

Goldie at Home: Innovative Iowans

Activity Overview: Have you ever looked closely at Iowa's state flag? As we commemorate Iowa's upcoming 175th anniversary of statehood, the Innovative Iowans program will explore Iowa symbols from rock to tree, and everything in between. This month's activity has young historians investigating Iowa's official state flag and comparing the state's flag design to surrounding states.

Connection to Iowa History

Dixie Cornell Gebhardt was born in Knoxville, Iowa, on November 18, 1866. Following graduation from Knoxville schools in 1885, she remained in the town for the majority of her life. Dixie became engaged in many organizations throughout her life, including the P.E.O. Sisterhood, the Red Cross and served in many roles with the Iowa Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) including State Regent. It is within her role with the DAR that she developed and created her design for the Iowa flag. Her design was adopted as Iowa's official state flag in March 1921, and Iowa Governor Harding called her, "Iowa's Betsy Ross." Gebhardt passed away in 1955.

The [original flag design](#) and a [portrait of Dixie Cornell Gebhardt](#) are held in the collection of the State Historical Museum of Iowa.



Instructions ([Video Instructions Available](#))

- 1 **Print.** Print the attached [Comparing Flags activity worksheet](#).
- 2 **Investigate.** Using the provided questions, examine and explore the state flags of Iowa and the surrounding states.
- 3 **Take notes.** Write your answers to the provided questions.
- 4 **Share!** If you would like to share your worksheet with the State Historical Museum of Iowa, please email your work to museum.education@iowa.gov. We want to share your ideas with other young historians!
- 5 **Questions to Spark Learning**
 - Dixie Cornell Gebhardt's design for the Iowa flag remains unchanged. If you had to update Iowa's flag, what would you change? Why?
 - Do you think state flags are necessary? Why or why not?
 - A need for an official state flag was brought forward by the Iowa National Guardsmen during World War I. They noticed other states had flags, but Iowa did not. Why do you think it took Iowa longer than other states to design and approve a state flag?

Materials

- [Comparing Flags activity worksheet](#)
- Printer
- Writing utensil

Instructions continued on next page

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Instructions continued

6 Additional Resources

Explore these resources below to learn more about official state flag designs.

- [The Goldfinch - State Symbols](#)
- [Iowa History Journal - With Patriotism and Perseverance](#)
- [Annals of Iowa: "The Iowa State Banner"](#)
- [Library of Congress - History of the Flag](#)
- [Iowa Official Register - State Symbols of Iowa](#)

Iowa Flag Activity Worksheet

Directions: Use the questions below to examine the state flags of Iowa, Minnesota, South Dakota, Missouri and Illinois. Look closely at the chosen images within the flag and overall designs. What do these designs tell you about the state it represents?

	<p style="text-align: center;">Iowa State Flag</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Let's examine what we see.</i></p>
<p>What words or phrases can you read on the flag? Why do you think those words were chosen?</p>	
<p>What symbols or items do you see on the flag? Why do you think it was chosen?</p>	
<p>What colors are on the flag? Why do you think those colors were chosen?</p>	
<p>What are your overall thoughts about the flag design?</p>	
<p>Do you think it represents Iowa? Why or why not?</p>	



Minnesota State Flag

Using the questions below, investigate this flag's overall design.

Then compare and contrast it to Iowa's state flag design.

What words or phrases can you read on the flag? Why do you think those words were chosen?

What symbols or items do you see on the flag? Why do you think it was chosen?

What is similar about this flag and the Iowa flag?

What is different about this flag and the Iowa flag?



South Dakota State Flag

Using the questions below, investigate this flag's overall design.

Then compare and contrast it to Iowa's state flag design.

What words or phrases can you read on the flag? Why do you think those words were chosen?

What symbols or items do you see on the flag? Why do you think it was chosen?

What is similar about this flag and the Iowa flag?

What is different about this flag and the Iowa flag?



Nebraska State Flag

Using the questions below, investigate this flag's overall design.

Then compare and contrast it to Iowa's state flag design.

What words or phrases can you read on the flag? Why do you think those words were chosen?

What symbols or items do you see on the flag? Why do you think it was chosen?

What is similar about this flag and the Iowa flag?

What is different about this flag and the Iowa flag?

	<p style="text-align: center;">Missouri State Flag</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Using the questions below, investigate this flag's overall design.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Then compare and contrast it to Iowa's state flag design.</i></p>
<p>What words or phrases can you read on the flag? Why do you think those words were chosen?</p>	
<p>What symbols or items do you see on the flag? Why do you think it was chosen?</p>	
<p>What is similar about this flag and the Iowa flag?</p>	
<p>What is different about this flag and the Iowa flag?</p>	

	<p style="text-align: center;">Illinois State Flag</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Using the questions below, investigate this flag's overall design.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Then compare and contrast it to Iowa's state flag design.</i></p>
<p>What words or phrases can you read on the flag? Why do you think those words were chosen?</p>	
<p>What symbols or items do you see on the flag? Why do you think it was chosen?</p>	
<p>What is similar about this flag and the Iowa flag?</p>	
<p>What is different about this flag and the Iowa flag?</p>	

Follow-up Questions

1. Which flag design do you like the best?

2. Why?
