

Subject

Language Arts:
Other Alphabets

Grade 4 +

Summary

From the list of alphabetical flags students will spell out messages that are both fun and practical.

Overall Expectations

Students will communicate ideas and information for a variety of purposes and to specific audiences

Specific Expectations

Students will use writing for various purposes and in a range of contexts while working with the nautical flag system.

Author

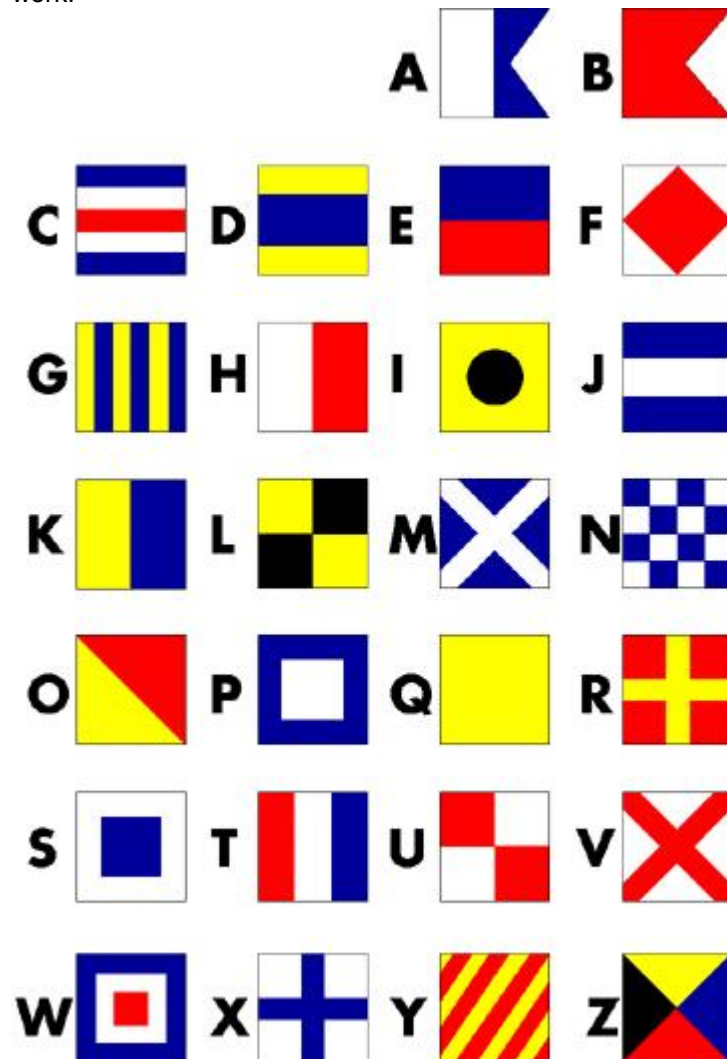
Rosalind Ross

Fun flags and secret messages

BACKGROUND

Ships and smaller vessels can send messages using special flags that work the same way as our alphabet. Before radio communications, computers and other electronic equipment, flags, and lights, would be used for serious messages during wartime or exploration.

Now the nautical flags are used more for decoration or during ceremonies. Just for fun, sailors may sew small badges on their jackets to spell a name or initials. Take a look at the flags to see how the message system would work.



ACTIVITY

Now that you've studied the flags, let's answer some questions.

1. How many flags are there in the alphabet?
2. Just like the alphabet you know very well, the flag alphabet has letters that are used more often or less often. That means you would need more flags for some letters. If you take a look at the printing on this page you will notice some letters are used more often. List four of those letters and beside each one draw the flag and colour it. Your answer may not be the same as other people's because there are so many letters to choose from.
3. There are some letters that do not appear very often. You would not need as many flags for these letters. List three of those letters then draw and colour the flags that match them.
4. In a straight row across a page draw and colour the flags for your name. Do not write the letters. Cut out your name in flags and stick it on one of your notebooks. Now everybody in the class has a special name in flags.
5. Print a secret message to a friend or classmate. Farther down the page draw the flags for the secret message. Cut off this part of the page and trade messages. Now you and your friends have a secret code for sending messages.
6. If you look at the www.floatingclassroom.com website you will find the names of the two cats going on the voyage. Which cat is in the picture below? Draw the flags for the cat's name.



You can do more things with the flag alphabet. You can put your name in flags on the door to your room or make cloth badges to sew on your jacket. You might want some help from Mom or Dad with sewing. Think of more ways of using the flags for fun.