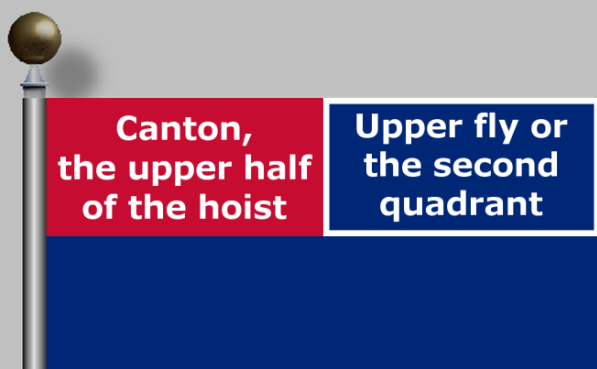
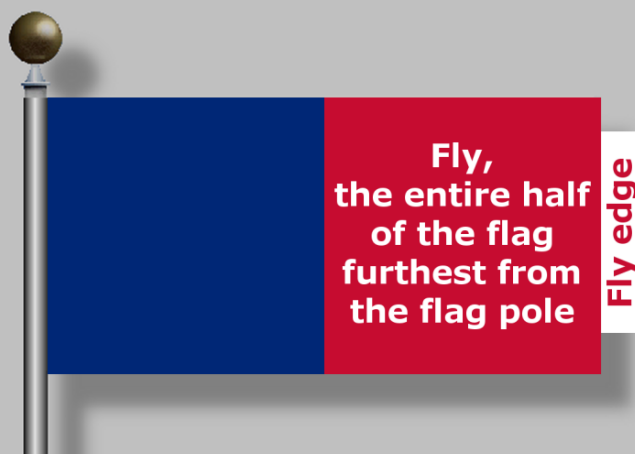
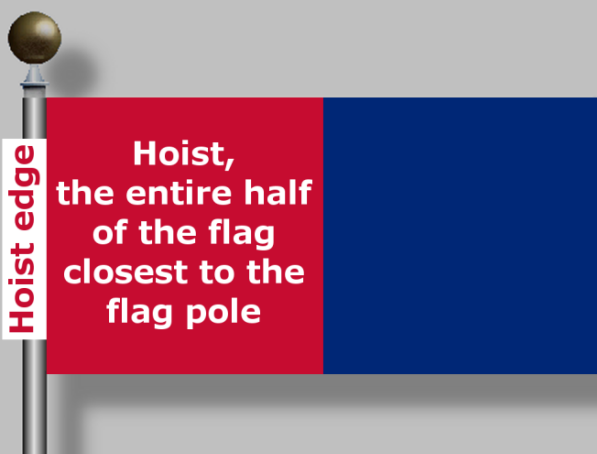
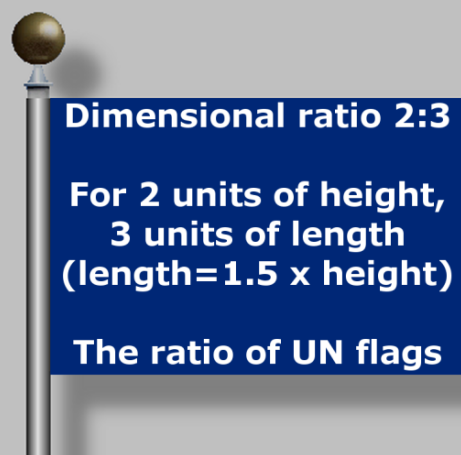
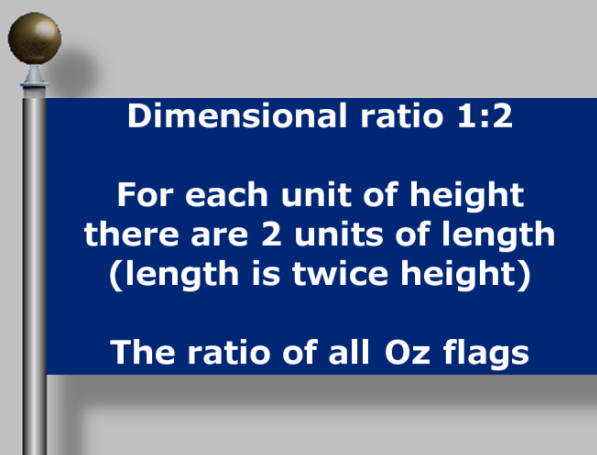




