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| **USA State Flag Descriptions - All 50 States** |
| Alabama Flag  **ALABAMA STATE FLAG** |
| The crimson and white colors of the Alabama flag were officially adopted in the year 1895 by the Alabama legislature. The flag has two crimson bars in an X pattern that is similar to the St. Andrews Cross. There has been much debate since the creation of the flag over whether or not it is supposed to be rectangular or square shaped. It was not until 1987 that this matter was settled by then Attorney General Don Siegelman, who determined that since the flag had been reproduced so many times in the shape of a rectangle that it should continue in that manner from that point onwards. |
| Alaska Flag **ALASKA STATE FLAG** |
| The dark blue flag of Alaska was originally created in 1927 by thirteen year old John Bell Benson who submitted his design as part of a state-wide contest. Young Bensons’ flag beat out 142 other entrants, most of which are on display at the Alaska Historical Library & Museum. This beautiful flag contains eight gold stars, seven of which form the Big Dipper and the eighth is representative of the North Star. |
| Arizona Flag **ARIZONA STATE FLAG** |
| The magnificent setting sun flag of Arizona incorporates symbolism from both the past and the present. The yellow and red alternating stripes represent the original thirteen colonies and the star in the middle of the flag is copper in color to show Arizona’s status as the country’s largest producer of copper even today. The colors utilized are also symbolic, with the red and blue being the state colors of Arizona while the red and yellow are reminiscent of the Spanish influence on the state. |
| Arkansas Flag **ARKANSAS STATE FLAG** |
| Arkansas’s red, white, and blue flag is filled with the history of the state. The large blue diamond encompassing the artwork stands for the fact that Arkansas is the countries only diamond-producing state. There are 25 white stars within the blue diamond which account for Arkansas being the 25th state to be admitted into the union. The three blue stars at the bottom of the flag represent the three countries that controlled the state throughout its history: France, Spain, and the United States. The two parallel blue stars are symbolic for both Arkansas and Michigan, which were admitted at the same time in 1836. The star at the top of the flag stands for Arkansas role in the Confederacy during the Civil War. |
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| California Flag **CALIFORNIA STATE FLAG** |
| The captivating flag of California was originally used to declare their independence from Mexico in 1846. Quickly designed and built with materials they had available, the settlers raised the flag at the Mexican garrison in Sonoma after taking the commander there as prisoner and the flag declared the land as “California Republic.” The other symbols on the flag include the grizzly bear, which stands for strength, and the red star, which is representative of the “Lone Star” of Texas. The California legislature officially declared this as the state flag in 1911. |
| Colorado Flag **COLORADO STATE FLAG** |
| Colorado’s state flag was designed with the state’s natural beauty in mind. This handsome flag was originally created in 1911 by Andrew Carlisle Johnson who used each color in the flag to stand for a different Coloradan theme: the blue symbolizes the clear blue skies, the white is used to represent the snowcapped mountains, the red pertains to the color of the earth throughout the state, and the gold stands for the sunshine that the state receives. |
| Connecticut Flag **CONNECTICUT STATE FLAG** |
| Up until 1897 Connecticut did not have an official state flag. Citizens of CT can thank Abby Day who lobbied the state legislature relentlessly until she achieved her goal of making sure that a state flag was created. This blue flag contains a white shield with three grapevines on it, which stand for religion, liberty, and knowledge as well as the original three colonies of Connecticut Hartford, Windsor, and Wethersfield. Below the shield is the state motto “Qui transtulit Sustinet' - 'He who hath transplanted will sustain.” |
| Delaware Flag **DELAWARE STATE FLAG** |
| Even though the date December 7, 1787 appears on the flag of Delaware, it was not until July 24th 1913 that their state flag was adopted. The date at the bottom of the flag is representative of the fact that they were the first state to ratify the Constitution of the USA and therefore the first official state within the Union. The diamond in the center of the flag is symbolic of Thomas Jefferson’s comment that DE is a “jewel” among the states due to its location on the eastern coast of the country. With many symbols and history on this flag, it too is a “jewel” among flags. |
| Florida Flag **FLORIDA STATE FLAG** |
