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## The First Flag: Read, Discuss, Write by Sarah Shively

**Grade Level:** Grade 3

**Subject Area:** English Language Arts

**Lesson Length:** 2 hours

**Lesson Keywords:** reading, writing, history, critical thinking, flag, United States, discussion

**Lesson Description:** This lesson is designed to help students connect with reading passages and improve their reading, writing, and critical thinking skills. This lesson plan engages students, provokes discussion on key pieces of information, encourages students to form opinions, as well as helps them gain insight and analyze text. This lesson plan connects reading, writing, and social studies. Students will build their understanding of the American flag and Independence Day using the reading passage. Students will answer questions based on vocabulary and meaning. Students will discuss information about the flag and its meaning, and answer questions on their experience and knowledge based on the reading and their connections to the text. Students will be able to answer questions using the passage, critical thinking skills, and their own experience as guidance. This lesson plan aligns nine Common Core standards.

### Common Core Standards Covered with This Lesson

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.1: Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

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CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language.

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CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.6: Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters.

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CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.1: Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

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CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.4: Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 3 topic or subject area.

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CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.1: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.

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CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.1b: Provide reasons that support the opinion.

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CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.1d: Provide a concluding statement or section.

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CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.8: Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.

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## Lesson Content: Book/Story/Reading Passage

**Instructions:** Please read the following reading passage as many times as needed (aloud and silent) before starting to go through other lesson pages. Understanding the content of this passage is very important since the lesson activities will be all about this content. Feel free to print the passage if needed.

### The First Flag

by

**Content:** It had been a busy day. I helped Betsy Ross. I am a seamstress. I can sew well. We were tired from sewing. Betsy Ross made her living by sewing for people. She sewed many things. She sewed clothes. She sewed curtains. Every day she would start with a pile of cloth and end with things people needed. Everyone knew she would do a good job. So they came to her home and asked her to sew for them. She hired me to help.

One day three men came to her home. They asked her if she could make a flag. I listened to them talk. One of them was named George Washington. I had heard of him. There he was. He came to the store in May. I remember it well because it was my birthday. He was leading the army. The army did not have a flag. The army was fighting for freedom. No one knew if we would win.

They showed Betsy Ross a drawing. It was for the flag of the new country. It had stars. It had stripes. It would have stripes and stars. I said, Silver stars would be good. Betsy said, No. It will be too hard to make. It should be red, white, and blue. So we set to work that day.

We worked on the flag for the next month. It would be very big. We had to do other work, too. She said we have to make more clothes to get money. We're doing the flag as a present. We would not be paid for the flag. It would be a present.

Finally the flag was ready. George Washington sent someone to get it. He opened it up and said, This is it. This is just what we need to inspire the army. He did not show it anyone yet, though. He kept it for a special day.

On July 4th, the army flew the new flag. That was the first Independence Day. On that day the United States said it was a new country. It had a new flag. We were not there. But we heard about it later.

The army had to fight more battles. Just saying they were independent did not make it true. The war went on for 7 more years. We worried. We made more flags. In all those battles, soldiers saw that flag. Still, it was hard to win.

When the war ended, the country started. I was proud when I saw the flag. I didn't just make a flag. I was part of making the United States.

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## Task 1: Vocabulary

**Instructions:** Please complete the following vocabulary activity by choosing the correct meaning of each word selected from the passage and use of each word correctly in a sentence.

**Q: 1 WordPhrase:** seamstress **WordPhraseTier:** 3

**Question:** The text says, "I am a seamstress." What does the word seamstress mean in the sentence?

- A: Someone who draws
- B: Someone who sews
- C: Someone in the army
- D: Someone who sells books

**Question:** Which sentence uses the word "seamstress" correctly?

- A: The seamstress sewed the dress.
- B: There is a seamstress who raises sheep at a farm.
- C: When I need a book, I visit the seamstress.
- D: The seamstress taught me how to dance.

**Q: 2 WordPhrase:** inspire **WordPhraseTier:** 2

**Question:** George Washington said, "This is just what we need to inspire the army." What does the word inspire mean in the story?

- A: To scare someone
- B: To listen to someone
- C: To influence someone and make them want to do something
- D: To create something for someone

**Question:** Which sentence uses the word "inspire" correctly?

- A: I inspire, so I need to drink some water.
- B: I inspire to listen to music.
- C: Inspire people and they will be upset.
- D: My teacher knows how to inspire me to learn new things.

**Q: 3 WordPhrase:** fight **WordPhraseTier:** 2

**Question:** The text says, "The army had to fight more battles." What does the word fight mean in this sentence?

- A: To have an argument
- B: To feel the need to overcome an obstacle
- C: To box in a boxing match
- D: To go to war and battle

**Question:** Which sentence uses the word "fight" correctly?

- A: The hero will fight the villain in battle.
- B: I fight with my friend when we have different ideas.
- C: There will be a fight between two boxers.
- D: Medicine will help me fight the flu when I am sick.

**Q: 4 WordPhrase:** independent **WordPhraseTier:** 3

**Question:** "The army had to fight more battles. Just saying they were independent did not make it true. The war went on for 7 more years." What does the word independent mean in the story?

- A: To sew flags
- B: To do chores
- C: To be a free country
- D: To cook dinner for family

**Question:** Which sentence uses the word "independent" correctly?

- A: My friend is independent, so he needs help doing chores.
- B: The United States was independent from England, so they could create their own laws.
- C: The boy was an independent reader and needed help from his teacher.
- D: Children are independent from their parents.

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## Task 2: Forum Discussion

**Instructions:** This discussion forum will have questions for students to respond. Read the posted questions, and respond to each. Students are responsible for posting one initial and two peer responses for each topic.

### 1 - How does the author feel?

The writer says, "On that day the United States said it was a new country. It had a new flag. We were not there. But we heard about it later. Describe how you think the writer felt when she heard the news that the United States was a new country, and why you think she felt that way.

### 2 - The flag is an inspiration

George Washington sent someone to pick up the flag. The person said the flag would inspire the soldiers. How do you think the flag inspired the soldiers to fight for freedom and why? Are there certain parts of the flag that are inspirational?

### 3 - The flag had stars and stripes

The author says, "It was for the flag of the new country. It had stars. It had stripes. It would have stripes and stars. What do you think the stars and stripes symbolized on the flag? Why do you think they chose stars and stripes? Do you think they should have chosen something else? If so, what?"

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Task 3: Writing Activity

**Instructions:** Think about how the American flag with the stars and stripes influenced Independence Day. Write about how the flag is important to the United States. How do you think the flag changed how people felt about the United States? What does the flag mean to you and how does it make you feel? When you stand for the pledge of allegiance, what are your thoughts about the flag? Are there any changes you want to make to the flag, like different colors or patterns? If there are, what are the changes and why? Remember to use details and examples in your writing assignment.