

Enrichment Activity 1

The Changing Pledge

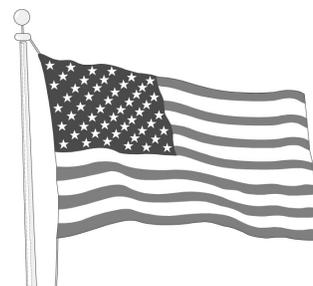
In this activity, students try to solve a mystery about the Pledge of Allegiance. They are provided with a version of the Pledge from October 1892 and are asked to detect the differences between that version of the Pledge and the current Pledge of Allegiance. They are also asked to speculate about why those changes occurred. Finally, they can compare their solution to the mystery with those of experts from the National Flag Day Foundation.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States was first given national attention during the National Public School Celebration of Columbus Day in October 1892. The Pledge had been published in the *Youth's Companion* for September 8, 1892, and at the same time sent out in leaflet form to schools throughout the country. During the celebration it was repeated by more than 12,000,000 public school students in every state in the Union.* Here is a suggested procedure for conducting this activity:

1. Distribute a copy of the **Changing Pledge 1** handout to each student. A blackline master appears on page 7.
2. Have students work in small groups of three or four to complete the activity. Ask them to record their work.
3. Circulate among the students to provide assistance and to monitor their work.
4. When students are finished, have volunteers share their work with the class.
5. Then distribute a copy of the **Changing Pledge 2** handout to each student. A blackline master appears on page 8.
6. Give students some time to compare their answers and solutions with those presented on the **Changing Pledge 2** handout. Encourage them to discuss how their work and that of the experts was similar and different.

To conclude this activity, mention to students that even the way in which the Pledge is given has changed over time. The September 8, 1892, *Youth's Companion* describes how students were to salute the flag during the Pledge:

At a signal from the Principal the pupils, in ordered ranks, hands to the side, face the flag. Another signal is given; every pupil gives the flag the military salute—right hand lifted, palm downward, to a line with the forehead and close to it. Standing thus, all repeat together,



For Which It Stands

Enrichment Activities

The American Legion
P. O. Box 1055
Indianapolis, IN 46206
(317) 630-1249
www.legion.org

Copyright 2005 by
The American Legion
All rights reserved.



* The Story of the Pledge of Allegiance, The National Flag Day Foundation, Inc.:
<http://www.flagday.org/Pages/StoryofPledge.html>

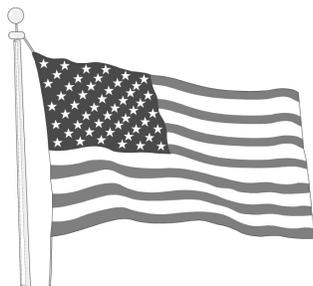
“ . . . once Hitler came to power in Europe, some Americans were concerned that the position of the arm and hand taken when “to my Flag” was said resembled the Nazi or Fascist salute.”

slowly: “I pledge allegiance to my Flag and* the Republic for which it stands: one Nation indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all.” At the words, “to my Flag,” the right hand is extended gracefully, palm upward, towards the Flag, and remains in this gesture till the end of the affirmation; whereupon all hands immediately drop to the side.

Have students follow these directions for saluting the flag. Ask them to speculate about why people had trouble with the second part of the salute. After students share their thinking point out that once Hitler came to power in Europe, some Americans were concerned that the position of the arm and hand taken when “to my Flag” was said resembled the Nazi or Fascist salute. In 1942, Congress established the current practice of reciting the pledge with the right hand over the heart.

Enrichment Activity 2

Flag Day Proclamation



Indicate to students that in this activity they will learn about Flag Day and the meaning of the American flag, by analyzing a primary source—an actual proclamation that the President of the United States issues each year recognizing Flag Day. Here is a suggested procedure for conducting this activity:

1. Distribute a copy of the **Flag Day Proclamation** handout to each student. Blackline masters appear on pages 9–10.
2. Have students work individually, in pairs, or in small groups of three or four to complete the activity described in the handout.
3. You might want students to preview the questions before doing the reading.
4. When students are finished, have volunteers share their work with the class.

