

The Dream Flag Project

Creating Dream Flags

WORDS ON FABRIC

The key factor is creating something that's sturdy and legible.

Note for younger participants: You may want to leave a wide margin around text to allow for decoration. This will make it easier for children to avoid decorating over the letters.

Here are some methods:

Method 1: Permanent Markers

This is simple and direct. Use light color fabric with a tight weave--not too thick. Use Sharpie or other brand of permanent markers. Write the words on the fabric using as large a letter-size as possible and simple, legible letter style (for easier reading).

Method 2: Fabric Markers

Use light tight-weave fabric and fabric markers. This will give you a little more color variation and may give you more graphic flexibility as well.

Method 3: Computer Printing.

This is a more complex (and costly) way of transferring text to cloth, but allows students to make sure the text is perfectly edited and formatted before printing. This requires computer access for participants (or parent helpers), an inkjet or laser printer, and special sheets of printable fabric available at fabric stores. Some companies that offer this product are [June Tailor](#) (under View Our Catalog), Canon, and Avery. Also, [Color Textiles](#) has been a good supplier for some schools at lower cost. (<http://www.junetailor.com>) (<http://www.colortextiles.com/>)

Have students word-process their text and format it for printout on standard paper. When the copy is "perfect," print text on fabric. (Works best if you insert one sheet at a time.) Let print set for a few minutes (or print may smudge.) Remove paper backing from the cloth. It will tear a little on the sides. (You can cut off the loose edges or just leave them.) Inks vary in their fastness. You may need to fix the ink by ironing the fabric to make it waterproof. Laser printer ink has proved fast *without* ironing. Experiment with your printer and see what works. You can apply watercolors, watercolor pencils, and other media to the fabric for beautiful effects in combination with the text.

Note: For some great detailed information on the computer printing process, check out the Dream Flags Wiki entry of Pete Endriss (of the John Wister School in Philadelphia). He's helped print as many as 450 Dream Flags for his school many times.

[Pete's Wiki Notes on Computer Printing](#)

<http://dreamflags.pbwiki.com/PRINTING+TIPS+-+Suppliers+and+technical+advice>

Method 4: Needlework

Embroider or cross-stitch letters onto fabric. This is for those who know how. Make sure the thread won't run when wet.

Method 5: Silk-Screen.

This is usually for large quantities but may be combined here in a way that allows individuals to modify a basic text or decoration scheme. You could have letters for D R E A M or some other "starter" and let students add their own text to this.

The Dream Flag concept was created by sixth grade teachers Jeff Harlan, Sandy Crow, Helen Holt and others at The Agnes Irwin School (www.agnesirwin.org), Rosemont, Pennsylvania, U.S. The Dream Flag Project (www.dreamflags.org) is a collaborative project facilitated by Jeff Harlan and Sandy Crow. Contact dreamflags@agnesirwin.org or Jeff Harlan, Dream Flags Project Director, The Agnes Irwin School, Ithan Ave. and Conestoga Road, Rosemont, PA 19010, U.S. A.

. . . for Helen

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FABRIC DECORATION

For older participants

The sky is the limit here, literally. Create work that expresses your dreams. If you want to display the flags outside, make them weather resistant.

For younger participants (elementary and middle school)

Here are some suggestions:

Since participants may be working on cloth for the first time and may not be able to "redo" work easily (especially if the text has been printed on the fabric already), they should **experiment** on scrap cloth. Any kind of old pillow case or sheet will do cut up in rectangles.

If they have text, help them remember that people need to read it and that they should either decorate *around* the text or use media that won't cover up the text.

Media that work well include the following:

Watercolor Paints

Easy and available. These can be used to create beautiful wash effects. Light colors are good for going over text (if it's fast). Help students to communicate a feeling with color, a feeling that goes with their dream. After drying, the flags should be "set" with hair spray, ironing, or other spray fixative. Experiment with what works (before the whole group does it.)

Acrylic Paint

Acrylic paint will be weatherproof without fixing; it also offers more color. It is harder to work with, though, and harder to clean up (stains cloth). It also needs to be diluted to create colors that will go over text without covering it. Generally, this is a more expressive media and is better for middle school age and up.

Water Color Crayons

These are very rich in color and are best used *around* text, not on it. They are also somewhat expensive. Like watercolor paints, they need to be fixed.

