



Project Try-It Activity

Illinois 4-H Youth Development Program

Passport to the World

DESIGN A FLAG

Explore flags of the world, learn the basics of flag design, then use those principles to create your own flag for your family, club, city or self!

Activity Time: 25 minutes | Recommended Ages: 8 to 18

SUPPLY LIST

- Computer, tablet or phone with internet access
- [“Good” Flag, “Bad” Flag](#) by Ted Kaye (pdf)
- Construction paper or plain white paper
- Scissors
- Glue or glue stick
- Markers, crayons or colored pencils

WATCH IT!

View a video tutorial of this activity by using the qr code (right) or visiting: <https://youtu.be/yzsufuWYiI>



ACTIVITY DIRECTIONS

1. Visit The World Factbook Flags of the World reference online at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/flagsoftheworld.html>.



2. Browse through the flags and find one that you think is interesting.
3. When you find a flag that you like, click on the “FLAG” button to see the flag larger and read the flag description. In this description you should learn about what the various colors, shapes and designs on the flag mean (see below).





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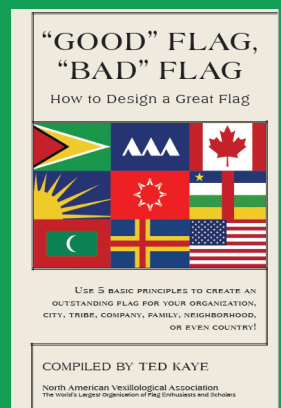
- Continue browsing and learn about the meaning behind the designs of other flags you think are neat.



- After you've browsed a few flags, take time to review the 5 basic principles of flag design in brief below or in-depth in ["Good" Flag, "Bad" Flag](#), a reference guide from the North American Vexillological Association.

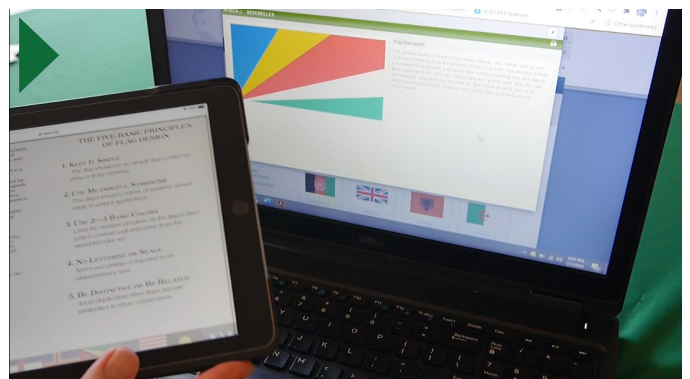
5 PRINCIPLES OF FLAG DESIGN

- Keep It Simple** - The flag should be so simple that a child can draw it from memory.
- Use Meaningful Symbolism** - The flag's images, colors, or patterns should relate to what it symbolizes.
- Use 2 or 3 Basic Colors** - Limit the number of colors on the flag to three that contrast well.
- No Lettering or Seals** - Never use writing of any kind or an organization's seal.
- Be Distinctive or Be Related** - Avoid duplicating other flags, but use similarities to show connections.



- Go back to one of the flags you identified in steps 2 or 4, and compare the flag to the 5 principles of flag design. Determine if the flag you chose follows all of the principles or not. For example, looking at the flag of the Seychelles at right, it meets all but one of the principles.

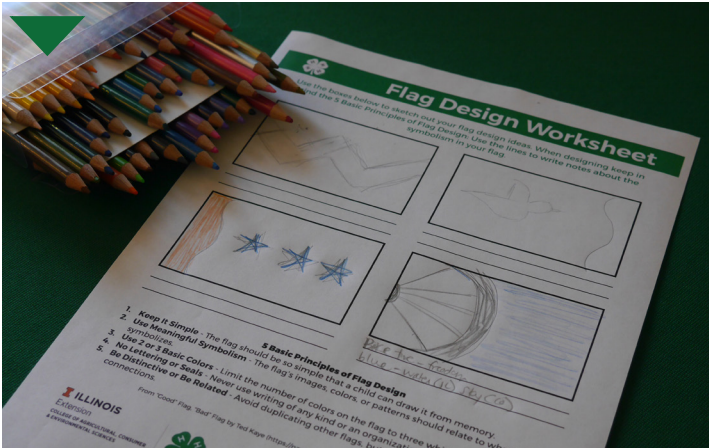
- Keep it simple
- Use meaningful symbolism
- Use 2-3 basic colors
- No lettering or seals
- Be distinctive or be related





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- Using the flag design principles use your chosen art or craft materials to create your own flag for your family, club, city or self! Try to follow as many of the 5 principles of flag design as possible, but remember that they are just guidelines, and a number of “good” flags break at least one principle. You may want to consider using our flag design worksheet (<https://uofi.box.com/v/flagdesignworksheet>) to sketch out your designs first before you make them larger. Designing on a small scale like this helps ensure you don’t make your design too complex. Not sure what your colors should symbolize? Do internet research on color meaning for ideas (like these from Graphix: <https://grafix.com/color-psychology-emotion-meaning-poster/>)



- Once you have finished your flag, share the flag, and the meaning behind each of the color, pattern or image choices, with a friend or family member.