| The official flag of Florida, adopted in 1900, contains a red, diagonal cross over a white background and in the center is the Seal of the state. There are several symbols on the State Seal that were updated for accuracy in 1985 including a Seminole Indian female, an enhanced steamboat, as well as a sabal palm tree. The red cross in the center of the flag, added in 1899, was suggested by the Governor at that time, Francis Fleming, to make sure that the flag did not appear to be one of surrender or truce while it is being hung on a flagpole. |
| Georgia Flag **GEORGIA STATE FLAG** |
| The flag of Georgia has had many different variations throughout the years and in 2003 the most recent version was settled upon. This red, white, and blue flag contains the state’s Seal and thirteen white stars. Although the Seal of Georgia has also been redesigned many times, several aspects have remained constant: the arch that is held up by the three columns, the words Wisdom, Justice, and Moderation which have always appeared on banners, and finally the soldier representing defense of the constitution have been present since the Seals inception in 1799. |
| Hawaii Flag **HAWAII STATE FLAG** |
| The Hawaiian flag was adopted in 1845 and combines elements of two of the most influential countries of the time: the United States of America and the United Kingdom. The Union Jack in the corner is representative of the UK, while the eight stripes signify the USA. The eight stripes also stand for the eight main islands in the chain: Hawaii, Kahoolawe, Kauai, Lanai, Maui, Molokai, Niihau, and Oahu. |
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| Idaho Flag **IDAHO STATE FLAG** |
| The state flag of Idaho contains the only state seal in the country that was designed by a woman, Emma Edwards. The right of women to vote was being debated at the time that she created the seal and she placed the man and woman in the seal next to one another and at equal heights. While designing the seal she spoke with many prominent citizens within the state to determine the most important symbols of Idaho. Some of the symbols include the miner, the scales (to denote liberty and justice), the trees, the shield, the stamp mill, the cornucopia, and the elk’s head. |
| Illinois Flag **ILLINOIS STATE FLAG** |
| The Illinoisan flag was originally designed by the Rockford Chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution and officially adopted in 1915. Their chapter won a contest sponsored by the D.A.R. to create a state flag for IL. The bald eagle pictured on the flag is representative of the United States of America and in its beak is the state motto. The word Illinois was added to the flag during the Vietnam War because it was difficult to discern its identity. |
| Indiana Flag **INDIANA STATE FLAG** |
| The dark blue flag of Indiana incorporates symbolism to portray the history of the USA as well as two values that Americans hold in high regard, liberty and enlightenment. The torch in the center of the flag is representative of those values, while the rays emanating from it show how their influence has spread. The thirteen outer stars stand for the original thirteen colonies and the five inner stars are a reference to the next fives states that will be brought into the Union. The largest star at the top of the flag, right below the name of the state, represents the state itself. |
| Iowa Flag **IOWA STATE FLAG** |
| The tri-color Iowa state flag is another flag that while appearing simple in design, actually has many symbols within the flag. The creator of the flag, Dixie Cornell Gebhardt, designed it with the history of Iowa in mind. The red, white, and blue colors are representative of Iowa’s close ties to France. The white stripe in the center is indicative of the Native Americans that had roamed the land prior to it being settled by Europeans. Finally, the eagle in the center of the flag is used to symbolize Iowa’s integration within the United States of America. |
| Kansas Flag **KANSAS STATE FLAG** |
| Adopted in 1927, the Kansas state flag is a dark-blue rectangle including the state seal and a sunflower. The seal, located in the center of the flag, tells the story of Kansas with its motto, “Ad Astra per Aspera,” meaning “To the Stars through Difficulties.” The thirty-four stars above the motto signify Kansas as the 34th state to be accepted into the Union. The word “Kansas” was added to the bottom of the flag in 1961. |
| Kentucky Flag **KENTUCKY STATE FLAG** |
| On a background of navy blue, the words “Commonwealth of Kentucky” headline the Kentucky state flag, along with two sprigs of goldenrod, the state flower. At the center of the flag, the Kentucky state seal depicts two men shaking hands, a pioneer and a statesman. The belief is that these two figures represent all men as captured in the state motto, “United We Stand, Divided We Fall.” |
| Louisiana Flag **LOUISIANA STATE FLAG** |
