



Honoring the Spirit of America

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“THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE”

Grades: 6-8
Social Studies

Objective

- Demonstrate an understanding of the Pledge of Allegiance and the terms contained therein.
- Criticize a point of view that is different from theirs.
- Recognize the Pledge of Allegiance history, its meaning and symbols.

Character Education Words

- Patriotism
- Loyalty
- Responsibility

Teacher’s Overview

- The goal of this lesson is to facilitate students' understanding of the Pledge of Allegiance
- Students will get into two groups – one that believe that the pledge needs to be changed and one that believes that it should stay the same.
- Students are to write their viewpoint according to which group they are in.
- Teacher will then change to the opposite view for students to rethink.
- As the teacher reads an impartial history of the pledge and all of its changes, students will take notes.
- The groups will then be give 2-3 news articles about the controversy.

Materials

- Reading Sheet
- Dictionaries and Thesauruses
- Activity Sheet
- Notebook paper and writing materials
- Construction paper, markers, crayons, etc., for making flags & maps

- A copy of the pledge and the history –
<http://history.vinyard.net/pledge.htm>
http://www.homeofheroes.com/hallofheroes/1st_floor/flag/1bfc_pledge.html
- news articles
<http://nytimes.com/2002/06/07/national/27PLED.html>
<http://www.cnn.com/2002/LAW/06/26/pledge.allegiance/>

Introduction

- 1 Conduct the standard Pledge of Allegiance with students facing the flag, standing with hands over hearts.
- 2 Have students quickly write down (in two minutes) what the pledge is supposed to mean to the country
- 3 Share thoughts
- 4 Assign the words "pledge," "allegiance," "republic," "indivisible," "liberty," "justice" to six groups. Each group must come up with their own, then the dictionary, definition of those words and share with the class. Each group must also list at least two synonyms for the word assigned to them. Results should be written to where all students can see.

Activity

- Pass out the reading sheet and read through the material. Use popcorn style reading, where the first child who reads a paragraph will call upon the next paragraph reader.
- Explain that the Pledge is basically a **promise**, and talk about why we might need to make this kind of a promise every day.
- Introduce the topic for discussion – Should “The Pledge of Allegiance” be changed?
- Have the students get into two groups – yes the pledge should be changed or no it should not be changed.
- Once each student is in that group let them discuss for 2-5 minutes why they think the way they do.
- Have them write a journal entry on their decision.
- Both groups are to argue the opposite side. Tell students that even though they believe differently, it is always important to understand why people may disagree and they need to respect other people’s opinions.
- The groups need to find in the articles and from the history at least three points and argue these points in front of the class.
- Teacher will facilitate a friendly discussion over the pledge debate.

Writing Response/Assessment: Write a short paragraph below telling what you think a good American pledge of allegiance should include. Then tell what you think about America's Pledge of Allegiance. Do you think it's a good one? Why or why not? Would you change any of it? If so, what would you change?

Why? Rewrite the pledge to reflect changing American values.

THE STORY OF THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The **Pledge of Allegiance** was first used on Columbus Day, October 12, 1892. There have been arguments as to who was the author, but it has been generally decided that **Mr. Francis Bellamy** of New York wrote it. His original version, published in the children's magazine, *The Youth's Companion*, went like this:

*I pledge allegiance to my Flag,
and the Republic for which it stands:
one Nation indivisible,
With liberty and Justice for all.*

This original Pledge was recited by more than 12,000,000 students in public schools across the nation that Columbus Day in 1892, but **it was not an official national pledge until Congress included it in the United States Flag Code in 1942.**

There have been a couple of changes to the Pledge since Mr. Bellamy first wrote it.

***I pledge allegiance to the Flag
of the United States of America
and to the Republic for which it stands:
one nation under God, indivisible,
with liberty and justice for all.***

When reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, you should stand and face the flag, with your right hand over your heart. If you are outside and wearing a hat, take your hat off and hold it over your heart with your right hand.

There is no law that says you have to say the Pledge of Allegiance, and not every school in America has a daily recitation of it, but it is generally considered to be an act of **patriotism** and **loyalty** to participate in this tradition, just as those children did back on Columbus Day 1892.