

Philip F. Haxel, Sr. Patriotism Award  
2010 Essay Contest

**Winner & Recipient of the Baton of Patriotism**

Stephen Michael Lemerand, Grade 5  
Cecilton Elementary School  
251 West Main Street  
Cecilton, Maryland 21913  
Principal: Gail N. Mink

The Importance of: "Old Glory"

"Flip! Flap! Flap!" That's the sound of the American flag moving in the wind. In my opinion, the flag is the most important symbol of the United States.

The flag of the United States is important because it represents our country. The 13 alternating red and white stripes represent the colonies that our nation started out as. They are important because they show how the United States began. The fifty stars signify the fifty states that are currently the components of our country. The stars show that every state has its importance. The stars are together in the blue rectangle because even though we're divided into fifty states, the citizens of the United States are one nation, together.

The colors of the flag also have meanings. For example, the white of the flag symbolizes purity and innocence. That shows that the citizens of our country, who aren't guilty of harmful or disrespectful acts, are given freedom. The blue of the flag represents hardiness and valor. That signifies the courage and endurance the citizens of the United States have in dangerous and difficult conditions. The red of the flag symbolizes diligence, perseverance, and justice. That shows how the citizens are careful, hard-working, and treated fairly. As you can see, every detail of the flag has some type of importance.

The American flag or "Old Glory" is also very important because it was established on June 14, 1777. It was made because after American colonies became their own nation, the citizens believed that there should be a flag to represent the United States. It shows how our citizens are given freedom, and how our country is a nation where everyone is treated fairly. It also symbolizes how we yearn for peace and are a nation that believes in justice. The flag also signifies that together, the citizens before us had created an independent nation where every citizen can do what they choose to as long as it is not harmful to others. They created a country where every citizen is treated fairly no matter their race, age, or gender.

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Appreciation for the flag is shown in many ways. For example, there is flag etiquette. It states that the flag should be raised, facing the right, every day if there's good weather, and that the flag should be raised quickly and lowered slowly. Also, there is even a special national holiday dedicated to the flag. "Flag Day" is celebrated every year, on June 14<sup>th</sup>. Citizens show their patriotism by leading parades and decorating.

I strongly believe that the American flag should be respected and appreciated by the citizens of the United States. It represents and symbolizes so much about our nation, and everyone should realize the importance of it. In my opinion, I think that the American flag should continue to move proudly in the wind. "Flip! Flap! Flap! Flap! Flip!"

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## **Finalist**

Darian Radden, Grade 5  
Cardinal Sheehan School  
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Baltimore, Maryland 21239  
Paula Redman, Principal

### American Flag

How is the American Flag a symbol of our country?

The flag is one of America's most important symbols. It represents our struggle for freedom from England's monarchy. Settlers to the new land wanted to govern themselves in a democracy where anyone can be powerful through hard work, not birthright. The flag is the symbol of their determination and pride.

The flag has many parts, equally important. The 13 stripes represent the original 13 colonies that settled the new land with blood, sweat, and tears and serve to remind us of their perseverance. The stars represent each of the states that make up America. By adding a new star for each state, the flag symbolizes our continued unity even as we grow.

The flag's colors also have significance. Red reminds us that the struggle was won through valor and hardiness. Blue represents justice, vigilance, and perseverance. White symbolizes purity and innocence.

Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness: These ideals are all embodied in our flag. The flag instills pride in all Americans and keeps us humble as we recognize the dangers faced and overcome to create our great nation.