



The FLAG

No one knows with absolute certainty who designed the first stars and stripes or who made it. Francis Hopkinson seems most likely to have designed it, and few historians believe that Betsy Ross, a Philadelphia seamstress, made the first one.

The national flag of the United States of America consists of thirteen equal horizontal stripes of red (top and bottom) alternating with white, with a blue rectangle in the canton (referred to specifically as the “union”) bearing fifty small, white, five-pointed stars arranged in nine offset horizontal rows of six stars (top and bottom) alternating with rows of five stars. The 50 stars on the flag represent the 50 states and the 13 stripes represent the thirteen British colonies that rebelled against the British monarchy and became the first states in the Union. Nicknames for the flag include the “Stars and Stripes”, “Old Glory”, and “The Star-Spangled Banner”.

Until the Executive Order of June 24, 1912, neither the order of the stars nor the proportions of the flag was prescribed. Flags dating before this period sometimes show unusual arrangements of the stars and odd proportions, these features being left to the discretion of the flag maker. In general, however, straight rows of stars and proportions similar to those later adopted officially were used. The principal acts affecting the flag of the United States are the following:

- On June 14, 1777, in order to establish an official flag for the new nation, the Continental Congress passed the first Flag Act: “Resolved, That the flag of the United States be made of thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new Constellation.”
- Act of April 4, 1818 - provided for 13 stripes and one star for each state, to be added to the flag on the 4th of July following the admission of each new state, signed by President Monroe.
- Executive Order of President Taft dated June 24, 1912 — established proportions of the flag and provided for arrangement of the stars in six horizontal rows of eight each, a single point of each star to be upward.
- Executive Order of President Eisenhower dated January 3, 1959 — provided for the arrangement of the stars in seven rows of seven stars each, staggered horizontally and vertically.
- Executive Order of President Eisenhower dated August 21, 1959 — provided for the arrangement of the stars in nine rows of stars staggered horizontally and eleven rows of stars staggered vertically.



The MOTTO

“IN GOD WE TRUST” [Official]

The official United States motto was first seen on a coin during the Civil War in 1864. But it was only much later on July 30, 1956 during the cold war it was proclaimed by Congress and signed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower into law.

The official adoption was an attempt to differentiate between the West’s Christian values and the atheistic values of communism.

If we go further back, the United States motto was born out of a wish to combine religious and national sentiments. The initial promoter was a Rev. M.R. Watkinson of Ridleyville PA who ambitiously wrote several letters to the Secretary of Treasury, Salmon P Chase, suggesting among other things “God, Liberty, Law”.

This specific suggestion in itself was not accepted but the idea of fusing religious and national feelings was, so in 1863 James Pollock (Director of the Mint) was asked to come up with a United States motto that could be used on coins.

Pollock had quite a few suggestions: “God Our Trust”, “God and Our Country”, “Our God and Our Country”, and “Our Trust Is In God”.

Chase chose a variation of the above “In God We Trust”. The sentiment behind the U.S motto was that the Union sided with God in relation to the issue of slavery.

“E PLURIBUS UNUM” [Former Unofficial Motto]

This United states motto is a Latin motto which in English mean “One From Many” or “One From Many Parts”.

This U.S. motto became part of the great seal in 1782 and was considered the national motto. The symbolic meaning behind the motto was the great value of fusing of many different parts into one strong unit — from individual units to a federal state.





The PLEDGE of ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was written in August 1892 by Francis Bellamy. It was originally published in *The Youth's Companion* on September 8, 1892. Bellamy had hoped that the pledge would be used by citizens in any country.

In its original form it read:

"I pledge allegiance to my Flag and the Republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

In 1923, the words, "the Flag of the United States of America" were added. At this time it read:

"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."

In 1954, in response to the Communist threat of the times, President Eisenhower encouraged Congress to add the words "under God," creating the 31-word pledge we say today. Bellamy's daughter objected to this alteration. Today it 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."

Section 4 of the Flag Code states:

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag: "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.", should be rendered by standing at attention facing the flag with the right hand over the heart. When not in uniform men should remove any non-religious headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. Persons in uniform should remain silent, face the flag, and render the military salute."

