

Virginia State Flag

Old Dominion • Capital: Richmond • Statehood: 1788

Overview

A blue field with the state seal: Virtus, the figure of virtue, stands over a fallen tyrant. The motto Sic Semper Tyrannis, “Thus always to tyrants”, leaves the message plain. Bold imagery of victory over oppression.

Flag specifications

Adopted: 1861-04-30
Designer: George Wythe Randolph and committee
Ratio: 2:3
Blue field with state seal centered.

Colors

   
#002D72 #FFFFFF #800000 #FFD700

Symbolism

Virtus	Roman goddess representing virtue and bravery.
fallen tyrant	Depicts the defeat of tyranny.
motto	‘Sic Semper Tyrannis’ means ‘Thus Always to Tyrants.’

Historical timeline

- 1776: State seal adopted.
- 1861: Current flag adopted after secession from the Union.

Notable facts

- Virginia’s flag is one of the few showing a violent image.
- The motto has been used since the American Revolution.
- The central seal depicts Virtus standing over a defeated tyrant.
- The image symbolizes the overthrow of tyranny.
- The Latin motto ‘Sic Semper Tyrannis’ means ‘Thus Always to Tyrants.’
- The blue field represents loyalty and vigilance.
- Virginia’s flag is based directly on the state seal.
- The current flag design was officially adopted in 1861.

Seal deep dive

stateSeal
The Virginia state seal centered on a dark blue field.
Meaning: Victory of liberty over tyranny and Virginia’s Revolutionary ideals

virtus
The Roman goddess Virtus standing triumphantly.
Meaning: Courage, virtue, and moral strength

tyrant
A fallen male figure representing tyranny, lying beneath Virtus.
Meaning: The overthrow of monarchy and oppression

motto
The Latin motto ‘Sic Semper Tyrannis’ displayed below the seal.
Meaning: Thus always to tyrants, a declaration of resistance to oppression

Vexillology notes

Design type: State seal on blue field

Complexity: 8/10

Readability: 4/10

Printable reference sheet for classroom use.