

# Reading With a Purpose



## Flag Day & Flag Etiquette

Excerpt from Holiday Round-Up  
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Flag Day & Flag Etiquette

Every June 14<sup>th</sup> is Flag Day. On this day, the US flag is supposed to be flown proudly. Why is Flag Day on June 14<sup>th</sup>? Is there a proper way to display the flag?

Over forty different nations have a day known as Flag Day. In the United States, this day is celebrated on June 14<sup>th</sup>. This date was selected because it was on June 14<sup>th</sup>, 1777 that the United States flag was officially adopted. On this day, homes and businesses are supposed to display the American flag. However, the flag cannot be displayed in just any manner. There are certain rules of etiquette that must be followed regarding the flag. These rules are stated in the Federal Flag Code which became public law on June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1942.



The following represents a sample, but not all, of the United States Flag Code.

When raising and lowering the flag, it should be hoisted briskly, but lowered ceremoniously. The flag should only be displayed from sunrise to sunset on buildings and stationary flagpoles. It may be displayed throughout the night, if illuminated during the hours of darkness. The flag should not be displayed on days when the weather is inclement, unless the flag in use is an "all-weather" flag.

The flag should be displayed daily on or near any main administration building of any public institution. It should also be displayed in or near every polling place on election days. Every school should display a flag on or near the school house building.

*Words to watch for:*

*etiquette      briskly*  
*ceremoniously      allegiance*

If the flag is being carried in a procession with other flags, it should be to the far right of this group, or at the center and out in front of the other flags. No other flag should be placed above the American flag. Flags from other nations may be flown at the same height as the American flag, but the American flag should be to the extreme right of this group. The flag of one nation is never to be flown over that of another.

The flag should not be displayed on a float in a parade, except from a staff. The flag should not be draped over the hood, top, sides, or back of a vehicle. If a flag is being displayed on a moving vehicle, that flag should be on a staff which is fixed firmly to the right side of the vehicle (specifically the right front fender).

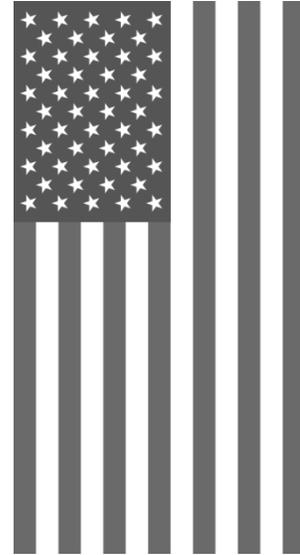
If the flag is being displayed on a wall, crossing staffs with another flag, the flag should be on the right (the flag's right), and the American flag's staff should be in front of the other staff. If a flag is being displayed flat against a wall, the star field (known as "the union") should be to the flag's own right (the observer's left).

When used on a speaker's platform, if the flag is being displayed flat, it should be displayed above and behind the speaker. If the flag is being displayed from a staff, then it should be in a position of prominence, to the speaker's right. Any other flags should be displayed on the speaker's left.

The flag will be flown at half-staff for thirty days following the death of a president or former president. After the death of a vice-president, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, or the Speaker of the House, the flag will be flown at half-staff for ten days. The flag will also be flown at half-staff for associate justices of the Supreme Court, the death of a Cabinet member, a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the governor of a state, or a member of Congress.

If the flag is being flown at half-staff, it should first be raised to the top of the staff and then lowered to the half-staff position. Additionally, when the flag is lowered for the day, it should be returned to the top of the staff and then lowered completely.

If a flag is draped over a casket, it should be done so that the union should be at the head of the casket and over the left shoulder. The flag should not be lowered into the grave, or allowed to touch the ground at any time.



*The flag, when displayed against a wall, the stars should be on to the observer's left.*

The flag should never be displayed with the union down. This applies regardless of whether the flag is being displayed on a staff or on a wall. The only exception is if it is being used as a signal of distress or extreme danger to life and property.

The flag should never touch anything beneath it, including the ground, floor, water, or merchandise. The flag should never be worn as clothing, used as bedding, or as curtains. It should never be drawn back, but always allowed to fall freely. Nor should it ever be used as a receptacle for receiving, holding, carrying, or delivering anything. The flag should never be displayed, used, or stored in a manner which would allow it to be easily torn, soiled, or damaged.

The flag should never be used for advertising purposes in any manner whatsoever. It should not be embroidered on articles such as cushions or handkerchiefs, or printed on paper napkins, plates, or anything else that is designed for temporary use and discarded. Nor should it ever have additional markings, insignias, letters, words, figures, designs, pictures, or drawings of any nature.

When facing the flag during the national anthem, or the pledge of allegiance, all those present should stand at attention, with their right hand over their heart. Men should remove their hats. Military personnel, both those in uniform or out, should salute the flag.

**Multiple Choice:** *Select the choice that completes the statement or answers the question.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Which of the following best describes the main intent of this lesson?
  - a. The intent is to inform the reader about the history of Flag Day.
  - b. The intent is to persuade the reader that Flag Day is important.
  - c. The intent is to instruct the reader on the proper methods of displaying a flag.
  - d. The intent is to persuade the reader that the US Flag Code is too complicated and should be done away with.
  
