

Name _____



Threads Of Freedom

Directions: Read the passage below about the origins of the American flag and the people who shaped its story. Then, answer the comprehension and critical-thinking questions that follow.

The Story Behind the Stars

When people think of the first American flag, many picture Betsy Ross carefully sewing stars onto a field of blue in her Philadelphia workshop. According to legend, she was asked by George Washington in 1776 to create a new flag for the young nation. Betsy suggested using **five-pointed stars** instead of six-pointed ones, as they were easier to cut and looked more elegant. While historians still debate whether Ross truly designed the first flag, her story became a powerful symbol of creativity and patriotism.

Other figures also played key roles in shaping the flag's design and meaning. **Francis Hopkinson**, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, claimed he designed the original flag and requested payment from Congress for his work-though he never received it. Hopkinson's contributions remind us that history is rarely the story of one person but rather of many hands working toward a shared goal.

Over the years, the flag has been changed and refined, gaining stars as new states joined the Union. From Ross's needle to Hopkinson's sketches, the flag's story is stitched together by the efforts of ordinary citizens whose work became extraordinary. Each stripe and star reflects not only a nation's birth but also the teamwork and determination that built it.

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1. Who are the two main people mentioned as contributors to the creation of the American flag?

2. What suggestion did Betsy Ross make that changed the design of the flag?

3. Why is Francis Hopkinson's role in the flag's history sometimes overlooked?

4. What does the passage mean when it says, "history is rarely the story of one person"?

5. How does the story of the flag show the values of teamwork and patriotism?

6. **Critical Thinking:** Why do you think stories like Betsy Ross's remain popular, even if all the details aren't proven?

7. **Inference:** What message might the author want readers to take away about ordinary people's impact on history?
