

The First American Flag



Elizabeth “Betsy” Ross is known throughout America as the woman who designed the first flag of the United States. Ross was born in Philadelphia in 1742. She was **renowned** in New York and Philadelphia as an excellent seamstress. She used high quality materials such as satin and silk. Moreover, she had a good **sense** of how colors mixed together. She especially enjoyed using bright primary colors in her designs. She decorated many public places and private businesses such as hotels and theaters.

Her work became so famous that the leaders of the American Revolution asked Betsy Ross to design the first flag of the United States. She chose her favorite colors – red, white, and blue. She made thirteen red and white stripes, a blue square field in the upper left hand corner. Upon the field was a picture of an eagle with thirteen stars. Each star on the flag represented a state. Betsy Ross chose red for the flag because **it** meant passion. The white meant purity and the blue represented unity and power.

Upon the new flag, Ross marked “The United States of America”. Congress approved Ross’ flag design before the new country was even called “The United States of America”. Before that, it was called “Columbia” and the states were called “colonies”. The new flag was finished and signed on July 4, 1776. It was **put up** in the Hall of Independence for everyone to see. The flag was a major part of the celebrations of American independence. The flag was officially adopted as the United States flag on June 14, 1777.

The flag has changed over the years. A star has been added to the flag for each of the new states that has joined the country since then. Now there are 50 stars on the flag. Betsy Ross continued making flags for the United States until her death in 1832. She is widely regarded as an American hero.



1. According to the article, when was Betsy Ross born?
 - a) 1742
 - b) 1776
 - c) 1777
 - d) 1832

2. The word “renowned” in paragraph 1 could best be replaced with:
 - a) hated
 - b) fired
 - c) famous
 - d) ordered

3. The word “sense” in paragraph 1 is closest in meaning to:
 - a) understanding
 - b) advantage
 - c) benefit
 - d) wisdom

4. According to the article, why was Betsy Ross asked to design the flag?
 - a) she volunteered to do it
 - b) she was known as a good designer
 - c) she was friends with Ben Franklin
 - d) she was a very nice person

5. The word “it” in paragraph 2 refers to:
 - a) passion
 - b) red
 - c) the flag
 - d) a state

6. The word “it” in paragraph 3 refers to:
 - a) the flag
 - b) the design
 - c) the new country
 - d) the states

7. The phrase “put up” in paragraph 3 is closest in meaning to:
 - a) built
 - b) stored
 - c) prepared
 - d) displayed

8. According to the article, what is one way that the flag has changed?
 - a) it has gotten bigger
 - b) more stars have been added
 - c) some colors have been changed
 - d) the stripes were removed

Answers: 1. (a) 2. (c) 3. (a) 4. (b) 5. (b) 6. (c) 7. (d) 8. (b)

