MY OWN FLAG

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MY OWN FLAG

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A VexiKid KitTM

PREFACE

FLAGS: A SPECIAL WAY TO EXPLORE THE WORLD

Flags are among the most powerful and emotion-laden symbols used by human beings. Beautiful to behold, flags are intriguing for the ideas represented by their colors and emblems. Like postage stamps, flags can mark a path of discovery of world geography as well as the social and political history of Earth's many different peoples. This kit has been created so you may enjoy the fun of learning about the world through flags.

While some of the projects proposed in the kit are challenging, you can enjoy doing them with the help of someone who has more experience in finding information on the internet or in reference books in the public library. However, the basic ideas are simple, for the best flags, even some of the more complicated ones, are themselves simple. And you will love flags.

Along the way you will encounter a few big words. The study of flags is called *vexillology*. The word is derived from the Latin word *vexillum*, the *gonfalon*-shaped banner on a pole that Roman troops carried in front of their marching columns. One who studies flags is a *vexillologist*. Truly complex is the archaic terminology of the related field of *heraldry* on which some flags are based, but that immense and interesting subject is not touched on in this beginner's kit.

On the pages of the collection of flag images there are questions designed to stimulate further exploration among the flags in this catalog and in other sources of facts about flags. (The answers are shown on a separate page). Maps, for example, can be found on the internet, and Wikipedia has a wealth of information about each flag illustrated in this catalog. An atlas on your own bookshelf will be found handy, too.

I hope that you experience many hours of pleasant and rewarding enjoyment from this kit about flags and flag-making.

—James F. Babcock, *Vexillonnaire*, member North American Vexillological Association

FLAG DESIGN ISN'T HARD

Wouldn't you like to make a flag that was your very own flag? You can do it!

Flags are *symbols*. A symbol is something you can see that stands for something else. A symbol is like a name you can see without seeing any letters. For example, when Americans say the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, they say "and for the Republic for which it stands."

If you have your own flag, it is something people can see and know that it stands for you. But you wouldn't put your name on your flag. Lots of flags do have words on them, but it's hard to read the words when the flag is drooping or even when it is waving in the wind. And flag material is often so thin that you can see through it. As a result, when you look at the back side of the flag the words appear backwards! For the same reason—because it's hard to see—you would not put a picture of your face on your flag.

The best flags are really very simple. They have no words and pictures, and they have only a few colors—usually not more than three or four. However some very pretty flags do use more than four colors. The flag of Virginia has words, pictures, and eleven colors!—but it is still a handsome flag.

Instead of pictures, flags often show other symbols. For example, the American flag has lots of stars with five points. Each star is a symbol for one of the fifty states in the U.S.A. This national flag also has thirteen stripes—seven red stripes and six white stripes. Each stripe stands for one of the states that existed when the U.S.A. was created over two hundred years ago. Carefully selected symbols make a flag different from all other flags.

As you can see, a well-designed flag tells a story about what it stands for. Even the colors in most flags have a symbolic meaning. For example, many of the flags of the Arab countries in north Africa have green as one of their colors. The green stands for the Muslim religion, which is the main religion of those countries. Countries in the south of Africa also use green in their flags, but in this case it stands for agriculture as most of the people are farmers.