Answers for the “Flag Day Proclamation” activity questions are:

1. *June 12, 2004*
2. *President George W. Bush*
3. *The American people*

* The word “to” was added to the Pledge after the word “and” in October 1892.

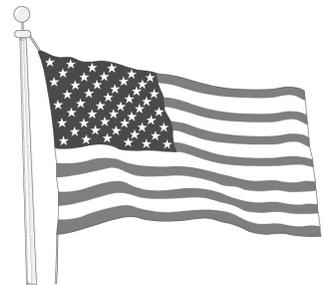
4. *A resolution of Congress requested that the President issue an annual proclamation calling for the observance of Flag Day and for the display of the flag of the United States on all Federal Government buildings.*
5. *Answers will vary.*
6. *The American flag has served as a symbol of our country's enduring freedom and unity. It has welcomed immigrants to America. Today, the flag inspires patriotism and pride.*
7. *The first Flag Day observances began informally in the 19th century. President Woodrow Wilson then established the first national observance by proclamation in 1916. In 1949, June 14 became "Flag Day." In 1966, the week in which June 14 occurred was designated "National Flag Week." Finally, Congress set aside the days from Flag Day through Independence Day as a time to honor America, to celebrate our heritage in public gatherings and activities, and to publicly recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.*
8. *The proclamation directs officials to display the flag on all Federal Government buildings and urges all Americans to observe Flag Day and National Flag Week by flying the Stars and Stripes from their homes and other suitable places. The president also calls on people to observe days from Flag Day through Independence Day, also set aside by the Congress as a time to honor America.*
9. *Answers will vary.*

Enrichment Activity 3

Veteran Interviews

In this activity, students, working in pairs, will conduct interviews with veterans to determine what the American flag means to them. They should be encouraged to use a tape recorder or video camera to gather information. Here is a suggested procedure for conducting this activity:

1. Help students identify veterans to interview. Encourage students to select a person from their own family. If this is not possible, ask for help from the local American Legion Post. Try to find veterans of different ages.
2. Have students work as a class to develop a set of questions that they will all ask in their interviews. The primary theme of the interviews should be about the meaning of the flag to the interviewees.

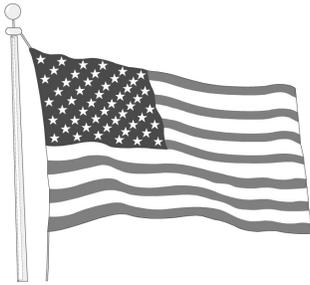


3. Give students time to conduct interviews. Encourage them to use photo albums, scrapbooks, and old letters to supplement the information collected in their interviews.
4. Once the interviews are completed, have student teams examine, summarize, and report on the evidence they collected. Let students decide how they will present their findings. Their presentations should develop the theme: “What does the flag mean to this veteran?”
5. Ask for volunteers to share their work with the class. Have everyone share their work with you.

As a concluding activity, have some of the veterans interviewed come to class. Ask them to tell their stories and share their feelings about the flag. Give students a chance to ask questions.

Enrichment Activity 4

With Liberty and Justice for All*



In this activity students will examine the meanings of the American principles expressed in the Preamble of the U.S. Constitution as a way of gaining a better understanding of what the flag and their country symbolize. Here is a suggested procedure for conducting this activity:

1. Remind students that the Pledge of Allegiance begins: “I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands.”
2. Explain that this statement suggests that the flag is a symbol for our country.
3. Indicate to students that in this activity they will examine what the flag and country to which we are pledging our allegiance stands for.
4. Tell students that one way to do this is to examine the Preamble—the introduction—to the U.S. Constitution. The Preamble is not a law. The Preamble states purposes or goals. These goals reflect the beliefs that the framers of the Constitution had about how government should serve its citizens.
5. Project the **Preamble** transparency and read the Preamble to the students. A blackline transparency master appears on page 11.

* Based on *We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution* (Calabasas, CA: Center for Civic Education, 2003, pages 87–92) and on John Patrick and Richard Remy, *Civics for Americans* (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1980, pages 58–59).

