



OUR FLAG

UNITY FOR ALL

Lesson Plan: Stars of Freedom

Grade Level: 6-8

Time: 45-60 minutes

Theme: Respecting the American flag through the example of President Eisenhower

Learning Objectives

1. Students will understand the basics of U.S. flag etiquette (how to display, fold, and treat the flag with respect).
2. Students will learn about President Eisenhower's role in shaping the flag's history and his devotion to American values.
3. Students will reflect on how respect for the flag represents respect for the country and its people.

Standards Alignment (Common Core / Social Studies)

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6-8.1:** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6-8.4:** Produce clear and coherent writing/projects appropriate to task and audience.
- **C3 Framework - D2.Civ.2.6-8:** Explain specific roles played by citizens.
- **C3 Framework - D2.His.2.6-8:** Classify series of historical events and developments as examples of change and continuity.

Materials Needed

- Current full-size U.S. flag
- Copy of U.S. flag code: <https://eisenhowerfoundation.net/page/our-flag>
- Slides that accompany this lesson: <https://eisenhowerfoundation.net/page/our-flag>
- If you would prefer students write their answers instead of, or in addition to, oral discussion of questions posed in the slides, have students take out notebook paper and a writing utensil.
- Copies of "How to Fold and American Flag" - Page 8 of this lesson plan.

Lesson Outline

1. Hook

- Use slide 2: Begin with the question: "What does it mean to be proud?" (A: To feel a deep satisfaction or pleasure in one's own achievements or the achievements of one's country.)
- Share your own story or example. Ask students to share a personal story of when they felt proud. Students can answer as a pair and share or a quick write.
- Slide 3: **Patriotism** - Discuss how pride can also connect to how we feel about our country and that it is often shown using our national flag. Point out some of the iconic photos in American history with the flag being raised out of pride and what it stands for (911, Iwo Jima, moon walk, Olympics, singing the national anthem or Pledge of Allegiance at the start of events, etc.)
- Slide 4: Discuss how pride connects to patriotism (Feeling of love for one's country can be shown through patriotic acts)
 - ▶ Discuss our patriotic holidays with students and how they can participate: display flag on front of porch, voting participating in patriotic holidays: 4th of July, Veteran's Day, Flag Day, Memorial Day; and doing community service, learning about our government and practicing civics and citizenship, etc..
 - ▶ Postulate that feelings of pride for our country leads to patriotic acts. It fosters a sense of belonging (unity) and encourages individuals to contribute positively to society (examples: civic engagement, community service, willingness to protect national values).

2. Discussion on Freedoms

- Slide 5: Ask students: What freedoms do we enjoy in the U.S.?" (speech, religion, press, assembly, voting, education, petition the govt., etc.)
 - ▶ Guide discussion: "How do we get those freedoms?" (Constitution & Bill of Rights, democratic form of government, military protection and enforcement). If it fits within your curriculum schedule, this can be a springboard into any one of those topics.
- Slide 6: Discuss with students how the military has secured our freedoms in the past and continues to do so today. Guide student discussion about the idea of sacrifice by soldiers who put their lives on the line to protect our government and American freedoms/way of life.

- ▶ If it fits within your curriculum schedule, this is a great springboard to introduce and/or discuss specific instances in our country's history when the military has been used to secure or enforce our national freedoms, both at home and abroad. (Revolutionary War, WWII, Little Rock Crisis are all examples of different applications of the military to secure freedom)

3. Symbols

- Use slide 7: Define **symbol** (an image or object that stands for an idea). The U.S. flag is a symbol of the freedoms, values, history, and unity of our country.
 - ▶ Each **color** symbolizes an ideal: Blue = Justice; White = Purity; Red = Valor.
 - ▶ Each **star** represents one of our states. The blue portion is called the "**Union.**"
 - ▶ What are some other symbols of the USA? (eagle, Uncle Sam)

4. History: Eisenhower and the flag

- Follow slides 8-16 to introduce the evolution of the flag and its connection to Ike.
- Slide 17 provides an excerpt from Ike's First Inaugural Address that tells us his thoughts on patriotism. Students may need to read along with this, so the text is provided on page 7 of this lesson. An audio clip is also provided on the slide for students to listen to Ike's words. If that is not working, a recording of the address can be found in its entirety at: <https://eisenhowerfoundation.net/primary-source/eisenhowers-first-inaugural-address>.
 - ▶ After reading/hearing Ike's words about patriotism, ask students, "What was Eisenhower's message about patriotism?" and "What does he say each American must do?" (service and commitment to the country)

5. Teaching Flag Etiquette

- Slide 18 - Ask students, "What is the difference between *etiquette* and a *law*?" Have them consider the definitions on the slide. Ask students if they think either etiquette or laws currently exists for how we treat the flag?
- Slide 19 - Provide information about the **U.S. Flag Code** and Patriot's Text Book.
 - ▶ Optional information to provide and discuss: In 1968, in response to anti-war protesters burning the American flag, Congress passed the first federal law against flag desecration. The law imposed a fine of up to \$1,000 and/or one year in prison.
 - ▶ Disrespecting and desecrating the flag used to be a federal crime, but with the 1989 case of *Texas v Johnson*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that flag anti-desecration laws violated the First Amendment right to freedom of speech.