JOE

JOE



Virginia



United States of America



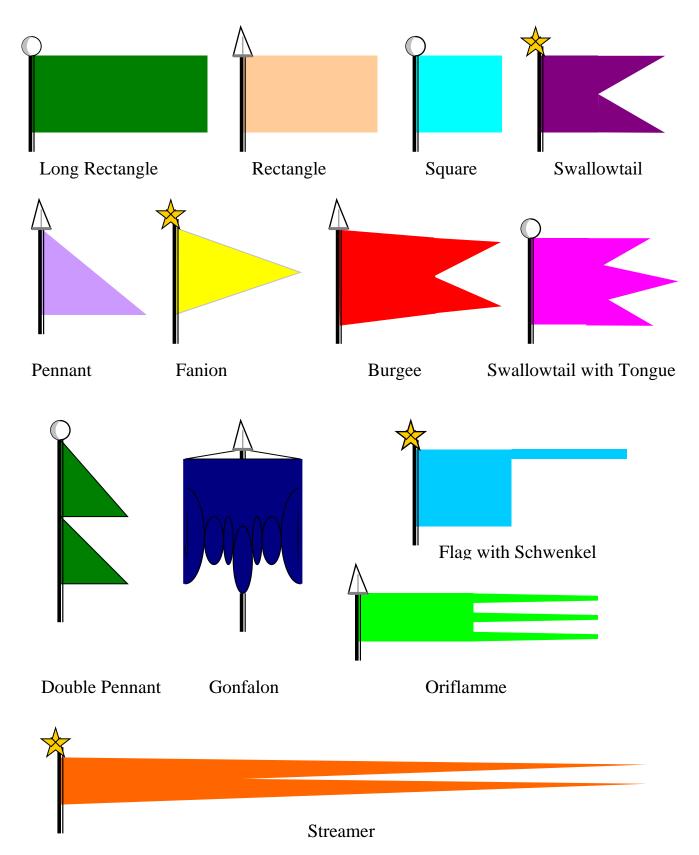
Mauritania



Namibia

There is much more you can eventually learn about flags. But right now you already know a lot of what you need to know to get started on designing your own flag!

FLAGS COME IN DIFFERENT SHAPES



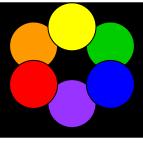
FLAGS USE SIMPLE COLORS

There are lots and lots of colors.

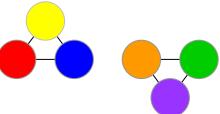
This *color wheel* shows many of them:



Most flags use only a few of the basic colors:

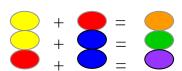


Yellow, Red, and Blue are *Primary Colors*:



Orange, Green, and Purple are Secondary Colors:

The secondary colors are made by mixing pairs of the primary colors: (Try it with your pens or crayons.)



Mixing all the colors makes white:



Black is the absence of color:



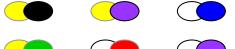
Adding black to a color makes its *shade*:



Adding white to a color makes its *tint:*



Contrasting colors means pairing a light color with a dark color. Here are six examples:



Clashing colors don't look well together:



Complementary colors often look nice.
There are four main pairs:



Most flags have bright contrasting or complementary colors, some in shades or tints.

THE COLORFUL FLAG OF VIRGINIA

This flag has eleven colors. Can you find all of them?



The symbol on this flag is the State Seal of Virginia. "SIC SEMPER TYRANNIS" means "Thus always to Tyrants." Many other U.S. state flags show their state seals.

Does the flag of y	our state, province, or count	ry have a seal? Yes No	_
My state, o	r province, or country is		
How many colors	are there in your flag?	What colors are they?	
1.	<u>4.</u>	<u>7. </u>	
2.	5.	8.	
<u>3.</u>	6.	9.	

SOME GOOD AND NOT SO GOOD FLAGS

Noted flag expert Ted Kaye lists five principles for designing your flag:

- **1. Keep it Simple**. Anyone should be able to draw your flag from memory.
- **2.** Use meaningful symbols. The colors, patterns, and images should tell about you, for example: where you live, what you like, and what you do.
- **3.** Use no more than three colors. Select contrasting standard colors.
- **4.** Use no lettering or seals. Omit pictures and writing.
- **5. Be distinctive or be related.** Avoid copying other flags, but do use similar features from other flags to show a relationship.

The flag of the U.S. state of New Mexico is an excellent example of good design:

- 1. It is certainly very simple!
- 2. The colors and Indian sun symbol suggest the state's hot climate and its famous Indian tribes.
- 3. There are only two colors.
- 4. There are no words and the state seal is not shown.
- 5. The flag is different from any other flag in the world.



New Mexico

There are many other well-designed flags, like these. New Zealand's is an example of rule #5: The flag in the canton shows the country's historic relation to England.







Benin



Bosnia & Herzogovina



Hampton Roads, VA

Many flags break some of the rules, but most of them are still beautiful, like these.



Swaziland



Belize



Montana



Mozambique

Finally, *this* flag breaks almost all the rules of good flag design!