Flag Sharing Example

- The jagged white stripe represents the snow-covered mountains, where I like to hike and explore.
- The green field at the top represents nature, where I like to spend my time. It also expresses the personal growth that I always pursue. Green is also my favorite color.
- The blue stripe represents Lake Michigan, which is where I grew up, and the blue sky of Colorado, where I lived for six years. Both places feel like “home” and are important to me.

APPLY IT

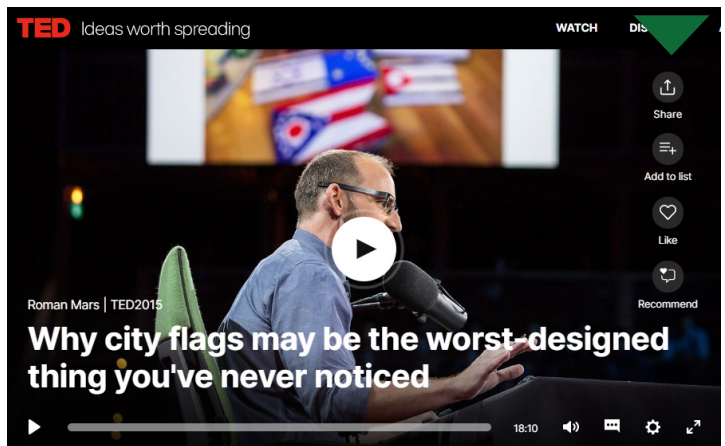
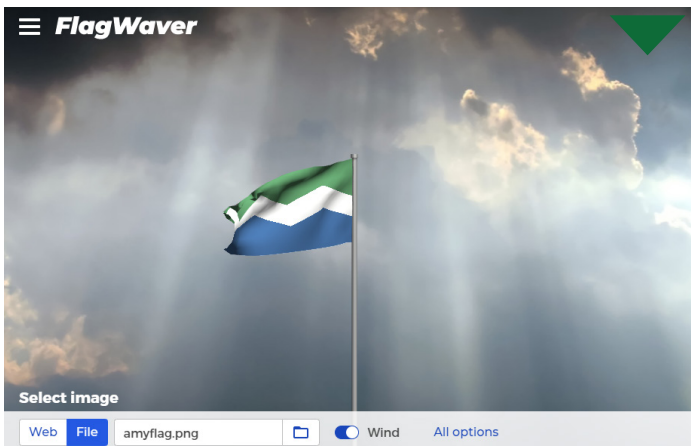
Flags are just one way that a place, like a nation, can represent themselves. Flags are usually rectangular in shape, made of cloth, and designed to be seen at a distance. Flags were first used for military purposes thousands of years ago, and now are mostly associated with countries and cities. Flags can be a symbol that people can unite behind, especially during competitive events like the World Cup and Olympics.



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Now that you've started to explore the world of flags and the nations that fly them, what can you do next?

- Make your flag design digital (take a picture of it, or re-create it on a computer) and then use a free resource like FlagWaver (<https://krikenoid.github.io/flagwaver/>) to see it “fly” (below left).
- Take a look at your current municipal (town or city) flag. Does it follow the principles of good flag design? If not, consider getting civically engaged by leading the charge to change it! Read more about recent municipal flag improvement projects (<https://portlandflag.org/municipal-flag-improvement/>) and watch this TED Talk by Roman Mars (<https://bit.ly/2ZSjqfl>) for inspiration (below right).



- Choose a country flag you admire and do some internet research to learn more about it! Go find the country on a world map. Learn about its major tourist attractions. Find out how many people live there and what languages they speak. Share what you learned with family or friends.
- Does the country you selected speak a language other than one you speak? Consider signing up for a free language learning tool like Duolingo (<https://www.duolingo.com>) or Babbel (<https://www.babbel.com>) to learn some basic words and phrases from that country.

PROJECT CONNECTION

Did you have fun learning about flags and their meaning, and then creating your own? If you like to learn about other countries, and their symbols, customs and people, Passport to the World is the project for you. In this project, you can study a country's government, agriculture, housing and industry, and also explore cultures through food, clothing, music and crafts.

REFERENCES

- “Good” Flag, “Bad” Flag (North American Vexillological Association) at <https://nava.org/good-flag-bad-flag/>
- Flags (Wikipedia) at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flag>

Find your local 4-H office at go.illinois.edu/FindYour4HOffice.
Learn more about Illinois 4-H at 4h.extension.illinois.edu.