Water Color Pencils

These allow a sharper line for drawing with the color of watercolor paints. They create lines that can then be blended by applying water. They are somewhat expensive. The color has to be fixed like watercolor paint.

Oil Paint

Oil will allow a rich range of expression but will also tend to harden significantly when dry and will be opaque. This may make the flag stiff and heavy, so it is recommended in moderation and only by older participants.

Attachments to Fabric

Anything can be attached to the fabric as long as it does not add so much weight or stiffness that the flag will not fly in the wind. Hot gluing, sewing, stapling, etc will all work. The flags should remain the same size as other flags (8 ½" x 11") with some allowance for edge decorations. Help participants to remember not to use tape or other adhesives that will not be weatherproof.

Here's the main idea: Make your dreams fly!

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ATTACHING FLAGS TO A LINE

After the flags are completed, you will want to hang them. The object is to hang all flags *vertically* from a line with room at each end of the line to connect to other lines. Flags can be sewn, pinned, or attached to the line in any other manner that will be durable.

Pointers:

1. When you buy rope, clothes line works well. Figure about 1 foot per flag.
2. A good distance between the flags is 2-3 inches. It allows enough for each to be seen individually and economizes on space.
3. If you sew, the easiest way is to go through the cloth over the TOP of the rope, around it, then through the cloth again. That way you never have to sew through the rope (very hard on fingers), and it's still secure.
4. If you have more than twenty flags, using several pieces of rope is easier. When the flag lines get bigger than 20 feet (the approximate size for 20 flags), then they're hard to manage and transport.
5. Leave at least a foot of rope at each end of your flag line so you can easily tie it to another one.

Method 1: Hand Sewn

This is probably the simplest durable way to attach flags. For this you need a fabric line as they use in some Buddhist prayer flags. Sew each flag directly to the cloth line with a double stitch. This holds the flag fast so it will not slip. Students with reasonable fine motor skill and hand strength (usually 4th grade and up) can do this themselves. A variation of this is to use a machine to sew them, a faster method if adults are doing the attaching.

Method 2: Drawstring

Leave ½ in. + margin at the top of each flag. Sew a hem at the top of each flag, leaving a "pocket" through which a line will pass. Use a ¼ in. or less diameter nylon chord and thread it through the flags. (You may want to "subdivide" your chord to make threading easier. You may want to apply a small amount of glue to each end of the flag (where the chord comes out) to keep flags from sliding in the wind or sliding off when being moved.

Method 3: Pinned

This is the simplest and least time-consuming method. It is not the most attractive, but it's pretty wind-proof and has the advantage of allowing you to remove the flags later. Get two safety pins for each flag. Get a cotton clothes line (with nylon center for strength). Using safety pins, pin each flag to the line, putting the pin through the center of the line, then through the corner of the flag, then closing it. Flags should be spaced a few inches apart for flapping. About four inches works well. They may rust a bit.

Method 4: Hot Glue

This is a very quick way to attach many flags, but it has to be done by an adult or older student. It is easiest to lay the rope down, place the flag next to it, put on a line of glue the width of the flag, then pick up the flag and place and press in on the glue line. The result is pretty durable.

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<u>Grade Level:</u>	<u>Type of Poetry:</u>	<u>Artist/Medium/Form:</u>
Kindergarten	<i>"When I Grow Up..."</i> Students wrote poems about what they want to be in the future	self -portraits
Grade 1	<i>"If I Had Three Wishes..."</i> Students were given this phrase and had to complete the poem based on it	Fairytales/ Fantasy
Grade 2	<i>" The Five Senses"</i> Students were taught about the five senses and then completed their poems with "my dream feels like..."	Sculpture/Tactile
Grade 3	Haiku Students were taught about the Japanese culture and shown examples of famous haikus. They then wrote their own for their dream flags in that format	Watercolors/ Monet
Grade 4	Acrostic Poem in which subject of poem is wrote vertically and each letter becomes the beginning of a sentence which references that word	Abstract Art/ Mondrian
Grade 5	Diamante Poem which consists of seven lines and is in the shape of a diamond. Students brainstormed prior to completing their poems.	tessellations
Grade 6	Free Verse Students in this grade held several classes discussions about peace, their city, and what they hoped to accomplish in the future. They were then given the freedom to write any form they chose as well as artist and art form.	student's choice