

# Memorial Day



**Amanda Bennett**

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## INTRODUCTION TO MEMORIAL DAY

Memorial Day, a day when we take time to remember all of the people that have given their lives for American freedom. They gave up promising futures, families, hopes, and dreams — for all of us. Let us use this day as an opportunity to honor them, remember them, and learn more about their sacrifices.

Looking back on my childhood days, I recall that Memorial Day used to be called Decoration Day. This was a day when families would gather, clean the cemetery plots of family members, plant flowers, and place small flags on the graves of those family members that had died defending America. People would “decorate” their graves, to honor their memory. This was also a time for a family picnic and a parade in town. It was a family time — a treasured time.

When we saw flags waving in the breeze all over the neighborhood, we were proud to be Americans. I would like for American children to experience this same pride and appreciate what it has taken to keep that flag flying.

As time has gone by, these traditions have often been left behind and forgotten. Now, if you ask many children what Memorial Day is about, they remark, “The day the pool opens!” or “The beginning of summer!” It is high time that we reclaim the memorial — the remembrance of those who fought so proudly so that we can be free to enjoy our precious God-given liberties.

With that in mind, let’s work on bringing the focus back to the intent of this holiday. We can do this in a way that will open the children’s eyes to the liberties that they enjoy and show them that these liberties have been protected at all costs. We will briefly learn about the history of the holiday, some of the wars that Americans have fought in, and ways that we can honor the great people who lost their lives defending our lives and liberty.

Take a moment and make sure that you can find your family flag. Try to fly it for each day of this week as you learn about and CELEBRATE these patriots. Let’s put MEMORIAL back in Memorial Day, a family holiday!



**MEMORIAL DAY SALUTE**

# Memorial Day – Day One

## LOWER LEVEL

### Today's Quote

Copy today's quote into your **Patriotic Journal**:

**"I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country."**

Nathan Hale, 1776, right before his execution

### Words of Wisdom (WOW Words)

Look up the following words in the dictionary and write the words and their definitions in your **Patriotic Journal**. **Website suggestions:** [Webster's 1828 Dictionary](#) and [Word Central](#)

**soldier**  
**defend**  
**honor**  
**patriot**

### Patriots

Using an encyclopedia or Internet site, look up the American patriot, **Nathan Hale**. Why is he considered an American patriot? Write or narrate a paragraph about Nathan Hale for your Patriotic Journal. **Website suggestions:** [Nathan Hale's Biography](#), [Nathan Hale](#), and [One of America's First Spies](#)

### Read and Discover

Look up **Memorial Day** in an encyclopedia, book, or Internet site, then answer these questions. **Website suggestion:** [Origins of Memorial Day](#)

1. Read and discuss the beginnings of this holiday. Notice that the holiday was originally called Decoration Day. Why?
2. There are many towns & people that claim to have started the tradition — which one was given "official credit" for being the first?
3. Did you read about the first "official" Memorial Day? Where and when was it held?

### Resources

Here are a few books that explain Memorial Day and its origins. Check with your local library to see what is available in your area. They are all very basic, explaining the origins of Memorial Day and today's holiday.

[Memorial Day \(Carolrhoda on My Own Books\)](#), by Geoffrey Scott.

[Memorial Day \(National Holidays\)](#), by Helen Frost.



# Memorial Day – Day One

## UPPER LEVEL

### Today's Quote

Copy today's quote into your Patriotic Journal:

**“Stand your ground. Don't fire unless fired upon;  
but if they mean to have a war, let it begin here!”**

John Parker, April 19, 1775, to his Minute Men at Lexington

### Words of Wisdom (WOW Words)

Look up the following words in the dictionary and write the words and their definitions in your Patriotic Journal. **Website suggestions:** [Webster's 1828 Dictionary](#) and [Dictionary.com](#)

**sacrifice**  
**liberty**  
**protect**  
**patriot**

### Patriots

Using an encyclopedia or Internet site, look up the American patriot, **Nathan Hale**. Why is he considered an American patriot? Summarize your answer in a paragraph in your Journal. **Website suggestions:** [A Time for Heroes](#), [Nathan Hale's Biography](#), [Nathan Hale](#), and [One of America's First Spies](#)

### Read and Discover

Using library books, encyclopedias, or Internet sites, find the answer to these questions and record your answers in your Journal, along with the source of your information (book, encyclopedia, web site). **Website suggestions:** [Origins of Memorial Day](#), [Memorial Day](#), [History of Memorial Day](#), and [Memorial Day](#)

1. What towns or people claim to have held the “first” Decoration (Memorial) Day? Find at least two towns and describe their claim.
2. Why was the holiday originally called Decoration Day?
3. Where and when was the first “official” Memorial Day observation held?