

John Hansard Gallery

YOUR Flag: Call for Entries

We've been inspired by the artist Larry Achiampong whose *PAN AFRICAN FLAGS FOR THE RELIC TRAVELLERS' ALLIANCE (MOTION)* can be currently seen on John Hansard Gallery's windows looking out over Guildhall Square.

We would like to invite you to design your own flag. This could represent a place or community that is special to you, a friend or family member. We will be sharing your designs on the John Hansard Gallery Instagram, so if you want us to include your flag, tag us using @johnhansardgallery or #JHGflags.

If you would like to post your design to be exhibited at John Hansard Gallery, please send it to us by 11 September 2020, along with the downloadable Submission Form. See our downloadable Instruction Sheet for directions on how to create your design. Enjoy!

Here is some inspiration to get you started...

More about artist Larry Achiampong

The flags displayed on John Hansard Gallery's windows are part of a series of flags Larry Achiampong has designed that celebrate and recognise his personal and shared heritage and identity as part of a Pan-African Diaspora. Larry hopes that by making and displaying these flags people may be prompted to talk about our colonial histories and the effects of that today.

The flags Larry designs all use colours, shapes, and symbols, which are significant to his heritage and interest in Africa, African people, and the effects of colonialism on the continent and the world. Each flag features 54 stars that represent the 54 countries of Africa. The colours green, black and red reflect its land, its people and the struggles the continent has had. The field of yellow gold represents a new day and prosperity. The colours connect to those used in many African countries national flags.



Artist Larry Achiampong



*PAN AFRICAN FLAGS FOR
THE RELIC TRAVELLERS'*



What is a flag?

A flag is defined as a piece of cloth, usually rectangular in shape and attached to a pole at one edge. It has a pattern that represents a country or a group, or has a particular meaning.

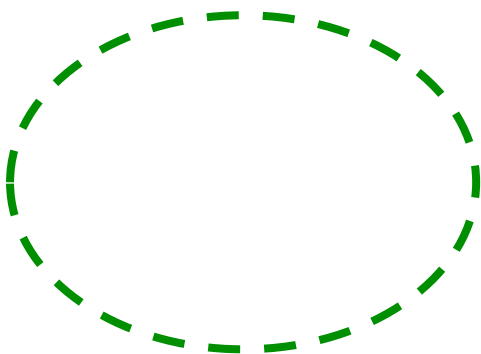
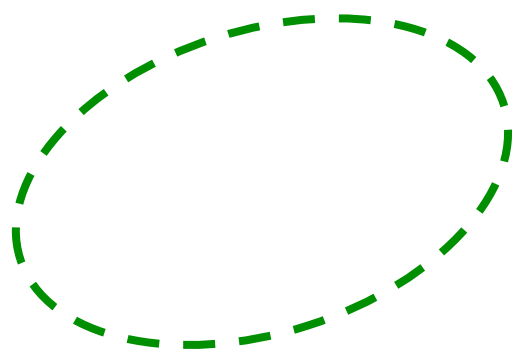
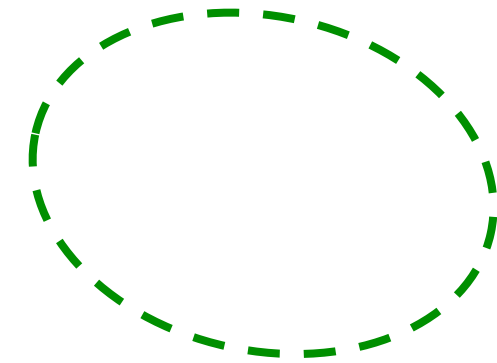
Nowadays, the word 'flag' refers less to the traditional cloth itself and more to the symbolic designs. Flags are now commonly used in print, digitally, and on all sorts of materials in all sorts of contexts.

Flags can be used in any context to create an identity for a community. One kind of flag you may see often are national flags – ones which represent a country.