Remember: Flags are made up of symbols, not words or pictures!

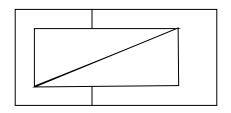
DESIGN YOUR OWN FLAG

Now you know what it takes to design a great flag. Just follow these steps:

1. CHOOSE BRIGHT CONTRASTING COLORS	HERE'S AN EXAMPLE
What are your favorite colors? 1 2 3 4	 BLUE GOLD RED WHITE
2. LIST DISTINCTIVE SYMBOLS	
What is your favorite hobby? What is your favorite food? What is your favorite sport? What is your favorite animal? What instrument do you play? What else are you known for?	COLLECTING SEA SHELLS PIZZA FOOTBALL OCTOPUS DRUMS WRITING POEMS
3. DRAW SIMPLE IMAGES OF YOUR SYMBOLS	
Favorite hobby Favorite food	
Favorite sport	
Favorite animal	
Musical instrument	
What you are known for	
4. CHOOSE A SHAPE FOR YOUR FLAG	
	RECTANGI E

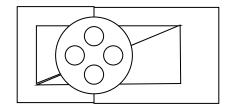
5. OUTLINE YOUR FLAG AND ITS PARTS

Do you want stripes?
Do you want a canton?
What shapes will make it different from all others?
Remember to keep it simple.



6. CHOOSE YOUR BEST SYMBOLS AND DRAW THEM ON YOUR FLAG

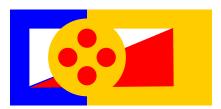
Which are the most distinctive and special to you?
Which will be the easiest for people to understand?
Which will show well when the flag is waving?
How about using only one?



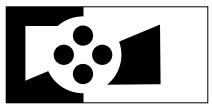
7. COLOR YOUR FLAG

Which colors will look best together?

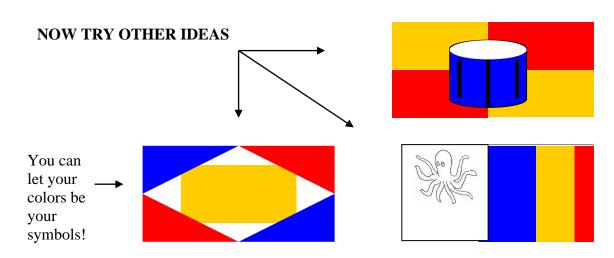
(Do they clash with each other? Do they contrast?)



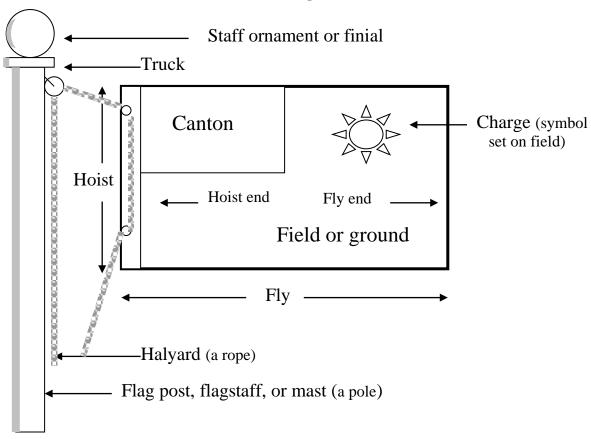
When your flag is printed in black and white, is the design still recognizable?



THAT'S YOUR FIRST ONE! GREAT!



FLAG WORDS



Vexillology is the study of flags. The student of flags is a **vexillologist**. That's you!

WHERE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT FLAGS

Check out books from your public library. Here are two to look for:

Flags of the World by Silvie Bednar

Flags of the Fifty States and Their Incredible Histories by Randy Howe

Study websites on the internet. There are many good sources, including these:

Flags of the World (http://www.fotw.info)

Guide to American Flags (http://wwww.law.ou.edu/hist/flags/)

Wikipedia: Flag (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flag)

SOME FLAG PROJECTS

- 1. Pick your favorite national flags and find their countries on a world map.
- 2. Collect postage stamps that show flags.
- 3. Collect pictures of the flags of your country—states, provinces, counties, cities or military flags. (Find them on the internet or ask your government.)
- 4. Practice writing the names of foreign countries.
- 5. Collect pictures of ancient and medieval flags, then learn about heraldry.
- 6. Learn more about colors and color theory from Internet sites.
- 7. Organize a flag design contest to create a flag for your school or club or town.

