

# ★ The Pledge of Allegiance ★

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this lesson is to teach students the meaning of the words and phrases included in the Pledge of Allegiance. Students should understand that reciting the Pledge is an act of citizenship in which citizens pledge their commitment to important American values. A reading and vocabulary activity focus on the meaning of the Pledge.

## **Objective**

The student will discuss and explain in writing the history and meaning of the Pledge of Allegiance to citizens of the United States.

## **Theme-Unity**

When recited, the Pledge of Allegiance is a declaration of loyalty to the United States. Every day many U.S. citizens give their word to support and defend the United States.

## **NCSS Standards**

IVa. relate personal changes to social, cultural, and historical contexts.

IVb. describe personal connections to

place—as associated with community, nation, and world.

Vla. examine persistent issues involving the rights, roles, and status of the individual in relation to the general welfare.

Xb. identify and interpret sources and examples of the rights and responsibilities of citizens.

## **Time**

45 minutes

## **Materials**

- ★ “The Pledge of Allegiance” activity sheet
- ★ “The Meaning of the Pledge” transparency/handout
- ★ Dictionaries
- ★ Website - [www.americanheritage.org](http://www.americanheritage.org)

## **Preparation**

- ★ Copy the “Pledge of Allegiance” activity sheet for each student.
- ★ Prepare “The Meaning of the Pledge” as a transparency, or copy it as a handout for students.

## **Focus**

Ask a student to volunteer to recite the Pledge. Ask students why it is important to pledge to our flag.

## **Activity**

1. Have students read “The Pledge of Allegiance” handout and define the words at the bottom of the handout. (See Links page on [www.americanheritage.org](http://www.americanheritage.org) for additional resources on the Pledge of Allegiance and the American’s Creed.)

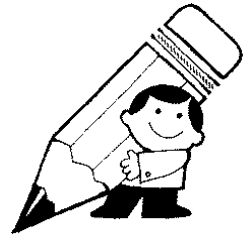
2. Provide handouts or show a transparency of “The Meaning of the Pledge.” Read and discuss the meaning of the phrases of the Pledge. Have students compare their definitions with the definitions on the Meaning handout.

## Closure

Discuss with students the relationship of the phrases in the Pledge to important civic values such as representative government, unity, liberty, and justice.

### Assessment

Students will rewrite the Pledge of Allegiance, substituting the six vocabulary words on the activity sheet with familiar words derived from their definitions/descriptions/synonyms. Students will create a pledge written in words they can easily understand.



# The Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance first appeared in the magazine *Youth's Companion* in September 1892. It was written by Frank Bellamy. It was first used in public schools on October 12, 1892 in celebration of the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America by Columbus.

The words of the Pledge have been changed twice. In 1923, the words “my

flag” were changed to “the flag of the United States of America.” The words “under God” were added in 1954 by an act of Congress.

The Pledge is now part of the Federal Flag Code passed by Congress on July 7, 1976. It can only be changed by proclamation of the President of the United States as Commander-in-Chief of the military.

The text of the Pledge is below.

*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.*

**Define these words from the Pledge:**

★ **pledge**

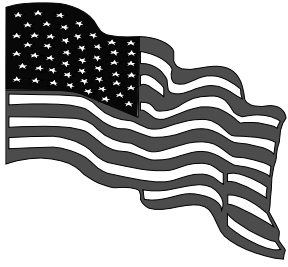
★ **allegiance**

★ **republic**

★ **indivisible**

★ **liberty**

★ **justice**



The **Meaning**  
of the **Pledge**



**I**

*means the person saying the Pledge.*

**pledge**

*means a promise.*

**allegiance**

*means support or loyalty.*

**to the flag of the United States of  
America**

*means the flag is a visible symbol of our country.*

**and to the Republic**

*means we have a government of representatives elected by the people.*

**for which it stands,**

*means the flag is a symbol of our republican form of government.*

**one Nation**

*means all the states together are one country.*

**under God,**

*means rights such as "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness"  
are given to us from a higher power than man.*

**indivisible,**

*means our country cannot be divided.*

**with liberty**

*means the freedom to live as you wish as long as you respect the rights of others.*

**and justice**

*means fairness under the law for all people.*

**for all.**

*means for everyone, whatever their sex, age, race, religion, or beliefs.*