

This week's issue:

SHOULD THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE SAY "ONE NATION UNDER GOD"?



Questions for Classroom Discussion:

- Do you think about the meaning of the Pledge when you recite it?
- What does the Pledge signify for you?
- Do you feel allegiance to other groups or institutions besides the United States?
- Do you think the Supreme Court reached the right conclusion when they said individuals can choose to recite or not recite the Pledge?

Students across the country **recite** the Pledge of Allegiance daily: *I pledge **allegiance** to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.*

In 2002, a father in California sued the government. He said that he did not believe in God. His daughter should not have to say “under God” in school every day. Many people agree with him. They point out that the separation of church and state is a law. This means the government cannot teach or support religion. They say this language in the Pledge is not fair. It **signifies** to students who do not believe in God that their belief is wrong.

Other people think that taking “under God” out of the Pledge would destroy tradition. About three-quarters of the United States population is Christian. Others follow religions like Islam and Judaism that are also based on belief in one God.

Supporters of the Pledge say the phrase does not teach a specific religion. They say it just reflects the **principles** of most Americans. A belief in God is part of the U.S. tradition. People swear on the Bible when they go to court. “In God We Trust” appears on our money.

The Supreme Court reached the **conclusion** that teachers and students who disagree with the Pledge have the right not to say it, but they did not say the Pledge should be altered.

Do you think allowing people to remain silent is an acceptable solution? Should reciting the Pledge be a requirement in schools? Or should the phrase “under God” be taken out of the Pledge of Allegiance?


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recite | allegiance | signify | principle | conclusion

USE THE FOCUS WORDS


recite (*verb*) to speak from memory

 **Sample Sentence:** Students across the country **recite** the Pledge of Allegiance daily.


 **Turn and Talk:** If you were asked to **recite** a poem for English class, what steps would you take to memorize it?


allegiance (*noun*) loyalty

 **Sample Sentence:** Harold feels he owes **allegiance** to his friends because of the help they gave him.

 **Turn and Talk:** Describe a person, place, or idea to which you feel a strong **allegiance**. Why do you feel this way?

signify (*verb*) to mean or stand for

 **Sample Sentence:** The American flag **signifies** freedom for many people.

 **Turn and Talk:** Talk about a special (not necessarily valuable) gift you’ve received. What does this gift **signify** to you?


principle (*noun*) a rule or belief that guides actions

 **Sample Sentence:** Supporters of the Pledge argue that it reflects the **principles** of most Americans.

 **Turn and Talk:** What are three **principles** that are important in your life?

conclusion (*noun*) a final judgment or decision

 **Sample Sentence:** The Supreme Court reached the **conclusion** that teachers and students who disagree with the Pledge have the right not to say it.

 **Turn and Talk:** Think of a time when an adult decided that you had broken a rule. Did you agree with the adult’s **conclusion**?