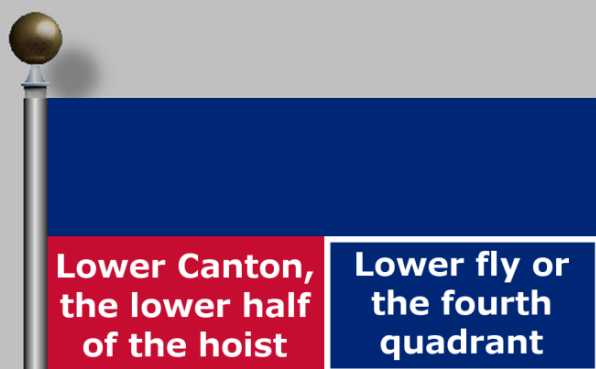
Sometimes called 'width'
or 'breadth'



Not to be confused with 'width'



The canton is sometimes called
the first quadrant (or quarter)



The lower canton is sometimes
called the third quadrant

Appliqué:

In the era before screen printing, the process by which all flags were made, that is, by cutting out individual pieces of differently-coloured fabrics and then tediously sewing them together by hand. Nowadays, the labour-intensive appliqué process is generally reserved for making highly decorative or ceremonial flags, such as those that one often sees arranged behind national leaders, because modern flag printing processes can handle a multitude of colours and the most intricate of patterns, churning out remarkable flag designs on an assortment of incredibly durable fabrics. Even for sewn flags, manual labour is giving way to computer-controlled laser cutters for flag fabrics, and automated stitching is probably on the horizon.

Charge:

Any emblem, shape, or object that is superimposed on the field of a flag, less accurately called a 'device'. For example, the current Australian flag has been 'charged' with a depiction of the Southern Cross.

Defacement:

When used for flags this term has nothing to do with spoiling or vandalising, but only means that a new element has been added to an existing flag. For example, the basis of the current Australian national flag is the British blue ensign, a flag with a plain blue field and a Union Jack canton. The Australian flag, then, is comprised of a British blue ensign that has been 'defaced' by the addition of the Southern Cross.

Dexter:

A somewhat confusing term that is derived from heraldry. For example, from the point-of-view of the shield in the Australian Coat of Arms, the kangaroo is on its dexter, or right side, although from the point-of-view of an observer, the kangaroo is on the shield's left side. For a flag, the assumed point-of-view of an observer is the obverse side, explained further below, so the hoist edge of the flag is also its dexter, or left edge. However, the term can also be applied to the leftmost part of any element within a flag, so that, for example, in the current Australian national flag, the dexter star in the Southern Cross is the one furthest left, or the one closest to the flagpole. Also see 'sinister'.



Field:

The background-area colour of a canton (or quadrant), a hoist, or a fly, sometimes also called the 'ground'. In the current Australian national flag, for example, the field for all three is blue.

Fimbriation:

Broadly speaking, any narrow strip, border, or outline of a high-contrast colour separating two other colours of lesser contrast, or even two identical colours. More generally, a narrow strip, border, or outline of white or gold between two darker colours, used to emphasise their separation. Fimbriation may also sometimes be called 'metal', following heraldic conventions, or even 'argent' if it is silver or grey, although argent as a colour is not limited to fimbriation.

Obverse:

The side of the flag for which a viewer sees the flagpole on the left, conventionally thought of as the 'front' side of the flag.

Reverse:

The side of the flag for which a viewer sees the flagpole on the right, conventionally thought of as the 'back' side of the flag.

Sinister:

The opposite of dexter, and like 'defacement', a term without any negative connotation when it is applied to heraldry or to flags. Specifically, for an observer of the Australian Coat of Arms, the emu is on the sinister or right side of the shield, and for the current Australian national flag as viewed from its obverse side, the sinister star in the Southern Cross is the one furthest right, or the one closest to the fly edge.

Vexillology (having the letters v, x, and y, a good word for Scrabble):

The study of all aspects of flags. The term was coined in 1957 by the late vexillologist Whitney Smith, from an amalgam of Latin and Greek roots. Smith pioneered the field, advancing it from its previous status as a mere sub-category of heraldry, and he made a long career out of it, designing flags, writing scholarly books and articles, and founding several vexillological organisations. Like all fields of study, vexillology has its share of dilettantes and self-proclaimed experts, those who pedantically evaluate every flag design against an arbitrary set of rules for 'good and bad'. Sadly, undue deference is often given to the opinions of vexillologists, so that they are apt to be put in charge of picking out the 'best' flag design candidates, when in fact average citizens are just as likely to know good flag designs when they see them, if not more so due to a lack of preconceived biases. Flag design, incidentally, is also called vexillography, and flag designers are also called vexillographers. Wikipedia has an interesting article about vexillography at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vexillography>, which includes links to articles about several famous vexillographers and about the flags that they have designed.