2. \_\_\_\_\_ According to the US Flag Code, in which of the following locations would someone be most likely to find an American flag on display?
  - a. a local church being used as a polling place on election day
  - b. a restaurant that has been officially licensed by the government
  - c. a store that has been authorized to sell American flags
  - d. an outdoor music concert featuring popular bands
  
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Which of the following correctly identifies the proper way to fly the flag from a vehicle?
  - a. draped over the hood
  - b. tacked up inside the back window
  - c. flying freely from the back bumper
  - d. firmly fixed to the right front fender
  
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Which of the following represents the correct positioning of the flag, if draped over a casket?
  - a. The union should be at the foot of the casket and over the left leg.
  - b. The union should be at the head of the casket and over the left shoulder.
  - c. The union should be at the head of the casket and over the right shoulder.
  - d. The flag should be displayed horizontally, with the union covering the heart.
  
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Which of the following statements is inaccurate?
  - a. The flag should never touch anything beneath it, including the ground, floor, or water.
  - b. The flag may be worn as clothing, used as bedding, or as curtains if necessary.
  - c. The flag should never be used as a receptacle for receiving, holding, or carrying anything.
  - d. The flag should not be embroidered on articles such as cushions or handkerchiefs.

**Vocabulary:** *Match each word with its correct definition. Consider how the word is used in the lesson. This might help you define each term. Use a dictionary to help if necessary.*

- |                |               |
|----------------|---------------|
| a. etiquette   | d. inclement  |
| b. brisk       | e. allegiance |
| c. ceremonious |               |

6. \_\_\_\_\_ severe, rough or harsh

7. \_\_\_\_\_ quick or lively; fast

8. \_\_\_\_\_ loyalty or devotion to a person, group, cause, or country

9. \_\_\_\_\_ formally, or elaborately polite

10. \_\_\_\_\_ an accepted code of conduct to be used in certain circumstances

**Guided Reading:** *Fill in the blanks below to create complete sentences.*

1. The flag may be displayed throughout the night, if \_\_\_\_\_ during the hours of darkness.



2. The flag of one \_\_\_\_\_ is never to be flown over that of another.

3. If a flag is being displayed flat against a wall, the star field (known as "\_\_\_\_\_") should be to the flag's own right (the observer's left).

4. The flag will be flown at half-staff for \_\_\_\_\_ following the death of a president or former president.

5. If the flag is being flown at \_\_\_\_\_, it should first be raised to the top of the staff and then lowered to the half-staff position.

6. The flag should never touch anything \_\_\_\_\_ it.

7. The flag should never be \_\_\_\_\_, but always allowed to fall freely.

8. The flag should never have additional markings, insignias, letters, \_\_\_\_\_, figures, designs, pictures, or drawings of any nature.

9. When facing the flag during the national anthem, or the pledge of allegiance, all those present should stand at \_\_\_\_\_.

10. When facing the flag during the national anthem, or the pledge of allegiance, men should remove their \_\_\_\_\_.

**Summarize:** *Answer the following questions in the space provided. Attempt to respond in a complete sentence for each question. Be sure to use correct capitalization and punctuation!*

1. The flag is lowered to half-staff for ten days after the death of whom?
  
2. What is the only exception to flying a flag with the union down?
  
3. When did the Federal Flag Code become public law?
  
4. Where is the flag supposed to be during a speech, if the flag is on a staff?
  
5. Why was June 14th chosen as Flag Day?
  
6. How is the flag supposed to be raised and lowered?

**Student Response:** *Write a paragraph addressing the questions raised below. A thorough response should consist of three to five complete sentences.*

7. Part of the Federal Flag Code reads that the flag should not be embroidered on articles such as cushions or handkerchiefs, or printed on paper napkins, plates, or anything else that is designed for temporary use and discarded. Consider this for a moment, and explain why you feel this was included as part of the Flag Code.

**Answer Key:**

**Flag Day & Flag Etiquette:**

**Multiple Choice:**

- 1) C
- 2) A
- 3) D
- 4) B
- 5) B

**Vocabulary:**

- 6) D
- 7) B
- 8) E
- 9) C
- 10) A

**Guided Reading:**

- 1) Illuminated
- 2) Nation
- 3) The union
- 4) Thirty days
- 5) Half-staff
- 6) Beneath
- 7) Drawn back
- 8) Words
- 9) Attention
- 10) Hats

**Summarize:**

1. The flag is at half-staff for ten days after the death of a vice-president, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and the Speaker of the House.
2. The only exception to this rule is if it is being used as a signal of extreme danger to life or property.
3. The Federal Flag Code became public law on June 22, 1942.
4. During a speech, if being displayed from a staff, the flag should be in a position of prominence, and to the speaker's right.
5. June 14 was chosen as Flag Day because the US flag was officially adopted on June 14, 1777.
6. The flag is supposed to be hoisted briskly, but lowered ceremoniously.

**Student Response:**

7. Student answers should vary.