

# The Pledge of Allegiance

## Pre-reading

### Questions:

- What does the Pledge of Allegiance mean to you?

### Definitions:

- Pledge – a serious promise
- Allegiance – loyalty or dedication to a belief or country
- Recitation – written material to be read aloud from memory
- Loyalty – being faithful or devoted
- Devotion – giving attention, time, or help for a purpose



## Reading

16 The original Pledge of Allegiance was written over 100 years ago. It was published in Boston,  
34 Massachusetts as “The Pledge to my Flag” on September 8, 1892. It appeared in a youth magazine called  
51 the “Youth’s Companion”. Who wrote it? No one knows for sure. Some believe Francis Bellamy, editor of  
56 the “Youth’s Companion” wrote it.

72 The 22 word recitation was written for school children to use during the national Columbus Day  
72 celebration. October 11, 1892 marked the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Christopher Columbus’ discovery of  
85 America. East coast leaders had planned many activities throughout the nation’s 44 states to celebrate the  
103 big day!

105 On October 11, 1892 more than 12 million school children across the United States recited the  
121 pledge for the first time. The Pledge to my Flag read:

132 I Pledge allegiance to my Flag, And to the Republic for which it stands:  
146 one Nation, indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all.

155 Reciting the Pledge to the Flag quickly became a daily routine in America’s public schools.

170 This original version of the pledge was used for 25 years before some changes were made. On Flag  
188 Day, June 14, 1923 the word “my” in my Flag was changed to “the”. The following year, the words “of the  
209 United States of America” were added after the word Flag.

219 On June 22, 1942 the pledge became official. United States Congress included the Pledge to the Flag  
236 in the United States Flag Code. This was the first official approval given to words that had been recited by  
256 school children for 50 years. One year after receiving this official approval, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled  
273 that school children could not be forced to recite the Pledge as part of their daily routine.

290 In 1945 the Pledge to the Flag received its official title as “The Pledge of Allegiance.” The last change  
309 in the Pledge of Allegiance happened on Flag Day, June 14, 1954 when President Dwight D. Eisenhower  
326 added the words “under God”.

330 The pledge was first written as a 22 word recitation for a Columbus Day celebration. It is now a 31  
350 word **profession** of devotion to a flag and way of life. When you say the Pledge of Allegiance to the United  
371 States of America, you:

- Promise your loyalty to the Flag itself.
- Promise your loyalty to your own and the other 49 states.
- Promise your loyalty to the Government that unites us all;
  - Recognizing that we are one Nation,
  - That we should not be divided or alone,
  - And understanding that the right to liberty and justice belongs to all of us.

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