearance in the world of the new flag. At one minute past midnight, it rose to the top of the flagstaff and unfurled itself in a stiff breeze that blew up the Patapsco River.

The crowd broke into singing "The Star-Spangled Banner," under the direction of Camille Elias, a secretary in the National Park Service's Washington headquarters. As soon as the last note of the song had ended, four Army 105-mm howitzers placed along the Patapsco shoreline roared out a 50-gun salute.

The 50th shell casing was later sent to Gov. William F. Quinn of Hawaii in commemoration of the historic event.

"Today Hawaii's star is set in the firmament for the first time, and for all time," Quinn told a crowd of 10,000 gathered at Iolani Palace, former residence of Hawaiian royalty, to witness the raising of the flag.

"The 50-star spangled banner was hailed most proudly last night by a delegation of 100 Hawaiians whose florid aloha shirts and full length muumuus shone against the more somber Maryland hues," an article in *The Baltimore Sun* said.

Leading the delegation was Rep. Daniel Inouye, who would later become U.S. senator from Hawaii. He had taken office in the House of Representatives when his state had been admitted to the Union.

In his speech, Seaton said that the admission of Hawaii — with its heavy Asian population — demonstrated "the unparalleled recognition of the rights of men wherever the American flag flies."

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Finan said, "The flag which we raise tonight is the banner of the most powerful nation on earth — the bright and shining symbol of hope and freedom to all peoples of the earth."

The 10-by-19-foot woolen flag that was used in the ceremony was later taken to New York and unfurled at Federal Hall, where George Washington was inaugurated president in 1789.

[http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2010-07-02/news/bs-md-backstory-1960-flag-20100702\\_1\\_48-star-flag-blue-canton-fort-mchenry](http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2010-07-02/news/bs-md-backstory-1960-flag-20100702_1_48-star-flag-blue-canton-fort-mchenry)

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Document D: Receipt for the Star-Spangled Banner

Mr James Calhoun Jun<sup>r</sup> Deputy Commissary  
To Mary Pickersgill J<sup>r</sup>  
To 1 American Ensigns 30 by 42 $\frac{1}{2}$  feet first quality Bunting \$4 05 90  
To 1 do do 17 by 25 $\frac{1}{2}$  feet do do 1 68 54  
August 19<sup>th</sup> 1813 for Fort M<sup>c</sup>Henry \$ 5,74,44  
Baltimore 27<sup>th</sup> October 1813 Rec<sup>d</sup> from James Calhoun Jun<sup>r</sup>  
Deputy Commissary Five Hundred and twenty four Dollars  
and forty four Cents in fulls for the above bill  
signed duplicate  
for Mary Pickersgill  
Eloza Young

According to the American History Smithsonian website, “Pickersgill was paid \$405.90 for the flag that became the Star-Spangled Banner, more than most Baltimoreans earned in a year. Courtesy of Flag House and Star-Spangled Banner Museum.”

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**Document B (transcript): Letter from Caroline Pickersgill Purdy to Georgiana Armistead Appleton, Baltimore (1876) (Let the students see the real document and try to figure out some of it, but then compare it to this typed version.)**

"Mrs. Appleton. Dear Madam. I have lately seen in the newspapers that the noted flag which waved over Fort McHenry in the bombardment of Baltimore: is in your possession, and is to be sent to the Centennial. I take the liberty to send you a few particulars about the "Flag". It was made by my mother, Mrs. Mary Pickersgill, and I assisted her. My grandmother, Rebecca Young made the first flag of the Revolution, (under General Washington's direction) and for this reason my mother was selected by Commo. Barney and George Stricker, (family connections), to make this "Star Spangled Banner" which she did, being an exceedingly patriotic woman.

The flag being so very large, mother was obliged to obtain permission from the proprietors of Claggetts brewery which was in our neighborhood, to spread it out in their malt house; and I remember seeing my mother down on the floor, placing the stars: after the completion of the flag, she superintended the topping of it, having it fastened in the most secure manner to prevent its being torn away by (cannon) balls: the wisdom of her precaution was shown during the engagement: many shots piercing it, but it still remained firm to the staff. Your father (Col. Armistead) declared that no one but the maker of the flag should mend it, and requested that the rents should merely be bound around.

The flag contained, I think, four hundred yards of bunting, and my mother worked many nights until 12 o'clock to complete it in the given time.

I would also state, that many of my ancestors were in the Revolution. My grandfather William Young was a captain in the war: my uncle Col. Flower was "Commissary General of Military stores", and Colonel of "Artillery" - these, both lost their lives by camp fever; I had another uncle taken prisoner by the British, and whipped through the fleet for attempting to escape: and my father in-law, Henry Purdy, served through the war.

For my character and position I could refer to you Miss Margaret Purviance, or any other reference you would require; I could further recall myself to your recollection, as I was a Manager of the "Aged Woman's" Home at the same time your were, and was particularly fascinated with you, (both being Episcopalians) in the care of a Mrs. Jefferson, daughter of Ms. Whipple a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

Your kindness and prompt attention to her induced me to present my case to you. I am widowed and childless, and now find myself, in my seventy sixth year, in feeble health, and with the barest pittance of support. My friends here in Balto.- have suggested that if these particulars, met with your approbation, and were placed on a card attached to the flag, they might excite among patriotic people, some compassion for my helpless condition; but I would leave this matter entirely up to your judgement.

I have not been able to write, on account of not having the use of my right arm, but thought it was better to put the signature in my own hand with kind regards. I trust your sympathy.

(Sgd) C. Purdy

(full name Caroline Purdy)