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HOW TO MAKE A PENNANT, FLAG OR DECORATED POLE

(15- 20 mins approx.)



Illustrations of flags and
pennants by Clare Hunter.
Illustration of barmaids'
decorated poles by Mary
Lowndes, 1909
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HOW TO MAKE A PENNANT, FLAG OR DECORATE POLE

This toolkit is aimed at ages 14+. Adult supervision may be needed for children aged up to 16

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GETTING STARTED: SUPPLIES YOU WILL NEED -

For the Pennant¹ or Flag

- 1x piece of fabric 42" (107cm) x 50" (127cm) for front cloth
- 1x piece of fabric 42" (107cm) x 50" (127cm) for back cloth (in black or a dark colour)
- Any other additional fabric for lettering and design elements
- Bondaweb² (as much of this as you will need to trace your design and lettering, allowing for error)
- Pencils (white and black)
- Scissors
- Pins
- Needles

¹ A pennant is a triangle of cloth that is longer than it is tall, and which tapers to a point. It has a side channel to slip a pole into, closed at the top.

² Bondaweb is a white fusible adhesive paper that you can buy by the meter online or at your local fabric shop. Like sticky-back sellotape it uses adhesive to stitch fabric to fabric, useful for lettering and adding an image to your banner.

- Thread
- A long tape measure/ ruler
- A large table
- Greaseproof paper
- Iron
- Ironing base (An old blanket rather than an ironing board may be easier)

For the Pole:

- 1 x 18mm x 2400mm dowel carrying pole



You can get most pennant or flag supplies from fabric shops or local charity shops, markets and upcycling centres. You can buy the dowel pole from Wickes, B&Q or your local hardware shop.

‘Let us go then, and make banners as required, and let them all be beautiful.’

Mary Lowndes, *Banner & Banner-Making* 1909



Suffragettes making banners and pennants for the procession to Hyde Park, 23 July 1910 ©LSE Women's Library ©LSE Women's Library

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COSTS

The total banner including fabric and poles may cost from £14.50, dependent on the detail of design. See a suggested outline budget below:

ITEM	ESTIMATED COST
POLE	
Dowel 18x2400mm	£6.50
FABRIC	
Estimated Total Cost	£8.00
TOTAL ESTIMATED COST	£14.50

Some items may have different prices depending on where you buy them. You can cut costs by upcycling old or used fabric. It will also add some history to your pennant or flag. For example, you could use some old clothes belonging to you or a loved one, a tablecloth or sheet

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DESIGN YOUR PENNANT OR FLAG

Your PROCESSIONS pennant or flag can be powerful, punchy and clear. Representing the ideas, hopes and concerns of women today, it should be bold, beautiful and uniquely yours. Whatever you put on it should be heartfelt. Onlookers will only have a short time to see its message, so make it simple, punchy and clear.

WORDS

You may want to include words on your banner. As banners are seen quickly on procession your main message should be at the top. Consider:

- Just one word – WOMEN; FREEDOM; COMMUNITY; CHANGE
- Someone's name – a heroine, your mother or daughter, neighbour, friend
- A place name – your home or somewhere you want to represent
- An occupation – if your banner represents a group of workers, volunteers, activists
- A phrase – you can use a contemporary phrase or slogan, or be inspired by suffragette mottos including: 'Deeds Not Words'; 'Delay of Justice an Injustice'; 'Right the Wrongs'.

TIP

Don't crowd your letters. They need space to be read at distance so use the largest font you can