FLAGS OF THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD

The following 10 pages show the flags of 231 nations and territories.

The countries and territories are in alphabetical order.

<u>Page 10</u>	Colombia	Honduras	Mongolia	Seychelles
Afghanistan	Congo, Democratic	Hong Kong	Montenegro	Sierra Leone
Albania	Republic of the	Hungary	Montserrat	Singapore
Algeria	Congo, Republic of	Iceland	Morocco	Slovakia
Andorra	Cook Islands	India	Mozambique	Slovenia
Angola	Comoros	Indonesia	Myanmar	Solomon Islands
Anguilla	Costa Rica	Iran	Namibia	Somalia
Antigua and	Cote d'Ivoire	Iraq	Nauru	South Africa
Barbuda	Croatia	Ireland	Nepal	Spain
Argentina	Cuba	Isle of Man	<u>Page 16</u>	Sri Lanka
Armenia	<u>Page 12</u>	Page 14	Netherlands	Sudan
Aruba	Cyprus	Israel	Netherlands Antilles	<u>Page 18</u>
Australia	Czech Republic	Italy	New Caledonia	Suriname
Austria	Denmark	Jamaica	New Zealand	Swaziland
Azerbaijan	Djibouti	Japan	Nicaragua	Sweden
Bahamas	Dominica	Jersey	Niger	Switzerland
Bahrain	Dominican Republic	Jordan	Nigeria	Syria
Bangladesh	East Timor	Kazakhstan	Northern Marianas	Taiwan
Barbados	Ecuador	Kenya	Norway	Tajikistan
Belarus	Egypt	Kiribati	Oman	Tanzania
Belgium	El Salvador	Korea, North	Pakistan	Thailand
Belize	Equatorial Guinea	Korea ,South	Palau	Togo
Benin	Eritrea	Kosovo	Palestine	Tokelau
Bermuda	Estonia	Kuwait	Panama	Tonga
Bhutan	Ethiopia	Kyrgyzstan	Papua New Guinea	Trinidad snd
Bolivia	Falkland Islands	Laos	Paraguay	Tobago
Page 11	Faroe Islands	Latvia	Peru	Tunisia
Bosnia and	Fiji	Lebanon	Philippines	Turkey
Herzogovina	Finland	Lesotho	Pitcairn Island	Turkmenistan
Botswana	France	Liberia	Poland	Turks & Caicos Islands
Brazil	French Polynesia	Libya	Portugal	Tuvalu
British Indian	Gabon	Liechtenstein	Puerto Rico	Uganda
Ocean Territory	Gambia	Lithuania	Qatar	Ukraine
British Virgin	Georgia	Luxembourg	Reunion	United Arab
Islands	Germany	Macau	Page 17	Emirates
Brunei	Page 13	Page 15	Romania	United Kingdom
Bulgaria	Ghana	Macedonia	Russia	United States
Burkina Faso	Gibraltar	Madagascar	Rwanda	of America
Burundi	Greece	Malawi	Saint Helena	Page 19
Cambodia	Greenland	Malaysia	Saint Kitts and Nevis	Uruguay
Cameroon	Grenada	Maldives	Saint Lucia	Uzbekistan
Canada	Guadeloupe	Mali	Saint Lucia Saint. Vincent and	Vanuatu
Cape Verde	Guam	Malta	the Grenadines	
Cayman Islands	Guatemala	Marshall Islands	Samoa	Vatican City Venezuela
Central African			San Marino	Venezueia Vietnam
	Guernsey	Martinique		
Republic	Guiana, French	Mauritania	São Tomé &	Virgin Islands (U.S.)
Chile	Guinea Pissau	Mauritius	Príncipe	Wallis and Futuna
China	Guinea-Bissau	Mexico	Saudi Arabia	Western Sahara
China	Guyana	Micronesia	Senegal	Yemen
Christmas Island	Haiti	Moldova	Serbia	Zambia
		Monaco		Zimbabwe







STARS ON FLAGS. Many flags have stars. The stars on the UNITED STATES flag represent the 50 states. But the stars on the EUROPEAN UNION flag (not shown here) symbolize *completeness* rather than the various countries that are members of the Union.