- Slides 20-21 - Class Brainstorm: “What do you think people should do or not do to show respect for the flag?” List ideas on the board.
 - ▶ Show students the official U.S. Flag Code. <https://eisenhowerfoundation.net/page/our-flag>. Point out that according to the Independence Hall Association and USHistory.org, The Flag Code is in no way enforced or reviewed by any U.S. government entity. Compliance with and interpretation of the Flag Code is up to the individual. Therefore, it comes down to flag **etiquette**.
- Slides 22-23: Tell students that the **U.S. Flag Code** contains many specifics about how to display, use and not use, and care for the American flag. Review a few of the most common basic rules included on the slides, and maybe include some others in the Flag Code that you feel are especially important.

6. Hands-On Activity: “Respect in Action”

- Slide 24: Demonstrate folding the flag with student volunteers. (Watch the video)
- Slide 25: Split into groups: Groups practice folding the flag. (Follow the steps to fold the flag using page 8). While waiting their turn, other students can be working on #7 or #8 activities listed below.

7. Poster Project

- Use slide 26: Students create Flag Etiquette Poster to display around the school. Posters should include:
 - ▶ A creative design
 - ▶ 3-5 etiquette rules
 - ▶ A slogan encouraging respect for the flag. Encourage students to use color, symbols, and patriotic imagery.

8. Reflection & Discussion

- Have students write a quick reflection: “Patriotism means . . .” and “One way I can show respect for my country today is...”
- Discuss: “What impact did Dwight D. Eisenhower have on our current flag?, and, “Why do you think Eisenhower cared so deeply about the flag and our country?”

Assessment

- Observe group participation.
- Grade posters for accuracy and effort.
- Have students play the “Stars of Freedom” Jeopardy game that pulls from the information in this lesson. The direct link is <https://jeopardylabs.com/play/03ab326faa>.
- Arrange for students to present their posters and/or do role-plays to younger classes of kids.
- Collect reflection responses (to part 8 in this lesson plan).

Extension Ideas

- Invite a local veteran to talk about what the flag means to them.
- Create a school flag that represents respect, unity, and shared values.
- Design a community flag that represents the community.
- Research Eisenhower’s speeches on patriotism.



Excerpt from *President Eisenhower's First Inaugural Address*
January 20, 1953

"We must be ready to dare all for our country. For history does not long entrust the care of freedom to the weak or the timid. We must acquire proficiency in defense and display stamina in purpose.

"We must be willing, individually and as a Nation, to accept whatever sacrifices may be required of us. A people that values its privileges above its principles soon loses both.

"... Patriotism means equipped forces and a prepared citizenry. ... Love of liberty means the guarding of every resource that makes freedom possible--from the sanctity of our families and the wealth of our soil to the genius of our scientists.

"And so each citizen plays an indispensable role. The productivity of our heads, our hands, and our hearts is the source of all the strength we can command, for both the enrichment of our lives and the winning of the peace.

"No person, no home, no community can be beyond the reach of this call. We are summoned to act in wisdom and in conscience, to work with industry, to teach with persuasion, to preach with conviction, to weigh our every deed with care and with compassion. For this truth must be clear before us: whatever America hopes to bring to pass in the world must first come to pass in the heart of America."

What was Eisenhower's message about patriotism?

What does he say each American must do?

How to fold an American flag

Source: The American Legion

Follow these steps to properly fold the flag.

STEP ONE: With another person, hold the flag lengthwise at waist level. As an act of respect, the flag should never touch the ground.

STEP TWO: Fold the flag in half, with the stripes folding over the field of stars.

STEP THREE: Fold the flag in half again — this time the stars will be to the outside, stripes to the inside. The flag should look like the photo below.



STEP FOUR: Starting at the end away from the stars, fold the bottom part (folded section) to form a triangle.



CONTINUE FOLDING: Fold the triangular section toward the stars, forming another triangle. Then, fold it again, working your way up through the field of stars as the flag is folded into a triangle.

FINALLY: Tuck the edge of the flag (the white stripe where the flag attaches to the standard) inside the blue triangle. A perfectly folded flag will be a tightly wrapped triangle, totally wrapped in the blue field with no red or white stripe showing.

