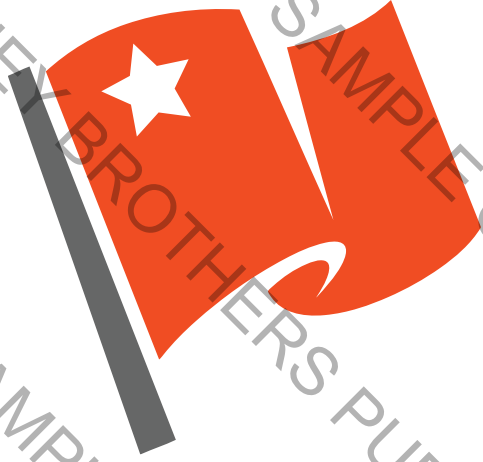




Vexillology

A Lesson in Flag Design



Vexillology

vex·il·lol·o·gy

A Lesson in Flag Design

Vexillology is the study of flags.

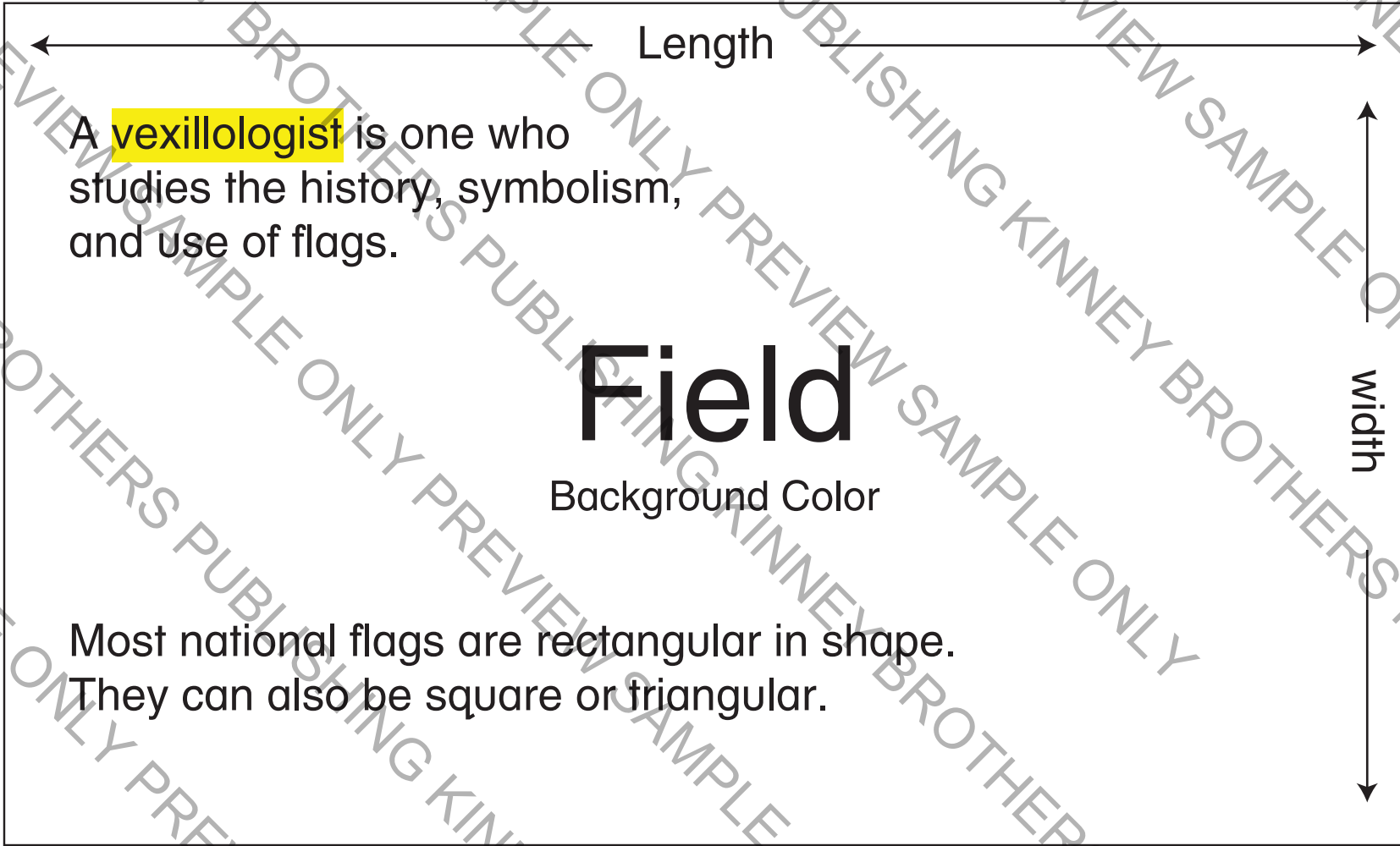
A flag is, simply, a piece of fabric with a distinctive design that is used as a symbol, as a signaling device, or as decoration. One of the most popular and recognizable uses is to symbolize a nation or country.