6. Highlight the words “We the people.” Explain that these words indicate that the source of authority to govern comes from the people. We establish the Constitution and use it to create a government to protect our rights and well-being.
7. Next highlight the words “do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.” Explain that this statement means that the Constitution was approved (ordained) by the people of the United States and that they agree to live under the government created by the Constitution.
8. Next, assign students to one of five groups listed on the transparency. Indicate that each group has been assigned to one of the goals, stated in the Preamble, that the writers of the Constitution wanted the United States to reach.
9. Indicate that each group should answer the three questions about their assigned part of the Preamble and be prepared to share their answers with the rest of the class.
10. Circulate among the groups to provide advice and to monitor progress.
11. When students are finished, ask for volunteers to share their thinking with the class.

Possible responses:

1. What does this part of the Preamble mean? Give an example.

Group 1—*establish justice: This means that the United States should have a system of laws that apply equally and fairly to everyone under the authority of the government. Example: Conflicts between people, or between citizens and their government, should be settled fairly in a court of law.*

Group 2—*insure domestic tranquility: This means that life should be peaceful in all the states. Example: The government should prevent behavior that could threaten health, safety, or property.*

Group 3—*provide for the common defense: This means that citizens should be able to protect themselves and their country from any enemies. Example: The government should have military forces to defend citizens against attack by outsiders.*

Group 4—*promote the general welfare: This means that the people should have good living conditions. Example: The government is supposed to help make it possible for citizens to work productively and enjoy the rewards of their work.*

Group 5: *secure the blessings of liberty: This means that citizens now and in the future should be free. Example: The government should protect civil rights and liberties of all citizens.*

“ . . . ‘We the people.’ Explain that these words indicate that the source of authority to govern comes from the people.”

2. Why is this part of the Preamble important? *(Answers will vary.)*
 3. What does this part of the Preamble have to do with protecting your rights and the common good? *(Answers will vary.)*
12. Ask the students to reflect on the responses from the five groups. Then ask each student to write a short summary of the goals of the Preamble. Ask for volunteers to share their work with the class. Ask every student to share their work with you. *(Possible response: The goals show that the framers of the Constitution valued the rights of citizens. They wanted the government to protect citizens' liberties. They also valued security. They expected the government to preserve law and order. Finally, they believed that government should be the servant of citizens, not their master.)*

To conclude this activity, remind students that they have learned about some of the basic principles of our country by examining the Preamble to the Constitution. Ask each student to use what they learned in this activity to record some thoughts to complete the following statement: "When I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands" I am promising to be true to . . ." *(Answers will vary.)*

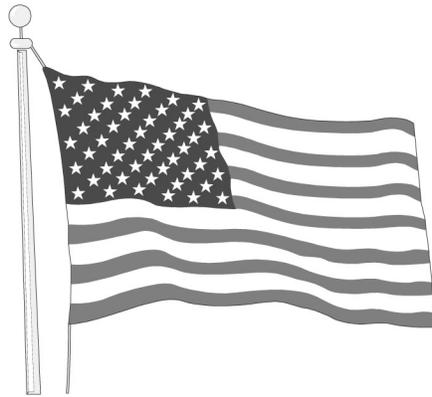
The Changing Pledge 1

The Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States was first recited in schools across the country on Columbus Day in October 1892. At that time it said:

I pledge allegiance to my Flag,
and to the Republic for which it stands;
one Nation indivisible,
With Liberty and Justice for all.

Examine this version of the Pledge. Then try to solve this history mystery:
How is the October 1892 Pledge different from the one used today, and why
were the changes you found made?

When you are finished solving the history mystery, you will be able to compare your solution to what the experts at the National Flag Day Foundation have to say about the changing Pledge of Allegiance.



The Changing Pledge 2*

The wording of the Pledge has been modified three times. On June 14, 1923, at the First National Flag Conference held in Washington, D.C., under the leadership of The American Legion and the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Pledge's words were changed from "my Flag" to "the Flag of the United States". The words were changed because it was believed that when giving the Pledge some foreign-born children and adults might have in mind the flag of their native land. The Pledge became:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States,
and to the Republic for which it stands;
one Nation indivisible,
With Liberty and Justice for all.

