



# Lesson Plan

## *Present Your Colors*

### Grades

4, 5, 6

### Subjects

math, social studies

### Time Allotted

45 minutes

### Setting

classroom

### Group size

20 to 30 students

### Skills

listening, following directions, recalling important facts,  
group cooperation

### Methods

The learner will develop an understanding of how flags were used during the Civil War by participating within a team to create and design a flag.

### Materials

Poster board, construction paper, markers or crayons, scissors, glue, photographs or pictures of Civil War flags

### Keywords

**Banner:** a rectangular flag used by a king, prince, duke, or other noble. The coat of arms of the owner covers the banner's entire surface. The term is also loosely applied to a national flag (The "Star-Spangled Banner").

**Canton:** the quarters of a flag, especially the top quarter of the hoist.

**Colors:** the national and regimental or armorial flags carried by dismounted organizations (such as a color guard). The term also applies to the national ensign flown aboard a naval vessel.

**Emblazon:** to adorn a shield or flag

**Field:** the ground of each division of a flag.

**Fly:** the edge of a flag farthest from the staff.

**Hoist:** (n.) the edge of a flag nearest the staff. (vb.) to raise a flag.

**Hoist rope:** the rope on which a flag is flown on a flagpole.

**Jack:** a flag flown at the bow of warships when anchored; it usually incorporates segments of the national flag.

**Staff:** a small pole from which a flag is flown.

**Union:** a flag or device of a flag symbolizing the union of countries or states.

### Objectives

At the end of the activity, students will be able to:

- Describe the significance of certain flags and their symbols used during the Civil War.
- Demonstrate symbolic representation by creating and designing their own team flag.
- Explain their team's flag to the class.



### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The use of flags (also known as colors) to represent a common bond within a group of people developed more than 1000 years ago. Flags have been designed for nations, states, groups, and organizations. During battles, flags were held high and symbolized a fighting spirit. Flags used during battles became physically and psychologically important. When voices and bugles could not be heard, flags became the only source of communication. Flags helped soldiers identify regiments and direction, and served as a rallying point if the soldiers became scattered.

Color-bearers were chosen for bravery and courage since their position was the most dangerous in the regiment. Soldiers knew the significance of the flag, and color-bearers were prime targets. The flag passed through several hands as bearers were wounded or killed.

Much planning goes into creating a flag. The Confederate States of America developed several flags from 1861 to 1864. The new flag adopted in 1861 had a canton of blue with a circle of seven stars representing the seven Confederate States at that time. The field had three broad stripes of equal width. The top and bottom stripes were of red and the middle one was white. This flag was the official flag of the Confederacy and was nicknamed “the Stars and Bars.” The Confederate “Battle Flag” of the Army of Northern Virginia was adopted in October 1861. This flag consisted of a blue St. Andrew’s cross edged in white on which were the thirteen white stars, one for each state now considered a part of the Confederate States of America, on a field of red. One other flag was designed but not officially adopted until after the collapse of the Confederacy.

### ACTIVITIES

*after sharing background information with students*

- Review the importance of flags by asking students their purpose, why they are used, and how they are used today.
- Ask students to list the responsibilities of the color-bearer. Ask students if they would like to have been a color-bearer.
- Explain the parts of a flag to students.
- Ask students to point out flags they have seen and what they represent.

- Divide the class into 4-6 teams and place in designated area with needed materials. Allow students to create and design a team flag with symbols.
- After completion of flags, have students choose a spokesperson or “color-bearer” to explain their flag and symbols to the class and how it represents their group.

### FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- Students will complete a crossword puzzle consisting of flag terms and their definitions.
- Students will research and write a short essay on the history and design of a state flag of their choice.
- Signal Corps activity in this guide.

### RESOURCES

Bowman, Forest J. “The Unfurled,” *Civil War Times Illustrated*, Volume X, Number 9, January 1972, 24-35.

Cameron, Devereaux D. *The Flags of the Union, An Illustrated History*. Pelican Publishing Company, Gretna, Louisiana. 1994.

Cannon, Devereaux D. *The Flags of the Confederacy, An Illustrated History*. 1986.

Maudaus, Howard Michael. *The Battle Flags of the Confederate Army of Tennessee*. Milwaukee Public Museum, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. 1976.

Williams, Earl P. *What you should know about the Flags of the Confederacy*. Thomas Publications, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. 1993.