



## A Lesson on The First Flag by Alicia Russell

**Grade Level:** Grade 3

**Subject Area:** English Language Arts

**Lesson Length:** 2 hours

**Lesson Keywords:** The First Flag, reading, writing

**Lesson Description:** The goal of this lesson is to give students the opportunity to use their reading, comprehension, and writing skills to reflect upon the first flag of the United States of America. By reading and rereading the story, students are asked questions to guide them through the comprehension of the story and focus is placed upon specific vocabulary words.

### 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.

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.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

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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:** Inspire **WordPhraseTier:** 2

**Question:** The author in our story says "He opened it up and said, 'This is it. This is just what we need to inspire the army.'" What does the word "inspire" mean in this sentence?

- A: make the army want to quit.
- B: make the army want to keep going.
- C: make the army want to sleep.
- D: make the army want to not follow rules.

**Question:** Which one of the sentences below uses the word "inspire" correctly?

- A: Eating dessert will inspire me to go to bed.
- B: The rain inspires me to want to ride my bike outside.
- C: Getting good grades inspires me to do my homework and study for tests.
- D: Yelling at the class will inspire them to do better.

**Q: 2 WordPhrase:** Soldiers **WordPhraseTier:** 3

**Question:** The author in our story says "In all those battles, soldiers saw that flag." What does the word "soldiers" mean in this sentence?

- A: person in the army
- B: a toy figurine
- C: a body part
- D: people who could sew

**Question:** Which one of the sentences below uses the word "soldiers" correctly?

- A: The soldiers worked on the farm.
- B: A soldier sewed the flag.
- C: He was a brave soldier in battle.
- D: I have a sore soldier.

**Q: 3 WordPhrase:** Independent **WordPhraseTier:** 2

**Question:** The author in our story says "The army had to fight more battles. Just saying they were independent did not make it true." What does the word "independent" mean in this sentence?

- A: tired of battles
- B: good fighters
- C: strong
- D: they were free

**Question:** Which one of the sentences below uses the word "independent" correctly?

- A: The zoo has a lot of independent animals.
- B: America is still an independent country.
- C: We are going to the store to get an independent gift.
- D: I independently rode the bus.

**Q: 4 WordPhrase:** Seamstress **WordPhraseTier:** 3

**Question:** The author in our story says "It had been a busy day. I helped Betsy Ross. I am a seamstress. I can sew well." What does the word "seamstress" mean in this sentence?

- A: A woman who is an expert at sewing.
- B: A woman who helps someone all day.
- C: A woman who keeps busy.
- D: A woman who sells things.

**Question:** Which one of the sentences below uses the word "seamstress" correctly?

- A: Sally Seamstress is a very nice friend of mine.
- B: The seamstress swam in the pond.
- C: My seamstress sewed a beautiful blanket for me.
- D: A seamstress has beautiful spotted wings.

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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 and two peer responses for each topic.

### 1 - How does the flag inspire the army?

How was the flag symbolic to the soldier's fight? What did the flag mean to the soldiers?

### 2 - The flag is a present.

Why did Betsy Ross want to give the flag as a gift to George Washington? What do you think making the flag meant to her? Do you think she thought?being a part of it was special?

### 3 - Independence Day

When the soldier's flew the new flag on July 4th, they celebrated the first Independence Day. What was important about celebrating July 4th that year? What traditions?does your family celebrate on the 4th of July each year??

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Task 3: Writing Activity

**Instructions:** Imagine you were Betsy Ross' seamstress helper on the day George Washington and his men came to present their idea of the new flag. In 2 paragraphs explain how you would feel given the importance of the task. What ideas would you give to Betsy Ross and how would you help her in making the flag? Reflect upon whether you agree with the author when they say I was proud when I saw the flag. I didnt just make a flag. I was part of making the United States.?Give specific examples of how you agree or disagree with this statement.

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