| Remarkably, ten very different flags flew over Louisiana before the legislature officially adopted a state flag in 1912. Prior to the territory being purchased in 1803 by the United States from France, Louisiana proudly flew the banner of Spain, France, and Great Britain among others. Louisiana even flew a flag as an independent nation for two months after seceding from the Union in 1861. On an azure background a pelican, the state bird, feeds her three young with drops of blood gouged from her own breast, affectionately referred to as a “pelican in her piety.” Below the pelicans is Louisiana’s state motto, “Union, Justice & Confidence.” |
| Maine Flag **MAINE STATE FLAG** |
| The first official flag for the state of Maine, adopted in 1901, consisted of a blue North Star shining down on a pine tree on a buff-colored background. Eight years later, the Maine legislature approved a new design, one featuring the Maine Coat of Arms on a blue field. The shade of blue is identified as the blue used in the United States flag. A farmer and a seaman represent Maine’s traditional reliance on agriculture and the sea. Above the shield and beneath the North Star is the word, “Dirigo,” the state’s motta meaning “I lead.” A banner beneath the shield bears the state’s name. |
| Maryland Flag **MARYLAND STATE FLAG** |
| Taken from the shield in the coat of arms of the family of George Calvert, first Lord Baltimore, the Maryland state flag embodies the yellow-and-black arms of his paternal family with the red-and-white colors and cross-bottony design of his maternal family, the Crosslands. (It has been disputed that the red-and-white colors are instead from the Mynne family, the family name of the wife of George Calvert.) Despite the fact that Maryland remained in the Union, many Marylanders wore the red-and-white “secession colors” in sympathy with the South. Although a pre Civil War version consisted of the Maryland state seal on a blue background, by the end of the war, both the yellow-and-black Calvert arms and the red-and-white cross-bottony design epitomized Maryland, and this version was adopted as the state flag in 1904. |
| Massachusetts Flag **MASSACHUSETTS STATE FLAG** |
| Massachusetts, one of the original 13 colonies of the United States, is one of only two states to have a state flag and a naval and maritime ensign. The original design of the Massachusetts state flag had a design on one side and a green pine tree on a field of white on the back. The pine tree design serves now as the naval ensign. The state flag, approved in its final form, consists of the Massachusetts coat of arms on both sides. On the coat of arms is an Algonquin Native American from the Massachuset tribe, who is carrying a bow and arrow pointing downward in peace. A white star by the figure’s head signifies Massachusetts as the 6th state admitted into the Union. On a blue ribbon around the shield are the Latin words meaning “By the Sword We Seek Peace, but Peace Only under Liberty,” the state motto. This motto is also reflected by the bent arm at the top of the shield holding a broadsword blade up. |
| Michigan Flag **MICHIGAN STATE FLAG** |
| The present flag, adopted in 1911, is the third official flag of the state of Michigan. The first state flag featured Michigan’s first governor, Stevens Thomson Mason, on one side and the Michigan coat of arms on the other. Mason was replaced by the United States coat of arms in the second version in 1865. The present flag consists of the coat of arms on a field of blue as required by Michigan law. The coat of arms features a bald eagle holding an olive branch and arrows on top of a shield, along with a man standing on a grassy peninsula waving with one hand while holding a rifle in the other. The shield is supported by an elk and a moose. Three state mottos encircle the coat of arms, translated from Latin to mean “From many, one”; “I will defend”; and “If you seek a pleasant peninsula, look about you.” The Michigan state flag, with its coat of arms, represents these mottos pictorially. |
| Minnesota Flag **MINNESOTA STATE FLAG** |
| The official flag for the state of Minnesota is made up of the state seal surrounded by a wreath of flowers on a medium blue background. Three dates appear on the wreath: 1858, the year Minnesota became a state; 1819, the year the first settlement at Fort Snelling was established; and 1893, the year the first official flag was adopted. A red ribbon at the top of the seal proclaims the state motto: “L’Etoile du Nord,” French for star of the north. Surrounding the seal is a circular banner containing 19 stars denoting Minnesota as the 19th state to join the union after the original 13 colonies. The largest star, located at the top, represents the North Star, and the word “Minnesota” is located at the bottom. An error in the original flag displaying a wreath of white lady’s slipper flowers, not native to the state, was corrected in 1957. Now the flag displays the pink and white lady’s slipper, the state flower. |
| Mississippi Flag **MISSISSIPPI STATE FLAG** |
