

The Legend of the Mexican Flag

The Mexican flag dates back to 1821. It is divided into three vertical sections. The left section is solid green for independence. The center section is white for religious purity. The right section is red for national unity.

In the middle of the center section is the Mexican coat of arms. This symbol depicts an eagle perched on a cactus and devouring a snake. This symbol is borrowed from an Aztec legend. The Aztecs were latecomers to the central plateau of Mexico. When they arrived from the north around 1325, most of the land was already divided among the tribes who had already been living there. The Aztecs believed that their deity Huitzilopochtli had given them a vision: that when they saw an eagle devouring a snake while perched on a cactus, they would be home. They spotted this on an island in the middle of Lake Texcoco. It is here that they established their home of Tenochtitlan.

When the conquistadors arrived in 1519, Tenochtitlan was larger than the great cities of Europe. Today, as then, it is the largest city in the world.

Materials

- copies of flag (page 109) and coat of arms (page 110)
- rulers
- tape or glue
- crayons or markers
- scissors

Directions for Flag

1. Color the flag on page 109 according to the legend.
2. Cut the flag out and tape it to a ruler or dowel.
3. Wave your flag and cheer for Mexico.

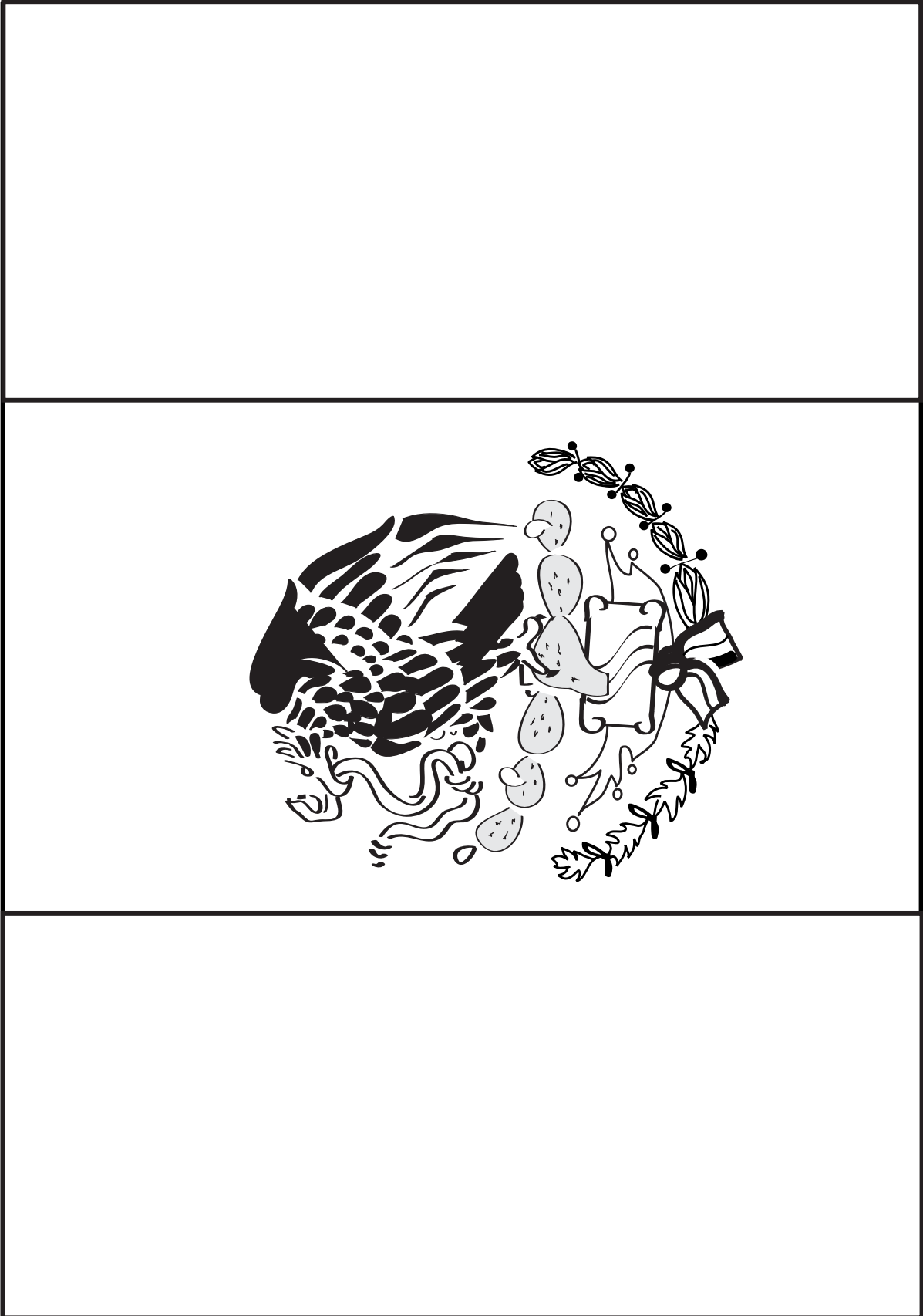


Directions for Coat of Arms

1. Cut out the coat of arms on page 110.
2. Tape or glue it to a large piece of paper for a "Class Coat of Arms."



The Legend of the Mexican Flag *(cont.)*



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