

## Expository Essay Example - History of the American Flag

The American flag has gone through quite an evolution, and might undergo even more change with the addition of Puerto Rico as an official state soon. Even though we think we have seen the same flag for countless years, it was quite different just a few decades ago. For instance, between 1777 and 1960, Congress passed many acts to change the design of the flag to account for the admission of states (PBS). Let us delve into its history a bit more in the following paragraphs.

The official American flag came into being on June 14th, 1777, when the Continental Congress passed an act to establish an official flag for the American people (PBS). The act stated: "Resolved, that the flag of the United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation." However, the first unofficial American flag was shown in 1775, when American ships in New England had a "Liberty Tree" flag. The flag consisted of a green pine tree with a white background, with the words, "An Appeal to Heaven" inscribed on it (US History).

Throughout the history of the U.S., there has been over 30 variations of the American flag (US History). However, the origin of the official American flag is unknown. A few historians believe it was designed by New Jersey Congressman Francis Hopkinson and sewn by Philadelphia seamstress Betsy Ross (PBS). But with so many variations, it is difficult to exactly trace the official flag's origins.

In terms of symbolism, the official American flag, with 13 horizontal stripes—seven red alternating with six white—represents the 13 original colonies. The stars symbolize the 50 states that comprise the U.S. The colors of the American flag also contain symbolism. Red is employed to demonstrate valor and persistence, while the white stands for purity and innocence—finally, the blue represents vigilance, perseverance, and justice (PBS).

The American flag, with its mysterious history and strange variations, is a fascinating historical item. The many variations of the American flag have crossed the sentiments of its population and its laws throughout U.S. history. Who knows how it will change next with the plea from Puerto Rico to become an official state at this time.

### References

Anon, (2017). History of the American Flag | A Capitol Fourth | PBS. [online] Available at: <http://www.pbs.org/a-capitol-fourth/history/old-glory/> [Accessed 26 Sep. 2017].

Ushistory.org. (2017). Flag timeline. [online] Available at: <http://www.ushistory.org/betsy/flagfact.html> [Accessed 26 Sep. 2017].