

WHAT IS A FLAG?

The colours of flags

A flag is a piece of fabric*. It is generally rectangular or square* and it is of various colours. The study of flags is called "vexillology" from the Latin word *vexillum* meaning flag.

A flag is used for various purposes*: **a national flag** is the symbol of a country; **international flags** are used for associations of countries, for example the olympic flag or the flag of the European Union or of the United Nations.

The colours are very important in a flag and the most common colours on a flag are:



Red is a very common colour in flags: it is the symbol of strength*, courage, bravery*, revolution, the blood of the soldiers



Green is traditionally a colour associated with nature, agriculture and fertility and in general connected with positive feelings of hope* and love



Blue is commonly connected with sea and sky but in flags it is the symbol of justice and peace.



Yellow is connected to sun and wealth*. It is used in the flags of many African nations to indicate sunshine*.

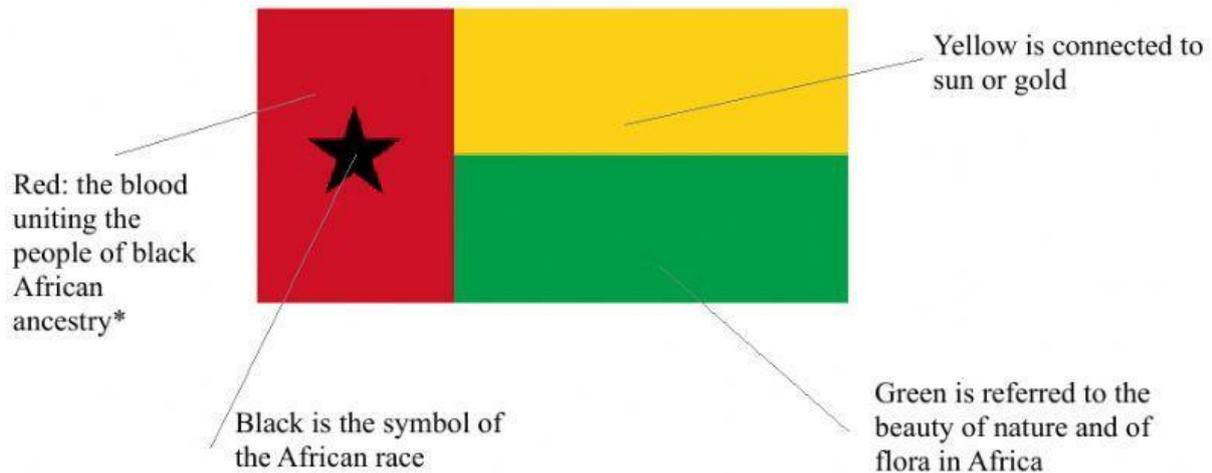


Black is usually a symbol of struggle*, determination, ethnic heritage* and fortitude.

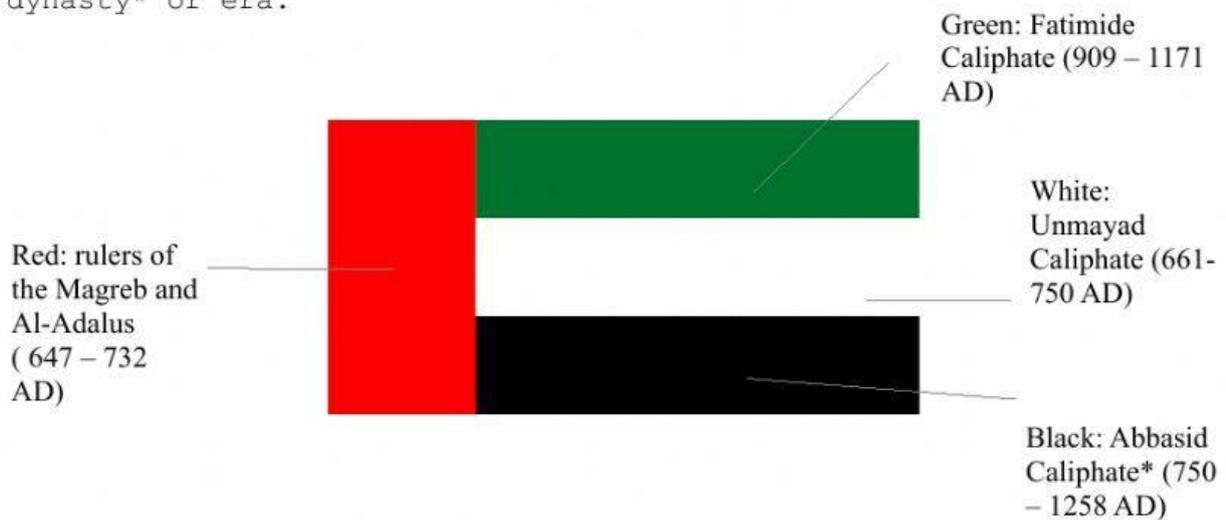


White is symbol of peace, purity and innocence.

Pan-Africanism: is the idea that African countries are united by an ethnic bond. The usual colours and their meanings* are:



Pan-Arabic colours: they are the colours first combined in the flag of the Arab revolt in 1916. They are connected to a specific Arab dynasty* or era.



The most common forms on a flag are: stars, the moon (usually a crescent moon, symbol of the Islamic religion), constellations*, the

sun, a circle, a cross (symbol of the Christian religion), a coat of arms*, an eagle.

GLOSSARY

Fabric: stoffa

Square: quadrato

Purpose: scopo

Strength: forza

Bravery: coraggio

Hope: speranza

Wealth: ricchezza

Sunshine: splendore del sole

Struggle: lotta

Heritage: eredità

Meaning: significato

Ancestry: antenati

Dynasty: dinastia

Caliphate: califfato

Constellation: costellazione

Coat of arms: stemma

PRACTICE

Find the colours in the grid

O	I	W	H	O	G	O	I	H	Q	U	M
E	Q	H	Q	Z	R	X	M	S	J	V	J
O	J	I	Z	U	E	H	U	D	D	Q	T
U	C	T	X	N	E	B	L	U	E	V	H
T	Y	E	R	Y	N	P	C	I	H	W	G
G	Y	U	E	Y	E	L	L	O	W	A	G
Q	A	G	D	F	R	R	C	Y	D	R	V
N	C	X	S	K	B	L	A	C	K	B	D

Answer the following simple questions after reading the text

1. What is a flag?

2. What is *vexillology*?

3. What is a national flag?

4. What is an international flag?

5. What are the common colours in a flag?

6. What are the colours of pan-africanism?

7. What are the pan-arabic colours?

8. What are the common shapes in a flag?

connect the colour with its correct meaning(s)

red



green



white



blue



black



yellow



Purity – peace – nature – bravery – blood – struggle – sun – gold – justice – hope – sky –
ethnic heritage – love – agriculture – revolution - purity