| As was the case in neighboring Louisiana, as many as seven different flags of sovereign nations have flown over the territory known now as Mississippi. When Mississippi seceded from the Union, the leaders adopted the Magnolia flag in January of 1861. This design incorporated a magnolia tree on a white field with its canton corner made up of a white star on a blue field (the Bonnie Blue flag). Mississippi became part of the Confederacy in March of that year and flew its flag until the State Legislature adopted its present-day flag in 1894. This flag has the Confederate battle flag in its canton corner (instead of the Bonnie Blue design) with a field made up of equal bars of blue, white, and red at the bottom. In 2001, a proposal to remove the Confederate battle flag was soundly defeated by Mississippi voters, keeping the original design. |
| Missouri Flag **MISSOURI STATE FLAG** |
| As the second state to be carved from the territory acquired from France in the Louisiana Purchase, Missouri joined the Union as the 24th state in 1820. Like many of its neighboring states, the state of Missouri was deeply divided on the issue of secession. During this troubled time, the state militia carried a flag bearing the Missouri coat of arms showing a Bald Eagle with olive branches (peace) and arrows (war), a grizzly bear, and a crescent moon. On top are the words “United We Stand, Divided We Fall.” Some 92 years later, this shield would become the central feature of a design by Marie Elizabeth Watkins Oliver adopted as the official Missouri State Flag in 1913. On horizontal bars of red, white, and blue (representing its French heritage), the coat of arms is supported by two more grizzly bears standing on a scroll inscribed with the words “Salus populi suprema lex esto” meaning “Let the welfare of the people be the supreme law.” Below the scroll are the Roman numerals for 1820. A band of 24 stars denotes Missouri’s induction into the union. |
| Montana Flag **MONTANA STATE FLAG** |
| The Montana state flag, officially adopted in 1905, was born of the initiative of Colonel Harry C. Kessler in 1898. Colonel Kessler, head of the 1st Montana Infantry (a group of volunteers recruited to fight in the Spanish-American War), created a flag to distinguish his men from other forces. This flag consisted of the Montana state seal on a dark blue background with the words “1st Montana Inft’y U.S.V.” at the top. On the seal are a miner’s pick and shovel with the Great Falls of the Missouri River running nearby surrounded by beautiful mountain scenery. A ribbon beneath the pick and shovel displays the words “Oro y Plata” (gold and silver in Spanish). Upon their return, the flag grew in popularity and was officially honored in 1905 (minus the Infantry headline). In 1981, the Montana Legislature added the word “Montana” in Roman lettering above the seal, and further detail was approved in 1985, specifically requiring Helvetica Bold type to be used in displaying the state name. |
| Nebraska Flag **NEBRASKA STATE FLAG** |
| The state of Nebraska is typically known as being one of the last states to officially adopt a State Flag, which it finally did in 1963. As was popular in the 19th century, many regimental flags, which were made up of the state seal on a blue background, became unofficially recognized as the state flag. Such was the case in Nebraska until Representative J. Lloyd McMaster introduced a bill in 1925 to designate a Nebraska state banner as “the Great Seal of the State charged on the center in gold and silver on a field of national blue.” The state seal, as described in legislation in 1867, is represented by a steamboat on the Missouri River, a blacksmith with a hammer and anvil, and a settler’s cabin with wheat and corn in the foreground; a train on the transcontinental railroad heads for the Rocky Mountains in the background. A ribbon above the landscape bears the state motto: “Equality Before the Law.” Also on the seal are the words “Great Seal of the State of Nebraska” and “March 1st, 1867,” marking Nebraska’s admittance into the Union. |
| Nevada Flag **NEVADA STATE FLAG** |
| The state of Nevada, the 36th to join the Union, has had several flags during its history. The first flag was created in 1905 by Governor John Sparks and Colonel Harry Day. On a blue background, this flag featured 36 stars with the words “Silver” and “Gold” at the top and bottom respectively and the state’s name in the center. This design, reflective of Nevada’s mineral resources, was changed in 1915 to feature the Nevada Coat of Arms instead of the silver and gold resources. The state name is at the top of the Coat of Arms and the words “All For Our Country” are beneath it. The gold and silver stars were resized and rearranged in an oval around the Coat of Arms. Since this flag was expensive to reproduce, a design contest was held in 1926 to come up with a flag that would be more economical to produce. Louis Schellbach, III won the contest with a design made up of a wreath of sagebrush (the state flower) cradling a silver star with “Nevada” circling its points. A ribbon at the top of the wreath contains the words “Battle Born” in recognition of the fact that Nevada became a state during the Civil War. The background was still blue, but gone was the Coat of Arms. In 1929, after some political disagreements over the placement of the state’s name were worked out, the bill adopting this design was signed into law—or so they thought! The bill, however, did not contain the legislative compromise regarding the name placement (in a semi circle beneath the star), and so the word “Nevada” continued to be placed around the star in error for more than 60 years. Finally, in 1991, the legislature corrected the error and further defined the background as cobalt blue. |
