

John F. Kennedy Hyannis Museum

Constitution Week

A Lesson for Kindergarten: “The United States Flag”

Introduction

In this lesson, students will learn about the United States flag. They will also practice the *Pledge of Allegiance*. The history of the flag will include the history of the 13 colonies that became the first 13 states, and that the stripes represent these states. Students will be introduced to the *Constitution*. Students will also develop an understanding of how the stars on the flag represent each state, and that the first flag had 13 stars. The flag now has 50 stars, one for each state. The lesson will include the book *F is for Flag* by Wendy Chyette Lewison, the *American Flag Riddle Video*, produced by education.com, and an art activity from the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, PA.

MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education History and Social Science Content Standards:

Kindergarten:

Topic 1: Civics: classroom citizenship

- 1-4. Ask and answer questions and explore books to gain information about national symbols, songs, and texts of the United States:
- a. Why the flag of the United States of America is red, white, and blue and has stars and stripes
 - d. What the words of the *Pledge of Allegiance* mean

Guiding Questions

1. Why does the United States flag have red and white stripes, and white stars?
2. Why did the first flag of the United States have 13 stars, and the flag today has 50 stars?
3. What is the difference between a colony and a state?
4. Why did representatives from the first 13 states write the *Constitution*?
5. What do the words in the *Pledge of Allegiance* mean?

Materials

1. A United States Flag
2. *F is for Flag* by Wendy Chyette Lewison
3. *The American Flag Riddle Video* by Education.com, (first section, the beginning through 1:44)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x0clDx1gSB4>
4. Flag pinwheel handouts from the Constitution Center:
https://constitutioncenter.org/media/files/American_Flag_Pinwheels.pdf
5. Chart Paper with the Pledge of Allegiance written on it

Learning Objectives

1. Students will be able to explain why our flag has thirteen stripes and 50 stars.
2. Students will be able to explain the history of the flag, and why the first flag only had thirteen stars
3. Students will be able to share the difference between the first 13 *colonies* and the first 13 *states*.
4. Students will be able to share that the *Constitution* is agreed upon rules that we live by and that it was written in Philadelphia in 1787 and ratified in 1788.
5. Students will be able to say the *Pledge of Allegiance* and explain the following vocabulary words: pledge (promise), allegiance (love or devotion), republic (people), indivisible (not able to be split up), liberty (freedom) and justice (fairness), developing a beginning understanding of the meaning of the pledge.

Lesson Activities

1. Explain to students that September 17th is an important day in the history of the United States. It is the day in 1787 when the Delegates to the Constitutional Convention signed the document they created which would become our *Constitution*. The Constitution has the rules we all live by.
2. Tell students that they are going to celebrate **Constitution Day** by learning about the history of our flag and the *Pledge of Allegiance*.
3. Share a flag with the students. Have them describe the different parts of the flag.
4. Read *F is for Flag* by Wendy Chyette Lewison. Review with students what the stars and stripes symbolize. How was the flag different in 1787?
5. Explain to students that a *colony* is a place where people live, but someone else who lives far away is the boss of them.

6. The colonies wanted their independence from this boss, so they fought for it and won it. This was the *Revolutionary War* in 1776. The 13 colonies became the first 13 states in the United States. This is why the first flag had 13 stars. The first flag was adopted on June 14, 1777, now celebrated as *Flag Day*.
6. Share the words of the Pledge of Allegiance. Explain that the first version of the Pledge of Allegiance was written in 1892, and today's words were agreed upon in 1954. Go over the words of the *Pledge of Allegiance* sharing the meaning of these words: pledge (promise), allegiance (love or devotion), republic (people), indivisible (not able to be split up), liberty (freedom) and justice (fairness), developing a beginning understanding of the meaning of the pledge.
7. Pass out the Constitution Center's Flag Pinwheel template. Allow students time to color their flags. Assist with cutting and putting the flags together