

A Guide To Creating Dream Flags  
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## **CHOOSING YOUR FABRIC**

### 1. PRINTING ONTO FABRIC FLAGS USING AN INK-JET PRINTER

If your students are composing their dreams using a computer program, such as Word, it's ideal to use fabric that can be fed into your printer for ease in production.

Many manufacturers sell printer ready paper-backed fabric to use in an ink-jet printer. I've tried several brands and find this company sells bulk and often has special discounts [C Jenkins Miracle Fabric Sheets](#).

The website has basic directions and troubleshooting with printers. They also sell solution and with directions to make your own treated fabric. This involves soaking fabric, ironing flat w/freezer paper to back the fabric (for ease to feed into printer) and cutting down to 8 ½" x 11'. For peace of mind and time saving the ready-made is just right.

### 2. DIRECT WRITING ONTO FABRIC SHEETS

Composed Dreams can be written directly on fabric to produce flags. This can be most economical. Purchase white or light-tinted medium weight fabric (thin fabric is too flimsy). Fabric should be washed and dried (and ironed) first without any fabric softener, to get rid of any sizing or coatings that will keep the ink from sticking to the fabric. You will have to cut flags to size for each student. Loose fabric can be floppy and hard to write on, so it's a good idea to pre-test a piece of yours with the pens you plan to use. It can help to use making tape on four corners and secure the fabric to student's workspace while they are writing. Use super-fine point felt tip markers to minimize ink bleeding while writing.

Sharpie super-fine markers work fine. But other pens/markers that are made for use on fabric are available. I like to use Sakura Pigma Micron Pens because of their variety of fine tips. [Dick Blick Art Supplies](#), Michael's and Jo-Ann's, etc. carry them. They're pigment-based, come in a variety of colors, and are considered archival. They cost around \$2.50 ea, but sales, teacher discounts and coupons are always on their sales flyers.

I have not tried but friends who use fabric specific markers on their quilts and artwork use [Zig Opaque Markers](#), [gel roller](#) pens by Pentel, the [Perma Writer II](#) and the [Copic Multiliner](#).

Some products work best on 100% cotton or natural fabrics while others work best on natural/synthetic blends. Check packaging labels of the products you plan to use to be sure.

The grain of your fabric has an impact on how well a fabric marker works. A coarse grain or rough texture to a fabric means there are "lumps 'n bumps" to work around. A fine grain or smooth fabric would be easier for writing and drawing. For deals on fabrics check the clearance racks at Jo-ann Fabrics. In the Philadelphia area [Jomar Fabrics](#) or Gaffney's Fabrics (Germantown) has the best deals.

## **EMBELLISHING YOUR FLAG**

You may want to have your students add illustrations, designs, etc to enhance their flag.

### 1. BEFORE PRINTING

If you are using a color ink-jet printer to print your flags your students can embellish their document in the program they are using.

For example: Word has colors, textures and patterns that come standard in the Word Program. Shapes can be filled with these designs and decorating can be done right in the word document before printing.

Additionally, students can combine techniques with any of listed below:

### 2. AFTER PRINTING-

Once dreams are printed onto the fabric (by either using above ink-jet printing method or handwritten with pens/markers) students can embellish flags in a variety of ways depending on your time constraint and amount of decoration desired.

a. Art supplies that are specially made for use on textiles would work best on these Dream Flags:

- fabric felt-tip markers
- fabric pens, fabric pencils
- fabric crayons
- fabric oil-pastels
- watered down fabric paint (for transparent look)
- straight fabric paint(opaque look).

Be sure to follow manufacturers suggested tips for heat setting to ensure permanency.

2. Experiment ahead of time with other media not necessarily made for use with fabric. I have tried:

- Crayola twistable crayons
- Crayola twistable slick sticks
- Crayola color sticks
- Pastels
- water colors
- watered down acrylic paint
- or any art media you enjoy using

Using these materials might not result in a decoration that is permanent. If this matters to you experiment with beforehand with various types of fixative or coatings.

3. Fabric dye for your type of fabric is a permanent solution but remember that dye requires your fabric to be soaked and this can cause text to run or fade (if not heat set prior) and edges to fray easily.

If you want to dye prior to adding text I suggest cutting pieces of fabric larger than the suggested 8 ½" x 11" so that flags can be cut down after dyeing to minimize the frayed edge that happens while manipulating and wear and tear in dye bath.

4. Sew on beads, buttons, sequins or small trinkets.

5. Quilting and appliqué using calico or solid colored fabrics and stitchery.

6. Applique fabric in a collage like manner onto the dream flag base fabric with fabric glue if sewing isn't a possibility.

7. Hand embroidery

8. Machine-embroidery with sewing thread.

8. Iron-on trimmings or patches. You can create your own fabric patches using cut fabric and [Stitch-Witchery](#) (or any kind of fusible webbing).

9. Homemade or store bought Rubber Stamps used with fabric markers or fabric-friendly ink stamp pads such as [Scribbles Fabric Ink Pads](#). This school year I discovered these [Seargent Empty Paint Dauber/marker](#). I love them b/c I can put

watered down fabric paint into them and students can use them for stamping or to apply paint to their stamps.

10. Stenciling -Fabric markers work very well with stencils.

Let students experiment on a scrap piece of fabric to get a feel for any of the above methods before doing it "for real".

## **FINAL NOTES**

- A fabric marker contains permanent color (dye/paint/ink) that's designed to not fade or wash out of textiles. A regular marker pen labeled "permanent" will likely not wash out either, but these don't come in as many colors as fabric markers do.
- Most processes require heat setting with an iron or a long tumble in a HOT dryer to increase the life of the image/words, make it fade-resistant and to ensure permanency.
- You can use hair spray, spray starch or fixative to protect some of the more "fragile" art media (like pastels or watercolors). The sprays would coat the fabric and make it a little stiff. But, also seals in the colors.
- Remember the more the fabric is manipulated or handled the more the edges can easily fray. If this is a concern of yours you can use [Fray Check](#) to "seal" edges as a final step.