| New Hampshire Flag **NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE FLAG** |
| New Hampshire, named for Hampshire, England by Captain John Mason, became the ninth state to join the Union in 1788. The New Hampshire legislature officially adopted a state flag in 1909, although several regimental flags represented the state prior to that. The New Hampshire state flag, in use since 1784, appears with the State Seal on a deep blue background. On the seal is the frigate USS Raleigh in front of the rising sun. The Raleigh, built in 1776 as one of the first 13 warships to fight the British in the Revolutionary War, is sailing near a large gray granite boulder. (The state nickname is “the Granite State.”) Encircling the frigate are the words “Seal of the State of New Hampshire” with the date “1776” below it. A wreath of yellow laurel leaves interspersed with nine stars surrounds the seal. The New Hampshire state flag has been changed one time in 1931 by the legislature to add more specific detail to the elements of the State Seal. |
| New Jersey Flag **NEW JERSEY STATE FLAG** |
| Although the New Jersey legislature did not officially recognize its state flag as such until 1896, its design and use can be traced back to 1780. The year before, General George Washington had directed that the color of the coats for his regiment be dark blue faced with buff (light yellow-brown), in honor of the original Dutch settlers. New Jersey regiments of the Civil War period carried two flags: one representing the United States and one featuring the state coat of arms in the center on the regimental color. The coat of arms, designed in 1777 by Pierre Eugene du Simitiere, is composed of a blue shield with three plows on it supported by two goddesses on either side. On the left, the Goddess of Liberty is holding a staff with the cap of freedom on it; Ceres, the Goddess of Agriculture, is on the right holding a cornucopia full of food. New Jersey’s rich agricultural tradition has given it the nickname “the Garden State.” Beneath them is a blue ribbon with the state motto “Liberty and Prosperity” and the date “1776.” Above the shield is a knight’s helmet representing state sovereignty and a horse’s head denoting speed and strength. |
| New Mexico Flag **NEW MEXICO STATE FLAG** |
| Since New Mexico had no official state flag during the early years of its statehood, an unofficial flag was displayed at the San Diego World’s Fair in 1915. This flag, one of very few state flags that featured the Stars and Stripes on its canton, was composed of the words “New Mexico” and the numeral “47” in silver and the state seal in the lower right corner. In 1920, the Daughters of the American Revolution sponsored a competition to create a new design for a state flag. Dr. Harry Mera, a physician and archeologist from Santa Fe, won the contest with an interpretation of a Zia sun symbol discovered on a 19th century water jar found at the Zia Pueblo. The sun symbol contains four groups of rays at right angles with four rays in each group, with the inner rays longer than the outer ones. Four is a sacred number for the Zia Indians, repeating itself in the rays radiating from the center of the sun, which symbolizes the Circle of Life. The sun is red in the center of a yellow background, colors chosen to honor the Spanish explorers who came to Mexico in the 1500s. |
| New York Flag **NEW YORK STATE FLAG** |
| As early as 1858, New York militia regulations called for the coat of arms to appear on a white background as the state flag. In 1896, the legislature adopted a law changing the white to buff to match the facing color of the uniforms worn by the troops serving in the Continental Army. However, since the custom at the time was for regimental flags to display the coat of arms on a blue background, the New York state legislature adopted a blue background in 1901. On the coat of arms, which was adopted in 1788, are two goddesses supporting a shield with a sun rising over two ships sailing the Hudson River. On the left, Liberty is dressed in blue holding a staff with the cap of freedom on it and a discarded crown at her feet, symbolizing freedom from British control. The Goddess Justice, in gold, stands on the right wearing a blindfold and holding the scale of justice. Beneath them is the state motto “Excelsior,” Latin meaning “ever upward” on a white scroll. Above the shield is an American eagle perched on a globe showing the Western hemisphere. |
| North Carolina Flag **NORTH CAROLINA STATE FLAG** |
