Eight Stars of Gold
The Story of Alaska's Flag

Benny Benson, an Alaska Native seventh grader from the Jesse Lee Mission Home in Seward, won the Alaska Flag Contest in 1927. His simple but elegant design was selected from 142 entries. Benny's life changed forever, as he became a famous Alaskan within the state and across the country.

The blue field is for the Alaska sky and the forget-me-not, an Alaskan flower. The North Star is for the future state of Alaska, the most northerly in the union. The Dipper is for the Great Bear – symbolizing strength."

Benny Benson's story

Big Dipper
It was this pattern of stars that inspired Benny Benson for his flag design entry.

The Big Dipper is one of the easiest group of stars to find in the sky. It is visible all year round, and its seven stars are bright enough to see even when the sky is not completely dark.

The Big Dipper is only a part of the constellation Ursa Major, the Great Bear. The "handle" of the Dipper is the tail of the bear.

You can find the North Star, Polaris, with the help of the Big Dipper. Go outside on a clear night and draw an imaginary line through the seven stars at the front of the cup. Extend this line and it will point to Polaris.

Connect the dots to see the Great Bear

Eight Stars of Gold
The Story of Alaska’s Flag on the museum’s site:
www.museums.state.ak.us
Meet the Author

India Spartz

Researcher, India Spartz, who grew up in Juneau and now works in Fairbanks, became very interested in telling the story of how Alaska got its distinctive flag. She wanted to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the flag and celebrate the creativity and the patriotic commitment of Alaska's people over the years. The result of her work is the Alaska State Museum exhibit and catalog, *Eight Stars of Gold: The Story of Alaska's Flag*. You can see an interview with India Spartz at the museum's website: www.museums.state.ak.us

Bubble Puzzle

What flies more around Alaska's capital than the Alaska Flag?

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 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
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Figure out the questions below to find the answer. The letters in the bubbles spell but the answer.

1. The Latin name of the constellation also known as the Great Bear is _____________.
2. Alaska was a ____________ before it became a state.
3. Benny Benson designed the ____________ flag.
4. The blue field is for the Alaska sky; (Round the circle ___ I ___ I) Benny Benson's flag motto.
5. The colors of the Alaska Flag are ____________ and ____________.
6. The part of the constellation on the Alaska Flag is called the ____________.
7. The number of stars on the Alaska Flag: ____________.
8. Another name for the north star is ____________.
9. The great bear symbolizes ____________.
10. Marie Drake wrote the state ____________.

Alaska Flag Arithmetic Trivia

All the numbers and statements below have a relationship to the Alaska State Flag. Can you figure out the statement using the numbers as clues? Each capital letter stands for a word that begins with that letter.

**E**G**I**N**N**E**R**E**R: See the key words at the bottom to figure out the puzzle.

**A**D**V**A**N**C**E**D: U**D**O**n’t** use the key words. Read the history of the Alaska flag and figure out the answers on your own.

**C**L**U**E: \(1927 = \text{The AFCY.}\)  \(\text{A} = \text{The Alaska Flag Contest Year.}\)

\(\text{59} = \text{Y of A S.}\)
\(\text{7} = \text{S that F the I D.}\)
\(\text{8} = \text{S on the A F.}\)
\(\text{49} = \text{A is this S on the U S F.}\)
\(\text{13} = \text{A of the A F D, B B.}\)

**K**E**Y**W**O**R**D**S: U**A**ge, Big, Stars, United, Flag, Designer, Benny, Dipper, U**S**tatehood, Benson, Alaska, States, Form, Year
Alaska's Flag
Do you know the words to the song, Alaska’s Flag?

1st Verse of Alaska’s Flag
Written by Marie Drake, Composed by Elinor Dusenbury

Eight stars of gold on a field of blue -l
Alaska's flag. May it mean to you!
The blue of the sea, the evening sky,l
The mountain lakes, and the flow’rs nearby,l
The gold of the early sourdough’s dreams,l
The precious gold of the hills and streams,l
The brilliant stars in the northern sky,l
The 'l'Bear’—the 'l'Dipper’—and, shining high,l
The great North Star with its steady ight,l
O'er land and sea a beacon bright.l
Alaska’s flag—it to Alaskans dear,l
The simple flag of a last frontier,l

Did you know that a second verse was written?

2nd Verse of Alaska’s Flag
Words by Carol Beery Davis

A Native lad chose the Dipper’s stars
For Alaska’s flag that there be no bars!
Among our culture. Let it be known!
Through years the Native’s past has brown!
To share life’s treasures, hand in hand,l
To keep Alaska our Great-Land;l
We love the northern midnight sky,l
The mountains, lakes and streams nearby,l
The great North Star with its steady ight,l
Will guide all cultures, clear and bright,l
With nature’s flag to Alaskans dear,l
The simple flag of the last frontier,l

You can hear Lieutenant Governor Frank Ulmer sing the flag song at exhibit website:
www.museums.state.ak.us

Flag Etiquette
Students at Kwethluk School in Lower Kuskokwim School District
Are there correct ways to handle flag respectfully?

See if you can find out if citizens from another country have the same flag etiquette that we do.

In the activity “Flag Etiquette” on the MuseuM U website at www.museums.state.ak.us you will find the answers to many frequently asked questions about handling a flag.

What is the state motto?

Alaska—the 49th State

When Alaska went from being a territory to a state in 1959, I people all over the United States had ideas for how to redesign the American Flag.

How was the flag redesigned?
The galaxy is said to be the track made by Raven’s snowshoes when he walked across the sky during one of his journeys while creating the inhabitants of the earth.

**Recommended Books**


**Recommended Websites**

The Alaska Democracy Project Citizens for New Millennium www.gov.state.ak.us/ltgov/adp The project circulates Ground Zero flags among school districts.


Flag Trivia on-line Quizb [www.usask.ca/history/fraser/na_flags](http://www.usask.ca/history/fraser/na_flags) Good site for developing games and questions for students about flags.

**Stargazer Scope**

As you are learning about the stars that inspired Benny’s design for an Alaska flag, make a Stargazer Scope.**

Decorate a rolled piece of heavy paper, or use a paper towel tube.

Hold it out at arm’s length as you look at the stars. Can you find the Big Dipper? Ihw your Stargazer Scope?**