Throughout history national flags have been created by countries to:

- Create a unified identity
- To mark territory
- To spark revolution
- To communicate a message

Where have you seen a flag?



How is a flag pattern designed?

Flags are designed with bold colours and simple patterns to be eye catching so they are easily to see when flying in the wind.

Flag designs use limited colours and shapes. Despite these limits, all 197 countries in the world have a different design for their national flag.

The colours, shapes, and symbols selected to be part of a flag design are chosen because they represent something significant to the country, community, or person designing the flag.

The meanings attached to the different colours or shapes used differ from flag to flag. For example, the blue stripe used in **Costa Rica's** flag represents the sky and opportunity, while the blue stripe used in **Laos'** flag represents the Mekong River which flows through the country.

However, common meanings can be found. Have a look online to see some of the most common uses of different colours and shapes found in national flags across the world.



Figure 1 Costa Rica

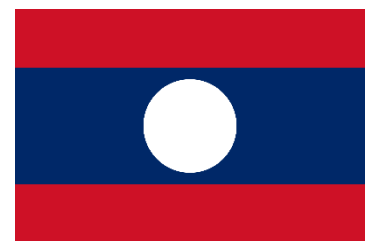


Figure 2 Laos

Some national flags use a particular shape or colour which connects it to another national flag, signifying links between the countries.

The **Nordic Cross** is used by all independent Nordic countries such as Denmark, Finland and Sweden, and the cross itself represents Christianity.



The colours green, white, red and black are often used by countries in North Africa and West Asia and are referred to as **Pan-Arab colours**. The four colours were chosen from a verse by 14th century Iraqi poet Safi al-Din al-Hilli: "White are our acts, black our battles, green our fields, and red our swords"

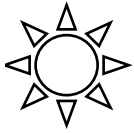


Colours and symbols

Here are some common shapes used in flags and their meanings.



Circle: The sun or the moon, life, unity



Sun (with or without rays): unity, life and energy, the dawn of a new era, hopefulness, enlightenment

In some flags such as a **Uruguay's** the flaming sun stands for revolution, in this case against Spanish rule in the 1800s



Moon: In combination with a star, the moon represents divinity and Islamic faith.

The moon can also represent the night sky. **Palau's** flag depicts a full moon – according to their tradition under the full moon is the best time for community activities such as fishing, planting, harvesting and festivals.



Stars: hope, freedom, energy, the night sky, unity

Stars can also often represent significant numbers, such as the ten stars in the **Dominican** flag that represent the ten regions in the country



The seven-pointed star on the **Jordan** flag represents the opening seven verses of the Qur'an



Cross: In ancient times the cross only symbolized the different points of the compass, in the 4th century the cross was also taken as the symbol of Christian faith

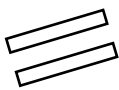


Triangle: strength, power, mountains, the three points of a triangle can also represent the Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) in Christianity

The triangle on **Bosnia and Herzegovina's** flag represents the three native peoples of the country – Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats



Square: The four even lengths of the square symbolize balance and equal opposites.



Stripes: can signify the amount of regions or states within a country, can be used to add additional significant colours to a flag design, blue stripes often symbolise rivers or the sea especially when they are wavy like on **Kiribati's** flag.

Nauru's yellow stripe running through its flag represents the equator. A star below it represents the islands position.



Other: Book: education, knowledge; **Olive wreath:** peace

Many countries choose specific shapes to represent something special or specific to them.

Kenya's flag shows traditional shield and spears of the Maasai people; **Canada's** maple leaf which is its national emblem; **Lebanon's** flag has the outline of a cedar tree, such trees used to cover the country in vast forests; **Grenada's** flag depicts the outline of a nutmeg which is the country's main crop. Many also use an outline of the shape of their country.



There are lots of resources online for fun flag facts! We liked this site:

<https://flagstories.co/post/132213886533/what-do-flag-colours-symbolise#132213886533>