| North Carolina, known as “The Old North State” and “The Tarheel State,” adopted an official State Flag in 1885. This red, white, and blue flag features a white star with the letters “N” and “C” in gold on either side. A gold scroll above displays the date “May 20, 1775,” commemorating the “Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence.” A scroll below has the date “April 12, 1776,” the date of the “Halifax Resolves.” Although North Carolina Infantry carried a regimental and Confederate flag throughout the Civil War, the 1885 design remains unchanged to this day. |
| North Dakota Flag **NORTH DAKOTA STATE FLAG** |
| North Dakota, which became the 39th state to join the Union in 1889, outfitted infantry regiments during the Spanish-American War and the Phillipine Island Insurrection in the late 1800s. The regimental flag carried into battle was made up of a field of deep blue with a Bald Eagle clutching an olive branch (representing peace) and arrows (representing liberty) in its claws. A shield on the bird’s breast bears 13 red and white stripes denoting the original 13 colonies, and a ribbon in its beak displays the words “E Pluribus Unum,” meaning “Out of Many, One” in Latin. Above the eagle is a yellow fan in the shape of a sunburst containing an array of 13 yellow stars representing the birth of a nation. The North Dakota State Flag of today, officially adopted in 1911 by the Legislative Assembly, is the same as the regimental flag with one exception: a red scroll beneath the eagle displays the words “North Dakota.” A bill to change the state flag was defeated in 1953. |
| Ohio Flag **OHIO STATE FLAG** |
| The Ohio State Flag, officially adopted in 1902, is the only American state flag that is not rectangular in shape. Based on the pennant flown by the Ohio cavalry during both the Civil and Spanish-American Wars, its swallowtail shape is technically known as a burgee. Designed by John Eisemann for the Pan-American Exposition, the Ohio burgee is made up of a large blue triangle representing the hills and valleys of the state and five alternating red and white stripes representing its roads and waterways. Within the triangle are 17 stars around a large white circle with a red center. The 17 stars denote Ohio as the 17th state to join the Union, and the circle represents the first letter of the state name as well as the state’s nickname “the Buckeye State.” A special method for folding the Ohio State Flag was created in 2005 by Alex Weinstock, an Ohio Boy Scout, and signed into law later that year. |
| Oklahoma Flag **OKLAHOMA STATE FLAG** |
| The first Oklahoma State Flag was adopted in 1911, four years after Oklahoma became the 46th state to join the Union. Remarkably, prior to that as many as 14 different flags flew proudly over what is now the state of Oklahoma, including the flag of Great Britain, Spain, France, Mexico, and the Choctaw Indian Nation to name a few. The flag of 1911, a white star outlined in blue with a blue “46” centered on a red field, lost popularity because it too closely resembled the symbols of Communism. So in 1924, a contest was held to come up with a new design to represent the unity of its Native American and European-American cultures. The winner of the contest (sponsored by the Daughters of the American Revolution) was Mrs. Louise Fluke, and her design featured an Osage Nation buffalo-skin shield with seven eagle feathers hanging from it. On the shield are an olive branch and a peace pipe, symbols of peace to Europeans and Native Americans, and six white crosses represent stars, symbolizing high ideals to Native American cultures. The shield is centered on a blue background, the color based on the flag carried by Choctaw soldiers during the Civil War. Mrs. Fluke’s flag was officially adopted in 1925. The state name in white letters was added to the design in 1941, and in 1988 the Oklahoma legislature added specific detail to the coloring of the flag. |
| Oregon Flag **OREGON STATE FLAG** |
| Adopted in 1925, Oregon has the only state flag with a different design on each side. Both sides are navy with a design in gold, with the reverse side featuring a beaver (the state animal). The front of the flag displays the words “State of Oregon” and the date “1859” at the top and bottom with a heart-shaped shield surrounded by 33 stars. The stars and date denote Oregon as the 33rd state to join the Union in 1859. A sun, mountains, forests, and a covered wagon make up the scene on the shield, while a plow and a pickax are beneath a banner with the words “The Union.” The crest of the shield is an American eagle with two ships sailing on the Pacific Ocean below. The ships, a British ship departing and an American trade vessel arriving, symbolize commerce and the emergence of the United States as a new power. |
| Pennsylvania Flag **PENNSYLVANIA STATE FLAG** |
