

California State Flag

Golden State • Capital: Sacramento • Statehood: 1850

Overview

The grizzly bear on a grass plot, with a red star above and bold stripe below, is a throwback to the short-lived Bear Flag Revolt. It conveys both independence and strength. “California Republic” remains emblazoned as if to declare a spirit still untamed, from Sierra peaks to Pacific shore.

Flag specifications

Adopted: 1911-02-03
Designer: William Todd
Ratio: 2:3
White field with red stripe at bottom, red star and grizzly bear with grass plot.

Colors

#FFFFFF

#B71234

#008000

#000000

#FFD700

Symbolism

grizzly bear	Represents strength and unyielding resistance.
red star	Inspired by the California Lone Star Flag.
red stripe	Symbol of courage.
white field	Symbolizes purity.

Historical timeline

- 1846: Bear Flag Revolt.
- 1911: Current Bear Flag design adopted.
- 1846 — Original Bear Flag flown during the Bear Flag Revolt.

Notable facts

- The bear was modeled on 'Monarch,' a California grizzly in captivity.
- California is called the Golden State for its Gold Rush history and fields of gold.
- The grizzly bear symbolizes strength and independence.
- The single red star represents sovereignty and independence.
- The red stripe along the bottom symbolizes courage and sacrifice.
- The flag design dates back to the Bear Flag Revolt of 1846.
- Although grizzly bears are extinct in California, the bear remains a state symbol.
- The current flag design was officially adopted in 1911.

Seal deep dive

grizzlyBear
A California grizzly bear walking on green grass.
Meaning: Strength, independence, and the former presence of grizzly bears in California

loneStar
A single red star positioned above the bear.
Meaning: The Bear Flag Revolt and California's brief period as an independent republic

redStripe
A red stripe running along the bottom of the flag.
Meaning: Unity with the red star and reinforcement of bold visual balance

lettering
The words 'CALIFORNIA REPUBLIC' beneath the bear.
Meaning: Commemoration of the 1846 California Republic

Vexillology notes

Design type: Pictorial emblem flag

Complexity: 6/10

Readability: 7/10

Printable reference sheet for classroom use.