This lesson will look at various flags from the list of flags of the United Nations. The intent is to understand not only the terms used in vexillology, but also the visually complex task of creating a flag that unifies, inspires, and symbolizes a people's sense of national identity.

Finally, you will be invited to design a flag for your own class or school.



Vexillology



A **vexillologist** is one who studies the history, symbolism, and use of flags.

Field

Background Color

Most national flags are rectangular in shape. They can also be square or triangular.

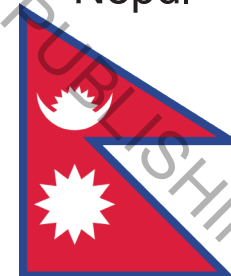
Australia



Switzerland



Nepal





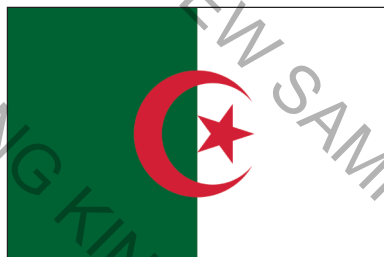
Vexillology

The length of the flag is divided in half.

Hoist

Fly

Algeria



Bahrain



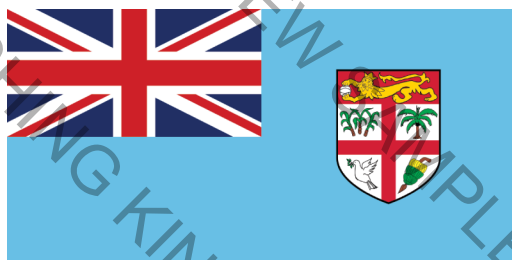
Djibouti



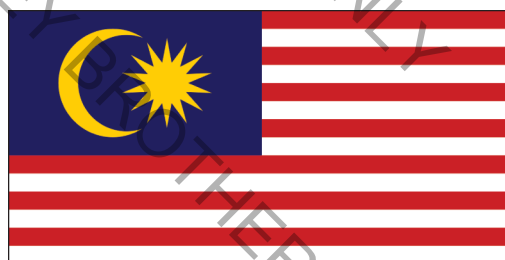


1 <h1>Canton</h1> <p>There are four cantons. The upper hoist canton is the most honorable position on the flag.</p>	2
3	4

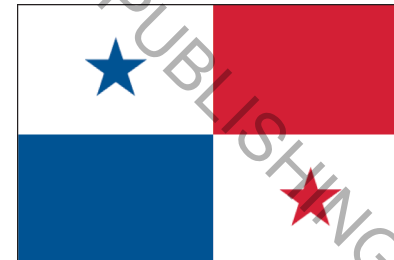
Fiji



Malaysia



Panama





Vexillology

Patterns



Latvia



Fess (horizontal band)



Peru



Pale (vertical band)



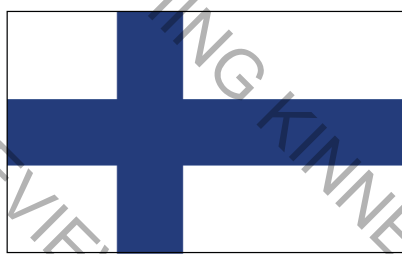
Namibia



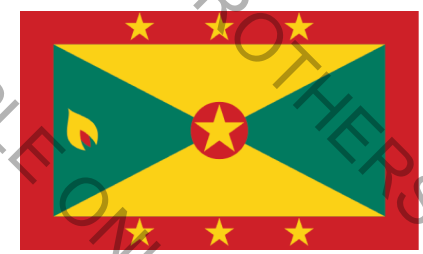
Bend (diagonal band)