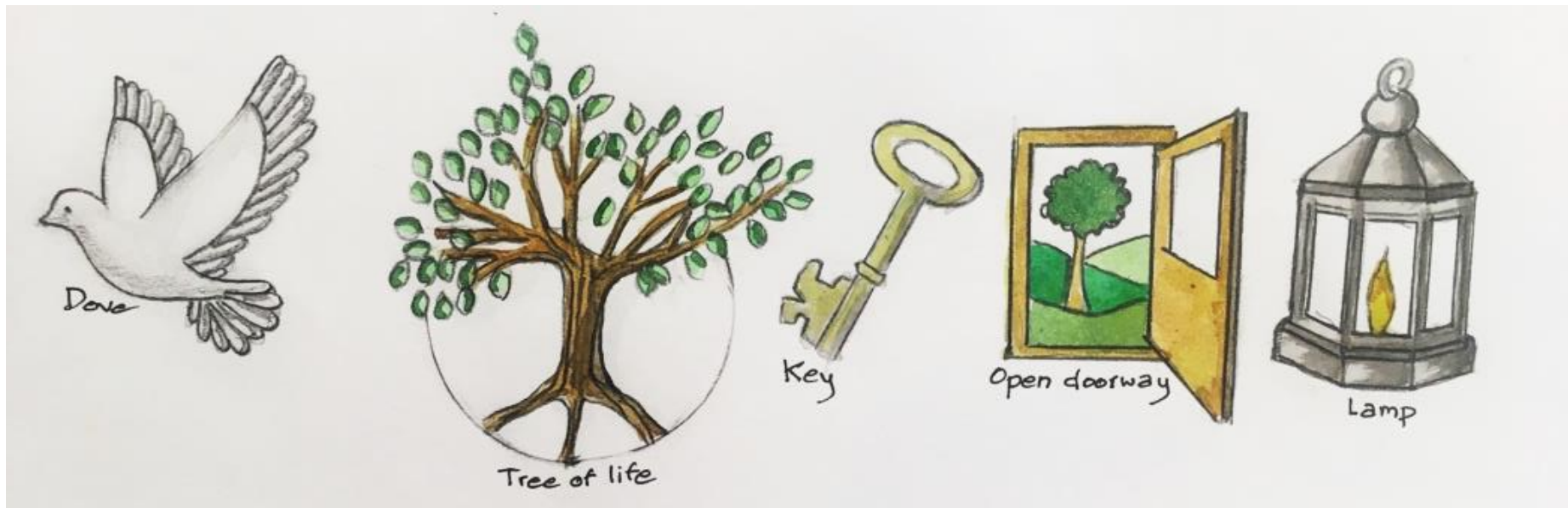
You might have one word on your pennant or flag or the whole thing might be a quotation. Handwriting makes it personal so you could include the signatures of your group, or the reproduced signature of a past heroine writ large in fabric paint or appliqué³.

³ Appliqué is where a small piece of fabric is stitched or sewn onto a larger piece of fabric. Appliqués are made with fabric, ribbons, beads, sequins or other materials. The appliqué material should be applied tightly either by hand or with a sewing machine.

IMAGE

The image should help people to understand your message quickly. It might be-

- A symbol: a dove, a tree of life, a key, an open doorway, a lamp
- Something from your life: a handprint, family, signatures of friends
- A popular image: brands re-imagined, well known figures



COLOURS

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The “Green, White, Violet” of the Suffragette colours stood for “Give Women Votes”. Using these colours was a new technique in branding and was hugely successful. It is often seen as the precedent for the use of political party colours we’re familiar with today.



Suffrage Banner © The Women's Library @ LSE

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Colour Symbolism

Black	power, mystery, triumph
Blue	loyalty, intelligence, trust
Brown	earth, stability, endurance
Dark Blue	integrity, knowledge
Green	hope, renewal
Grey	security, intelligence
Lavender	femininity, grace
Orange	enthusiasm, creativity
Pink	love, caring
Violet	dignity, power, ambition
Red	courage, passion, determination
White	purity, light, peace
Yellow	joy

PENANTS, FLAGS AND DECORATED POLES

Pennant: a triangle of cloth that is longer than it is tall, and which tapers to a point. It has a side channel to slip a pole into, closed at the top. Pennants and flags add colour, movement and energy to a procession. They can have a word, image, quotation or a name on them and can be a useful way to identify a group. Make pennants and flags in one layer of cloth in the lightest of materials because they should float in the wind.

MAKE A PENNANT

(15 mins)

Use an 18mm pole

Take a square of fabric. Cut out a triangle of whatever size you like. Create a side channel on the straight edge 3" (7.5 cm) wide, by folding the straight edge over. Sew down the edge. Then sew across its top, leaving the bottom edge of the side channel open for the pole to slide inside. The pennant should be secure, but you can glue the base of the material to where it meets the pole if you think it needs further support.