But stars can also stand for real stars! For example, the flag of CHRISTMAS ISLAND on the previous page has four stars that make up a famous constellation in the night sky—the Southern Cross. Six other flags in this booklet show the same stars. Can you find those six flags?

Why do you suppose all these flags have these same four stars on their flags? (Hint: find their countries on a map of the world.)



SAME NAME. One country has the same name as one of the states in the United States of America. Can you find it in the list of countries on page 9?

Can you find that country on a map?

Can you find that state on a map?

You might think that the country and the state have that same name for the same reason, but they don't. Why not?



NATIONAL SYMBOLS. Lots of flags bear symbols. The symbol always has a special meaning for the country.

For example, the flag of LEBANON shows a cedar tree. Over three thousand years ago, people who called themselves Phoenicians settled villages on a seacoast where the hills were covered with cedar trees. They made ships from the trees and became famous traders by selling the wood to the pharaohs of Egypt. The cedar tree is an old symbol!

Find other flags with interesting symbols. See if you can find out what they mean for their countries by looking up their flags on the Internet.



FLAG SHAPES. All the flags of nations and their territories are rectangles or squares. Or are they? Can you find on this page the only one that is a different shape?

What is the name for this shape? (Hint: See page 2.)

What country does this flag represent?

Can you find that country on a map?

It is one of the highest countries in the world. How high? Look up the country on the internet.



FLAGS AS HISTORY. The colors and emblems used in flags often tell something important about the history of their countries.

On the next page is an especially interesting example—SOUTH AFRICA. This country was once divided between black and white people in a political system called *apartheid*, which means *segregation* in the language of the white people who dominated the blacks. When the blacks finally won equal rights in 1994, a new flag used a Y to show all the people coming together—"the convergence of diverse elements within South African society, taking the road ahead in unity."



ISLAND NATIONS. The flag of Seychelles on this page is very distinctive, don't you think? It is one of the few flags that shows spreading diagonals. Can you find another?

Seychelles is a group of islands in the Indian Ocean. Can you find it on a map?

There are many countries that are islands or groups of islands. See how many flags you can find in this booklet whose country has "Island" in their names.

There are 53 other countries that are also islands or island groups. Can you list them? And there at least five countries that, in pairs, share three big islands. See if you can find them.



SIMILAR NAMES. At least seven countries have names that end in -STAN.

The flags of two of them are on this page.

Can you find the flags of all the others in this booklet?

See if you can find out why the names of these countries end in -STAN.



ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS IN THE FLAG COLLECTION

- p.10 **FLAG COLORS**. Libya uses green to stand for the religion of Islam. The meaning of a flag's colors is special to each particular country, often as a reference to something in its history.
- p.12 **STARS ON FLAGS**. The Southern Cross constellation appears on these seven flags:

Australia Christmas Island Micronesia New Zealand Papua New Guinea Samoa Tokelau.

This constellation can be seen only from Earth's southern hemisphere, and all these countries are located in that half of the world. They also happen to be neighbors in the South Pacific.

- p.13 **SAME NAME**. Georgia, the American state colonized in 1733, was named in honor of King George II of England. In the case of the country of Georgia, the origin of the name is disputed. Some say it was named for Saint George, others that it comes from Greek for "land tillers," while others note that the people of this area were called *Gurghans* when the Persian empire controlled the country many hundreds of years ago.
- p.14 **NATIONAL SYMBOLS**. Wikipedia is one of the best sources of detailed information about national flags. Search by entering "Wikipedia flag of [country name]" in your browser.
- p.15 **FLAG SHAPES**. Nepal's flag is a double pennant. A small country, Nepal is home to the Himalaya mountains, including Mount Everest, which is the world's highest peak at 29,029 feet.
- p.16 **FLAGS AS HISTORY**. The quotation is from Wikipedia's article "Flag of South Africa."
- p.17 **ISLAND NATIONS**. One flag with similar spreading diagonals is that of the Marshall Islands.

