

Flags of Our Island

Many flags have flown over Kodiak since the Russians invaded. During its reign, three flags were known to have been flown by the Russians: the Russian naval flag, 1788; Russian-American Company flag 1806; Russian-American company flag, 1835; the U.S. flag, circa 1867 with 37 stars, flown at the time of purchase, and newer flags with more stars as territories became states; the Alaska flag, and various cannery or military flags have flown here. In this lesson you will learn about several of the flags that have been flown here, and then create a flag for yourself.

On the Russian flags, a double-headed eagle appears, with St. George killing a dragon in its center. St. George is a Christian saint who slayed a dragon and rescued a princess on a white horse.

Many other animals—both real and imaginary—also have become symbols for certain ideas and qualities. The animals have been selected because they have specific traits or qualities. Oxen, for instance, are strong and powerful, therefore the ox is a common symbol for strength.

Ox	Strength	What might these Kodiak animals represent on a flag?	
Lion	Courage	Bear	
Dove	Peace	Eagle	
Bee	Busyness	Whale or Seal	
Dog	Faithfulness	Fox	
Owl	Wisdom	Salmon or halibut	
Dragon	Evil	Pushki	

Colors have a great influence on emotions and feelings. When we see red, it may make you think of danger or excitement, or love. Green may represent summer or growing plants or nature.

Alaska adopted the flag for official state use in 1959. Alaska's flag was designed in 1926 by 13-year-old Benny Benson, a native boy Chignik. In his design the blue field represents the sky, the sea, and mountain lakes, as well as Alaska's wildflowers. On the flag are eight gold stars: seven from the constellation Ursa Major, or the Big Dipper, and the eighth star is for the North Star, also representing Alaska as the northern-most state.

YOUR TURN:

Design a flag using symbols to help you tell your Kodiak story. For example, a dove might fly above a city that is in great conflict. Or a lion might encourage someone who is afraid to try something new. Or you can choose from the animal or color symbols. Your teacher will give you a Flag Practice page to get started.