| As the second state to join the Union in 1787, Pennsylvania authorized its first State Flag in 1799 composed of the State Coat of Arms on a deep blue field. Containing the elements of the State Seal, the Coat of Arms was that of Provincial Pennsylvania’s Penn family, first appearing on printed money issued by the state in 1777. On it two black draft horses are supporting a shield with an American eagle as a crest and a red ribbon with the words “Virtue, Liberty and Independence” beneath it. On the shield are a ship, a plough, and three sheaves of wheat with a corn stalk and an olive branch below. During the Civil War, Pennsylvania regiments carried the Stars and Stripes, substituting the Pennsylvania Coat of Arms for the field of stars. The legislature further standardized the design in 1907, specifying the blue as the same as “Old Glory.” |
| Rhode Island Flag **RHODE ISLAND STATE FLAG** |
| As the last of the original 13 colonies to join the Union, it took the state of Rhode Island over 100 years to formally adopt a state flag. Although the flag’s main feature, an anchor, was adopted as the official seal when “Providence Plantations” was established in the mid 1600s, Rhode Island only officially adopted a state flag in 1897. It was the third state to do so, after New York and New Jersey. On a white field is a gold anchor encircled by 13 gold stars representing the 13 original colonies. Beneath the anchor is the motto “Hope” in gold letters on a blue ribbon. The stars and anchor are outlined in the same blue. The colors blue and white were carried over from flags flown by Rhode Island regiments during the American Revolution, the War of 1812, and the Mexican War. |
| South Carolina Flag **SOUTH CAROLINA STATE FLAG** |
| While the crescent shape on the South Carolina flag is considered by many to symbolize the moon, it actually is representative of the crescent shape on the front of the caps worn by Revolutionary War soldiers from SC. The palmetto tree, also indicative of the Revolutionary War, was added in 1861 to recognize their importance in defending the soldiers on Sullivan’s Island during bombardment from the British. The soft wood of the palmetto was able to absorb the force of the cannon balls launched by British ships keeping the soldiers safe. The final aspect of the flag is the dark blue color of the background, which signifies the color of the uniforms worn by South Carolina’s soldiers during the Revolutionary War. |
| South Dakota Flag **SOUTH DAKOTA STATE FLAG** |
| South Dakota adopted its first state flag in 1909, a decade after achieving statehood. This official flag featured a golden sun with the words “South Dakota” above and “The Sunshine State” below, also in gold. On the reverse side was the Great Seal of the State of South Dakota picturing a steamboat on a river with a farmer plowing a field in the foreground and mountains in the distance. Above the scene on a ribbon is the state motto “Under God the People Rule.” Since it was more expensive to produce a flag with different designs on each side, the legislature passed a bill adding the seal to the center of the sun and making the design the same on both sides. South Dakota conceded “The Sunshine State” motto to Florida in 1992 when legislation was enacted changing the official state motto to “The Mount Rushmore State.” Flags made prior to July 1, 1992, however, remained legal until supplies were depleted. |
| Tennessee Flag **TENNESSEE STATE FLAG** |
| In 1917, a National Geographic magazine article explained that the three stars on the Tennessee flag characterized the fact that TN was the third state to be admitted into the Union after the original thirteen. The creator of the flag, Capt. LeRoy Reeves, admitted after the article was circulated that this fact had nothing to do with his design. Rather, Capt. Reeves utilized the stars to represent the three different regions of the state of Tennessee: West, Middle, and East. The three stars remain together due to the blue circle that encompasses them, “an indissoluble trinity” as described by the captain. |
| Texas Flag **TEXAS STATE FLAG** |
| The design of the Texas flag is based on the principles of the state itself. Seemingly simple in design, the Texas state flag incorporates many values that both Texans and Americans in general hold in the highest regard. The red, white, and blue colors used for the flag represent bravery, purity, and loyalty respectively. The Lone Star flag was officially adopted in 1839 and each point of the star on the flag has been given an unofficial meaning. The author Adina de Zavala described how each point stands for the characteristics of an outstanding citizen which are: fortitude, loyalty, righteousness, prudence, and broadmindedness. |
| Utah Flag **UTAH STATE FLAG** |
| In 1913, Utah adopted an official state flag consisting of a gold circle around the Great Seal of Utah, adopted in 1896, which was the year Utah became the 45th state to join the Union. Centered on a dark blue background, the Seal is made up of the coat of arms featuring a beehive flanked by sego lilies, the state flower. The state motto “Industry” arches above the beehive with “Utah” below. An eagle ready for flight perches on top of the coat of arms with six arrows beneath it. Two American flags flank the arms with their flagstaffs crossed to enclose two dates: 1847, the year Brigham Young and his Mormon followers arrived in the Salt Lake Valley, and 1896, the year of statehood. Initially, Utah code called for “1847” to be placed on the coat of arms. However, an error was made in 1922 placing the date beneath the arms on the Seal itself, and this design remains on the flag to this day. |