The 10 countries or territories with "island" in their names are:

British Virgin Islands	Christmas Island	Cook Islands	Faroe Islands	Juan de Nova Island
Marshall Islands	Norfolk Island	Pitcairn Island	Solomon Islands	Virgin Islands (U.S.)

The 53 additional countries that are islands or groups of islands are:

Antigua and Barbuda	French Polynesia	Jersey	Philippines	Singapore
Aruba	Gibraltar	Kiribati	Puerto Rico	Sri Lanka
Bahamas	Greenland	Madagascar	Saint Helena	Svalbard
Barbados	Granada	Maldives	Saint Kitts	Taiwan
Bermuda	Guam	Malta	and Nevis	Tokelau
British Indian	Guernsey	Mauritius	Saint Lucia	Tonga
Ocean Territory	Iceland	Micronesia	Saint Vincent and	Trinidad and
Comoros	Indonesia	Nauru	the Grenadines	Tobago
Cuba	Ireland	Netherlands	Samoa	Tuvalu
Cyprus	Isle of Man	Antilles	Saõ Tomé	Vanuatu
East Timor	Jamaica	New Zealand	and Príncipe	Wallis and
Fiji	Japan	Palau	Seychelles	Futuna

Several other countries share a big island rather than being on one of the continents:

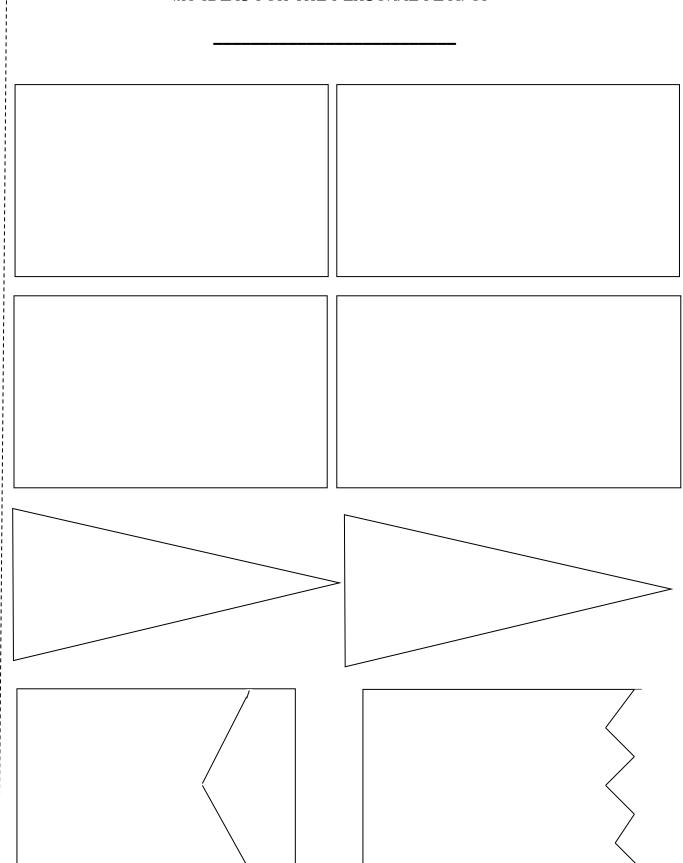
Haiti and the Dominican Republic Brunei and Indonesia Indonesia and Papua New Guinea

p.18 **SIMILAR NAMES**. The 7 countries whose names end in -STAN are:

Afghanistan Kazahkstan Kyrgyzstan Pakistan Tajikistan Turkmenistan Uzbekistan

STAN means *country*, *land*, *or place* in ancient Persian. These countries are all neighbors in the section of middle Asia where that language was once spoken by marauding conquerors.

MY IDEAS FOR THE PERSONAL FLAG OF



MY IDEAS F	OR MY PERS	SUNAL FLA	ն

How are your scissor skills?

Clip out these shapes and move them around to test your flag design ideas. Color your own set of chips like these to have all the pieces you want.