In 1924, "of America" was added. The Pledge became:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag
of the United States of America,
and to the Republic for which it stands;
one Nation indivisible,
With Liberty and Justice for all.

The last change in the Pledge of Allegiance occurred in 1954 when President Dwight D. Eisenhower approved adding the words "under God." As he authorized this change he said: "In this way we are reaffirming the transcendence [inspirational nature] of religious faith in America's heritage and future; in this way we shall constantly strengthen those spiritual weapons which forever will be our country's most powerful resource in peace and war." The Pledge of Allegiance now reads:

"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."

* Source: The Story of the Pledge of Allegiance, The National Flag Day Foundation, Inc.: <http://www.flagday.org/Pages/Story of Pledge.html>

Flag Day Proclamation

Introduction

Every year, the President of the United States issues a proclamation, a public announcement, recognizing Flag Day. In this activity you will have an opportunity to analyze one of these proclamations.

Read the proclamation carefully. Then use the questions that follow the proclamation to learn about Flag Day and the meaning of the American flag.

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

For more than 200 years, the American flag has served as a symbol of our country's enduring freedom and unity. Old Glory has welcomed generations of immigrants to America's shores and is displayed proudly on homes, at schools, and over businesses across our country. During times of war, our flag has rallied our citizens to defend the blessings of liberty at home and abroad. It has accompanied our troops into battle and been given to grieving families at the grave sites of fallen heroes. Today, as our brave men and women in uniform fight terrorism and advance freedom, the flag inspires patriotism and pride across our Nation and around the world.

Each year on June 14, we honor the American flag and recall the adoption of our first official national flag by the Continental Congress in 1777. The first Flag Day observances began quietly in the 19th century as State and local celebrations recognizing the anniversary of the Stars and Stripes. Inspired by these patriotic gatherings, President Woodrow Wilson established the first national observance by proclamation in 1916. To commemorate [honor] the adoption of our flag, the Congress, by joint resolution approved August 3, 1949, as amended (63 Stat. 492), designated June 14 of each year as "Flag Day" and requested that the President issue an annual proclamation calling for its observance and for the display of the Flag of the United States on all Federal Government buildings. The Congress also requested, by joint resolution approved June 9, 1966, as amended (80 Stat. 194), that the President issue annually a proclamation designating the week in which June 14 occurs as "National Flag Week" and calling upon all citizens of the United States to display the flag during that week.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE W. BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim June 14, 2004, as Flag Day and the week beginning June 13, 2004, as National Flag Week. I direct the appropriate officials to display the flag on all Federal Government buildings during that week, and I urge all Americans to observe Flag Day and National Flag Week by flying the Stars and Stripes from their homes and other suitable places. I also call upon the people of the United States to observe with pride and all due ceremony those days from Flag Day through Independence Day, also set aside by the Congress (89 Stat. 211), as a time to honor America, to celebrate our heritage in public gatherings and activities, and to publicly recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twelfth day of June, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-eighth.

GEORGE W. BUSH

Follow-up Questions

1. What is the date of the proclamation?
2. Who gave the proclamation?
3. What audience was the proclamation given to?
4. Why was the proclamation given?
5. List three things the proclamation says that you think are important.
6. What does the American flag stand for, or symbolize, according to the proclamation?
7. How has the idea of Flag Day grown over the years since the adoption of our first official national flag by the Continental Congress on June 14, 1777? Use information in the proclamation to answer this question.
8. What are people asked to do on Flag Day?
9. If you were in charge of Flag Day activities in your community, how would you want the event to be celebrated?

Preamble to the U.S. Constitution

“We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

Group 1: establish justice

Group 2: insure domestic tranquility

Group 3: provide for the common defense

Group 4: promote the general welfare

Group 5: secure the blessings of liberty

Questions for each group:

1. What does this part of the Preamble mean? Give an example.
2. Why is this part of the Preamble important?
3. What does this part of the Preamble have to do with protecting your rights and the common good? (**Common Good**—something done to help everyone in the community.)