Cuba



Finland



Grenada



Chevron



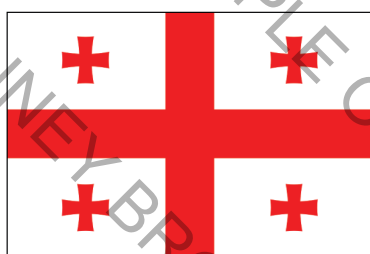
Cross



Border



Jamaica



Georgia



U.S.A.



Saltire



Quadrisection (4 cantons)



bars (two or more bands)

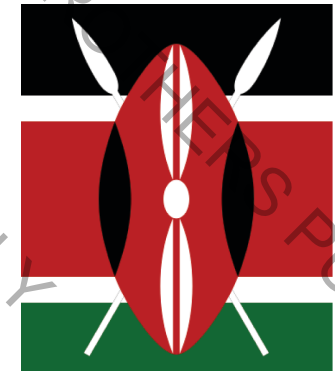
Charges & Badges

(emblems)

(e.g., coat of arms)



Vexillology





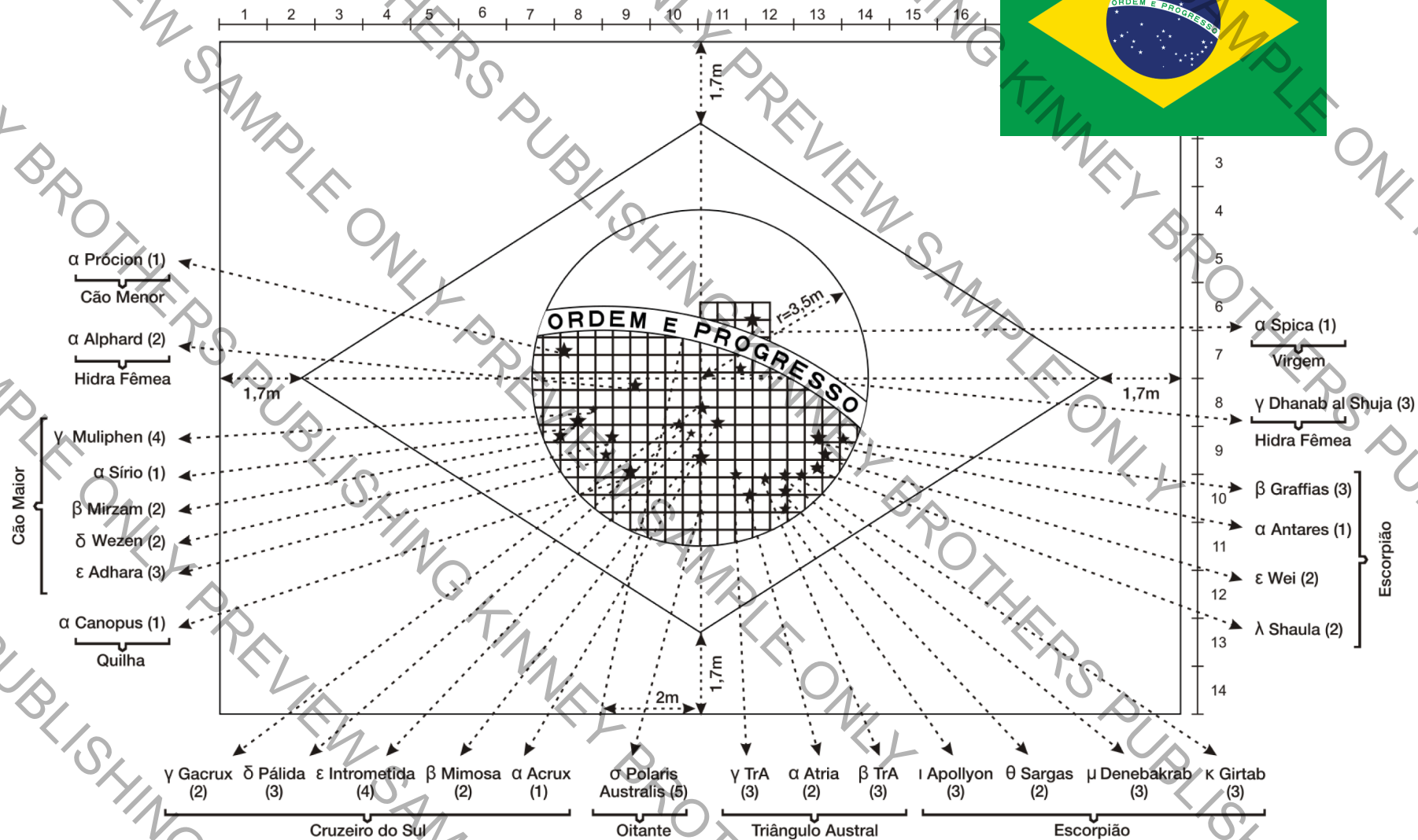
Vexillology

When a flag's design is final, instructions detail the exact size, proportions, and colors to be used in the construction of the flag. Making a change or replacing a country's flag can be very expensive.

Brazil



Desenho modular da bandeira nacional



Obs.: os números entre parênteses indicam a grandeza das estrelas.



Flag Design Rules

1. Keep it simple!

Can you draw the flag from memory?

2. Use meaningful symbolism.

Powerful symbols evoke emotion!

3. Use 2-3 colors.

Make each color meaningful.

4. No lettering.

Seen from behind, lettering is backwards!

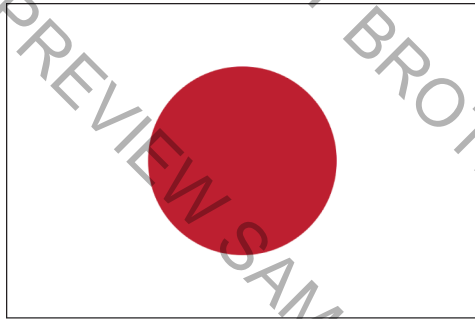
5. Be distinctive!

Your flag should be memorable.

Flag Designs