MAKE A FLAG

(20 mins)

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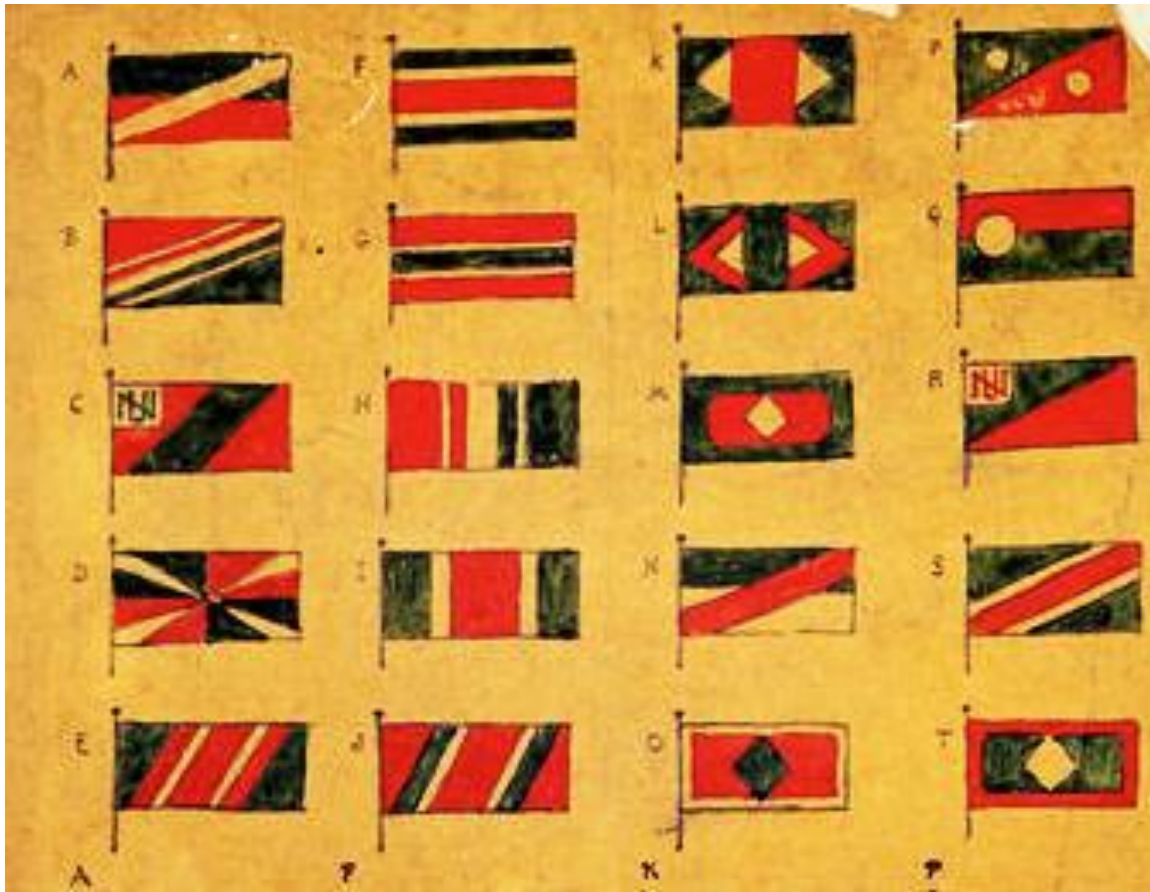
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Use an 18mm pole.

Cut a square or rectangle of fabric to a size of your choice. Remember the bigger it is the harder it will be to carry and wave.

Create a side channel on the straight edge 3" (7.5 cm) wide, by folding the straight edge over. Sew down the edge. Then sew across its top, leaving the bottom edge of the side channel open for the pole to slide inside.

The flag should be secure, but you can glue the base of the material to where it meets the pole if you think it needs further support.



Twenty Flag Designs, Mary Lowndes, 1907 - 1922
 © The Women's Library @ LSE

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MAKE A DECORATED POLE

(30 mins)

This can be a pole which has some floating ribbons tied at the top.

Suffrage campaigners also tied objects / emblems to poles to represent their group, for example a pair of tankards for barmaid. You could use: a pair of trainers to symbolize sportswomen; a bunch of carrots - gardeners; a clutch of medals - charity runners.

They can be fun and are easy to make. Just get your pole and notch it, then tie and glue streamers to it.

Attach objects to streamers securely so they don't fall off.

See Mary Lowndes designs on the vads.ac.uk online site for inspiration.

CREDITS

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