

Buffalo Trace Education Box
Lesson 19
Indiana's Flag

Purpose: Students will learn about the history and symbols of the Indiana flag. (This lesson can be used with Lesson 13 “Using the Bison as a Symbol.”)

Subjects: Indiana history, government, art

Materials Needed: United States flag, Indiana state flag, summary of “History and Meaning of the Indiana Flag” (included with this lesson), Indiana state quarter, paper, markers or crayons

Steps:

1. Display the U.S. flag and the Indiana flag. Discuss synonyms for flag: banner, standard, pennant. (Indiana used the term banner until 1916.) Compare/contrast the flags — colors, geometric shapes (stripes, five-pointed stars, rays), how the stars are arranged (rows vs. circles), symbols (torch) and words.
2. Briefly point out the torch, the rays, location of the stars (outer circle, around the torch and large one above the torch) and font for the word Indiana. Discuss the use of just two colors.
3. Read aloud or display the summary of “History and Meaning of the Indiana Flag.” Discuss.

History and Meaning of the Indiana State Flag

From Indiana statehood in 1816 to 1916, Indiana's state banner (which is what the flag was called) was the United States flag. (In 1901, Indiana made the U.S. flag our official state banner.) In 1916, Indiana was celebrating its 100th anniversary of becoming a state. The Indiana Daughters of the American Revolution wanted a permanent emblem for Indiana. They held a contest with an award of \$100 for the best design of a flag. They encouraged anyone who entered to design a simple banner with symbols and colors different from the U.S. flag.

The best design was made by artist Paul Hadley of Mooresville, Indiana. The flag has a blue background with yellow symbols. The torch in the middle of the flag represents liberty and enlightenment. The rays illustrate their far-reaching influence. There are a total of 19 stars on the flag. The outer circle of the 13 stars represent the 13 colonies. The 5 stars in a semi-circle stand for the states admitted to the Union prior to Indiana (Vermont, Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio and Louisiana). The star directly above the torch symbolized Indiana, the 19th state.

The Indiana General Assembly added the word “INDIANA” above the 19th star representing the state. In 1917, the U.S. flag remained Indiana's official state flag and

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Hadley's design was Indiana's state banner. In 1955, the General Assembly approved Hadley's design as the state flag of Indiana.

4. When on the same flagpole, the Indiana flag is flown underneath the U.S. flag and must be the same size or smaller. The state flag is flown over the Indiana Statehouse, Indiana National Guard, public schools, state universities and state parks. On some occasions, the governor will order that the flag be flown half-staff in honor of some event or person.
5. The Indiana state quarter has a circle of stars in its design. What other symbols do you see? Governor O'Bannon selected this design, which was issued in 2002.
6. Have students design their own flag with simple colors, symbols and shapes. Or print out a black and white Indiana flag template.

Extensions:

- Research Indiana's song, bird and flower. (In 2017, a boy in Anderson tried unsuccessfully to introduce legislation to name the red fox as the state mammal.)
- Track how the General Assembly adopts a code or a law through the various branches of government.

Resources:

- For the full "History of the Indiana Flag" from the Indiana History Blog, <https://blog.history.in.gov/a-permanent-emblem-of-its-own-the-indiana-state-flag-its-designer/> and the full "What is the Meaning Behind the Indiana State Flag" go to in.gov.
- Go to www.usmint.gov (Kids 50 State Quarters Coloring Pages for 2002 Indiana) for a drawing of an Indiana quarter, as well as lesson plans.
- The article "Indiana Remains Without a State Mammal," The Herald Bulletin (Feb 8, 2017, Anderson), gives details about the legislative process of attempting to name a state mammal. You Tube has Schoolhouse Rock — I'm Just a Bill.