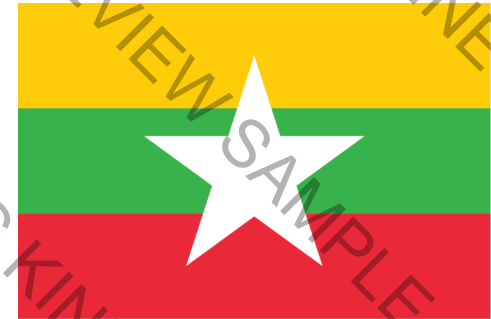
Vexillology



Japan, known as the Land of the Rising Sun, has a simple but resonant flag design.



The complementary colors of the Ukraine flag represent a blue sky over a golden wheat field.



The three colors of the flag of Myanmar represent solidarity, peace, and courage.



The triad charge in the Barbados flag means government of the people, by the people and for the people.



Nauru's unique flag design shows its geographical position one degree below the equator.



The U.K. flag's cross and saltire design represents three countries' flags combined - England, Scotland, and Ireland.



The Golden Eagle badge in Mexico's flag is the Aztec symbol for what is now Mexico City.



This design is referred to as a *Canadian Pale*. The leaf charge is a symbol from the original coat of arms of Ontario and Quebec.



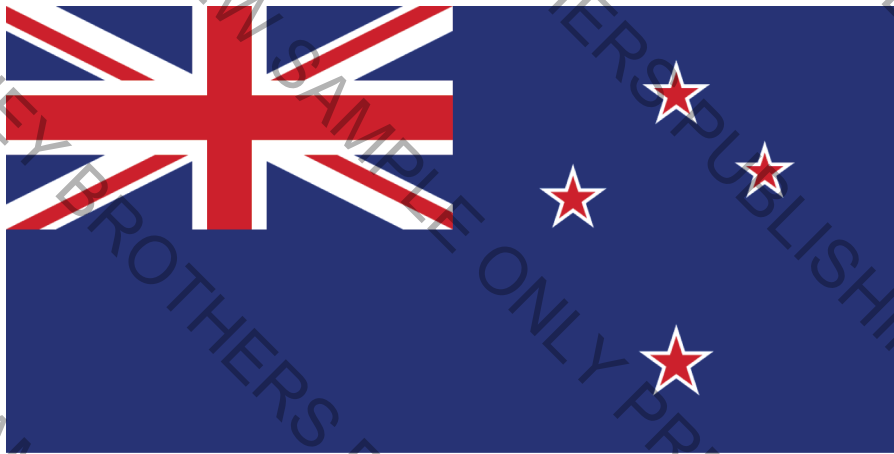
The San Kitts and Nevis flag's powerful bend design symbolizes fertile land, African heritage, and the struggle for freedom.