The original Bellamy salute, first described in 1892 by Francis Bellamy, who authored the original Pledge, began with a military salute, and after reciting the words "to the flag," the arm was extended toward the flag.

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, 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, toward the Flag, and remains in this gesture till the end of the affirmation; whereupon all hands immediately drop to the side.

The Youth's Companion, 1892

Shortly thereafter, the pledge was begun with the right hand over the heart, and after reciting "to the Flag," the arm was extended toward the Flag, palm-down.

The SEAL

The Great Seal of the United States is used to authenticate certain documents issued by the United States federal government. The phrase is used both for the physical seal itself (which is kept by the United States Secretary of State), and more generally for the design impressed upon it. The Great Seal was first used publicly in 1782.

The obverse of the great seal is used as the national coat of arms of the United States. It is officially used on documents such as United States passports, military insignia, embassy placards, and various flags. As a coat of arms, the design has official colors; the physical Great Seal itself, as affixed to paper, is monochrome.

Since 1935, both sides of the Great Seal have appeared on the reverse of the one-dollar bill. The Seal of the President of the United States is directly based on the Great Seal, and its elements are used in numerous government agency and state seals.

SYMBOLS ON OBVERSE OF GREAT SEAL

Eagle: In the center of the seal is a bald eagle. The eagle holds a scroll in its beak inscribed with the Latin motto *E pluribus Unum* — which means *Out of Many, One* (one nation created from 13 colonies). The eagle grasps an olive branch in its left talons and a bundle of thirteen arrows in its right. The olive branch and arrows are symbols for the power of peace and war.

Shield: A shield with thirteen red and white stripes covers the eagle's breast. The shield is supported solely by the American eagle as a symbol that Americans rely on their own virtue.

The red and white stripes of the shield represent the states united under and supporting the blue, which represents the President and Congress. The color white is a symbol of purity and innocence; red represents hardiness and valor; and blue signifies vigilance, perseverance, and justice.

Cloud: Above the eagle's head is a cloud surrounding a blue field containing thirteen stars which form a constellation. The constellation denotes that a new State is taking its place among other nations.

SYMBOLS ON REVERSE OF GREAT SEAL

Pyramid: The seal's reverse side contains a 13-step pyramid with the year 1776 in Roman numerals at the base.

Eye: At the top of the pyramid is the Eye of Providence with the Latin motto *Annuit Coeptis*


in the sky above — meaning *It (the Eye of Providence) is favorable to our undertakings or He favors our undertakings.*

Scroll: Below the pyramid, a scroll reads *Novus Ordo Seclorum* — Latin for *New Order of the Ages* which refers to 1776 as the beginning of the American new era.





★ The ★
**NATIONAL
ANTHEM**



“The Star-Spangled Banner” is the national anthem of the United States of America. The lyrics come from “Defence of Fort McHenry”, a poem written in 1814 by lawyer and amateur poet, Francis Scott Key, after witnessing the bombardment of Fort McHenry by the British Royal Navy ships in Chesapeake Bay during the Battle of Fort McHenry in the War of 1812.

The poem was set to the tune of a popular British song written by John Stafford Smith for the Anacreontic Society, a men’s social club in London. “The Anacreontic Song” (or “To Anacreon in Heaven”), with various lyrics, was already popular in the United States. Set to Key’s poem and renamed “The Star-Spangled Banner”, it would soon become a well-known American patriotic song.

“The Star-Spangled Banner” was recognized for official use by the Navy in 1889 and the President in 1916, and was made the national anthem by a congressional resolution on March 3, 1931, which was signed by President Herbert Hoover.

Before 1931, other songs served as the hymns of American officialdom. “Hail, Columbia” served this purpose at official functions for most of the 19th century. “My Country, ‘Tis of Thee”, whose melody is identical to the British national anthem, also served as a *de facto* anthem before the adoption of “The Star-Spangled Banner”. Following the War of 1812 and subsequent American wars, other songs would emerge to compete for popularity at public events, among them “The Star-Spangled Banner”.

