

**FUN WITH FLAGS:
NAUTICAL FLAGS AND
THEIR MEANINGS**

FUN WITH FLAGS

Introduction:

Knowledge of nautical flags are valuable at sea in case of danger or breakdowns in other communications systems such as radio. 26 square flags (which represent the letters of the alphabet) along with 10 numbered pendants. More than 1 flag can be flown; there are answering and substitute flags (read more here):

- One-flag signals are urgent or common signals.
- Two-flag signals are used mostly for distress and maneuvering.
- Three-flag signals are for points of the compass, relative bearings, standard times, verbs, punctuation and also general code and decode signals.
- Four-flags are used for geographical signals, names of ships, bearings, etc.
- Five-flag signals are used to relate time and position.
- Six-flag signals are used to indicate north or south or east or west in latitude and longitude signals.
- Seven-flags are for longitude signals containing more than one hundred degrees

There are more than the signalling flags on ships. Where flags are located is very important and there are guidelines set out to follow. Find out more here:

<https://www.rya.org.uk/knowledge-advice/regulations/Pages/flag-etiquette.aspx>

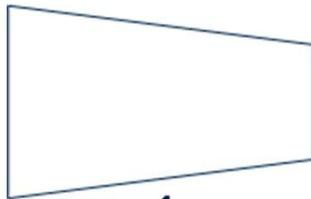
Please note: when more than 1 signalling flag flies, the flag meanings change.

Complete these fun activities using nautical signalling flags to help you learn the patterns and their meaning. For help, ask the people you know / look it up in a book / use the internet. There are 4 activities and an extension task – GET YOUR PENCILS READY!



Activity 1: "ALMOST COLOUR BY NUMBERS!"

Draw and colour the correct pattern that is associated with that number:



1



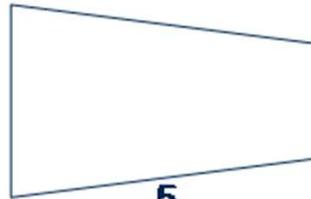
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3



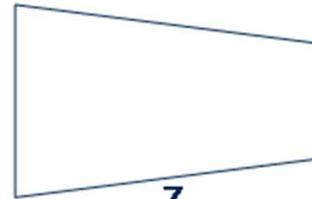
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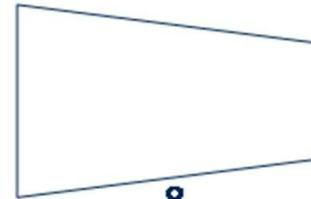
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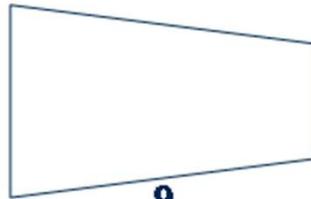
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7



8



9



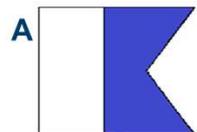
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Activity 2 - "WHAT DOES IT MEAN?"

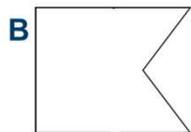
Each flag represents a letter from the alphabet and each letter is part of the phonetic alphabet.

Complete the following:

- Draw and colour each flag that is associated with the that letter.
- Fill in the phonetic alphabet associated with that letter.
- Complete the international meanings for nautical flags.



ALPHA
Diver
down; keep
clear



BRAVO



CHARLIE
Yes



Keep clear



**Altering
course to
starboard**



FOXTROT



GOLF



**A pilot on
board**



INDIA



**vessel on
fire keep
clear**



KILO



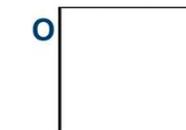
LIMA



MIKE



NOVEMBER



**Man
overboard**



PAPA

Q

QUEBEC

R

ROMEO

S

SIERRA

T

Keep clear

U

UNIFORM

V

Require assistance

W

WHISKEY

X

X-RAY

Y

Am dragging anchor

Z

ZULU



Activity 3 - "YOU'RE A, CODEBREAKER"

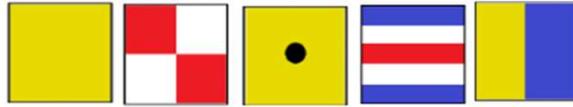
Putting more than 1 signalling flags together gives their own separate meanings to the code. To find out more, go to <http://www.marine waypoints.com/learn/flags/flags2.shtml>

However, to get to know flags we are going to look at them as symbols representing the letter as our code in this activity.

- a) Using your activity 2 answers, decode the messages below (use letters).
- b) Be creative, write (well draw) your name using the flags.



— — —



— — — — —



— — — — —



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Challenge: Create your own code message and have someone solve them.

Activity 4 - "MIX IT UP"

There are more than the signalling flags on ships. Where flags are located on a boat is very important and there are guidelines set out to follow. (find out more here: <https://www.rya.org.uk/knowledge-advice/regulations/Page/s/flag-etiquette.aspx>). Please note: when more than 1 signalling flag flies, the flag meanings change.

- What messages are these ships communicating? Write the flag meanings under to the boat.
- Only red, blue, yellow black and white colours are used for the signalling flags, why do you think this is?
- Why are signalling flags important for boats?

Extension Activity

- Create flash cards to have the signalling flag on one side, and the meaning on the other (include the letter).
- Play a game with others to see how many you can get right or create 4 sets play SNAP!