Debate!

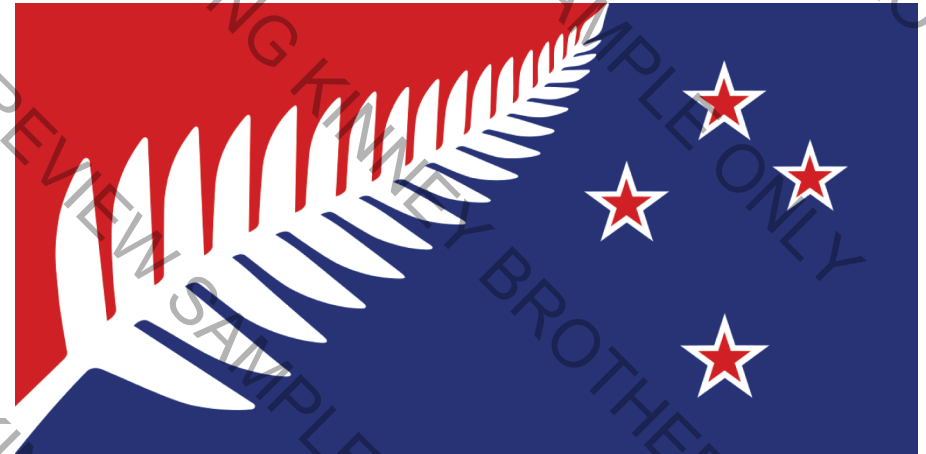


Vexillology

For several decades, New Zealand has been debating the change of its national flag. The flag of New Zealand is very similar to Australia's and the two are often confused. Many people feel the current flag represents its country's colonial status and not an image of an independent nation. The Maori people do not feel that the flag represents them and the diversity of the population of New Zealand. These are some of the winners of flag design contests. Which would you choose? Why?



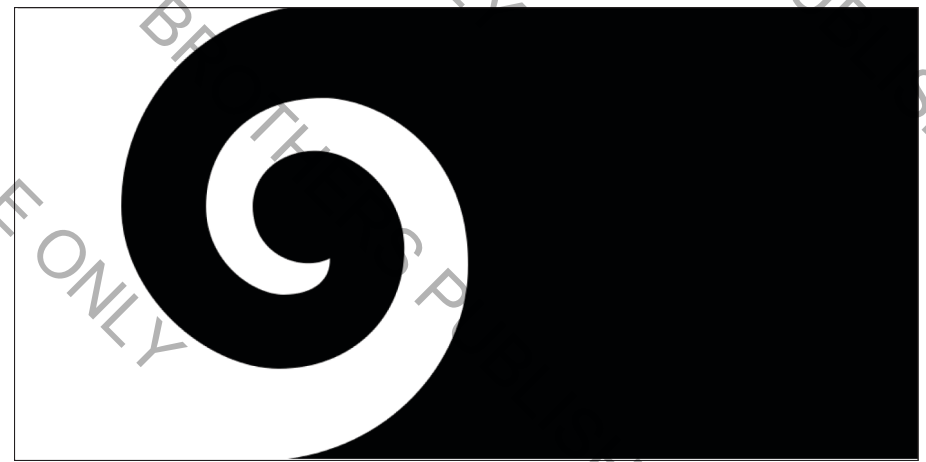
Current flag. The British flag sits in the upper hoist canton. The stars represent the Southern Cross constellation.



The silver fern is an important symbol in contemporary New Zealand and is often used in sports.



This design is inspired by the Maori creation myth story and the geography of New Zealand.



The Maori *koru* design is a fern frond unfolding. It is also meant to represent a wave or a ram's horn.



Vexillology

Design your own flag!