| Vermont Flag **VERMONT STATE FLAG** |
| Although Vermont’s legislature adopted an official state flag in 1923, several designs of record prior to that should be noted. The first Vermont flag, created in 1803, was a militia flag and had 17 stars and 17 alternating red and white stripes with “Vermont” in upper case above the stars and stripes. In 1837, Vermont changed its design to include 13 stripes and one large star on a blue background. Within the star was the State Coat of Arms. A large pine tree, a cow, and three sheaves of wheat form a landscape on the Coat of Arms with mountains rising in the background. A buck’s head forms the crest of the arms with two pine boughs on either side crossed under a red ribbon with the words “Vermont” and “Freedom and Unity” below. Since this design was readily confused with the United States flag, especially at a distance, Vermont regiments traditionally went into battle carrying a flag composed of the State Coat of Arms on a field of blue. In 1923, this design became the official state flag as we know it today. |
| Virginia Flag **VIRGINIA STATE FLAG** |
| The Virginia flag, like those of several other original colonies, incorporates symbols representative of the time in which they were created, mainly during the Revolutionary War. The VA seal was conceived around 1776 and it shows two figures, a female standing over a fallen male. The female, who is garbed in ancient Greek apparel holding both spear and sword, is a portrayal of Virginia and Liberty. The male is shown wearing the uniform of a Roman soldier with a fallen crown on the ground near him, his role is that of King George III and Tyranny. The seal may have been created decades prior, but the actual flag of Virginia was not created until 1861 where the seal was placed on a dark blue flag. |
| [Washington Flag](http://www.allstarflags.com/category/state-flags-nylon/washington-state-flags-nylon/) **WASHINGTON STATE FLAG** |
| Although Washington became the 42nd state to join the Union in 1889, it did not adopt an official state flag until more than 30 years later in 1923. This design includes the State Seal centered on a field of deep green. The State Seal is composed of a bust of George Washington, the first American president, on an oriental blue background. Designed in 1889 by Charles Talcott, the seal is encircled by the words “The Seal of the State of Washington” on a yellow background with “1889” at the bottom. Since the State Seal appears on both sides of the flag, it is one of the most expensive flags to produce. The Washington State Flag is also the only flag featuring a green field and a person, much less an American president. |
| West Virginia Flag **WEST VIRGINIA STATE FLAG** |
| West Virginia broke away from the state of Virginia and joined the Union as a free state on June 20, 1863. Later that year, the legislature adopted an official State Seal, the central part of the West Virginia Coat of Arms, which would become the most prominent element of the state flag. The State Seal pictures a farmer and a miner standing on either side of a large boulder featuring the date “June 20, 1863” with two crossed rifles in front of them. A red liberty cap, the symbol of freedom, rests on top of the rifles. Below is a red ribbon with the state motto: “Montani Semper Liberi” which means “Mountaineers are always free” in Latin. The Seal is topped by a red ribbon with the words “State of West Virginia” and encircled by a wreath of Rhododendron maximum or “great laurel,” the state flower. The legislature adopted this design as the official flag of West Virginia in 1929. |
| Wisconsin Flag **WISCONSIN STATE FLAG** |
| The Wisconsin State Flag was adopted in 1913 and amended in 1979 to include the name of the state as well as the date of statehood. The flag features the state motto “Forward” at the top and just below is the state animal, the badger. The sailor and miner represent the people working on water and land. The cornucopia and lead highlight the states farm products and minerals. A shield is featured in the center of the flag highlighting Wisconsin’s main industries: Navigation, Mining, Agriculture and Manufacturing. |
| Wyoming Flag **WYOMING STATE FLAG** |
| The Wyoming State Flag was designed by Verna Keays, who was 24 at the time, as part of a contest sponsored by the Wyoming DAR in 1916. It is said that the original design had the bison facing the fly end but that was reversed to the current state with the Bison facing the hoist as bison are known to weather the harsh winter by facing into the wind. The Great Seal of the State of Wyoming serves as the heart of the flag; as well as the bison. |



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