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

Word Generation - Unit 2.10

## Focus Words

recite | allegiance | signify | principle | conclusion



## Weekly Passage

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?

### TEACHER - Discussion Questions

- ▶ 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?

**Unit 2.10**

# Should the Pledge of Allegiance say “one nation, under God”?

## Focus Word Chart - TEACHER VERSION

Word	Meaning	Forms			Related Words
		Inflectional	Basic Word Classes	Prefixes/ Suffixes	
recite	(v.) - to speak from memory	recites reciting recited		recitation recitative	cite citation incite
allegiance	(n.) - loyalty	allegiances (pl.)			liege
signify	(v.) - to mean or stand for	signifies signifying signified	sign	significant significantly signifier significance	design assign resign
principle	(n.) - a most important belief	principles		principled	prince
conclusion	(n.) - a judgment or decision	conclusions		conclude concludes concluding concluded conclusive conclusively	inclusion seclusion claustrophobia

## Unit 2.10

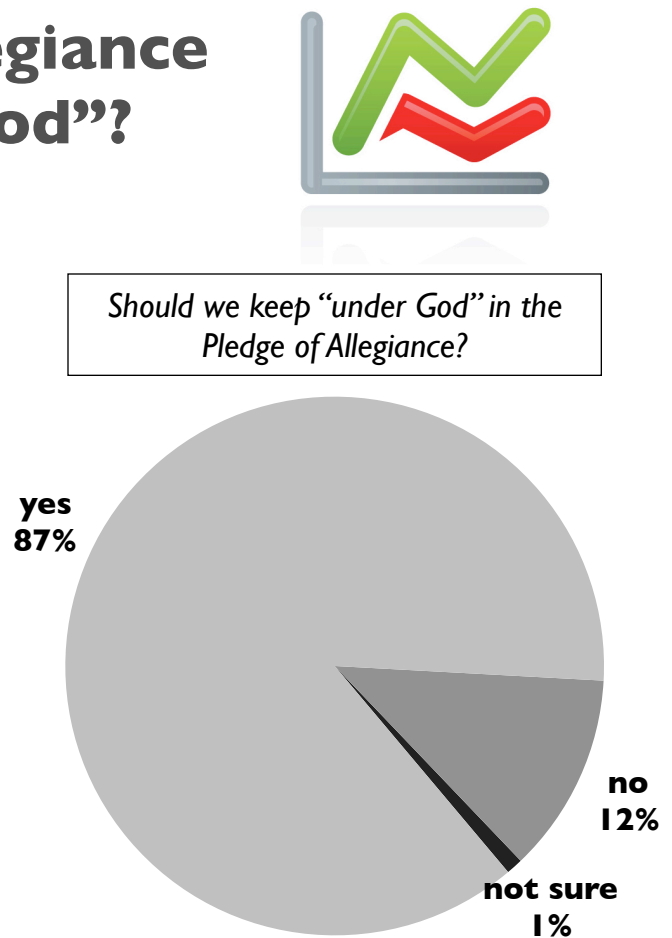
# Should the Pledge of Allegiance say “one nation, under God”?

## Problem of the Week

**Reciting** the Pledge of **Allegiance** is meant to bring Americans together. The **conclusion** of the Pledge, “... with liberty and justice for all,” refers to two important American **principles**: the right to personal freedom and the right to be treated fairly.

“Under God” was added in 1954, during America’s Cold War with the Soviet Union. This addition was meant to **signify** that, unlike the Soviet Union, America was a religious nation. To many people, this addition makes sense. Historically, America has been a religious nation. Most Americans are religious believers. But what about atheists? Does the “liberty” promised at the end of the Pledge mean that all Americans, even atheists, should be free to say the Pledge without saying something they don’t believe?

This circle graph shows the results of an AP-Ipsos Public Affairs poll taken in March of 2004.



**Option 1:** Which of the following statements is true?

- A) Most Americans want “under God” removed from the Pledge.
- B) Most Americans have no opinion.
- C) There are 7 Americans who want to keep “under God” for every one American who wants it removed.
- D) There are 9 Americans who want to keep “under God” for every one American who wants it removed.

**Option 2:** Three Americans have been selected at random. What is the probability that all three are in favor of keeping “under God” in the Pledge?

**Answer:** about 66%

**Discussion Question:** The separation of church and state is an important American **principle**. Asking students to **recite** a daily Pledge of **Allegiance** that includes God is wrong, some say. They say it **signifies** an attack on religious freedom. Is this the right **conclusion**? Or is the Pledge more about history and tradition than about religious belief? Eighty-seven percent of Americans want to keep “under God” in the Pledge. Do you think these Americans are motivated mostly by feelings about religion, or mostly by feelings about history and tradition? Why?

# Should the Pledge of Allegiance say “one nation, under God”?

## Debating the Issue



## I. Get ready... **GO!**

Pick one of these positions (or create your own).

**A** The phrase “under God” should stay in the Pledge of Allegiance. It reflects the principles of the majority of Americans.

**B** The phrase “under God” should not stay in the Pledge of Allegiance. It is not fair to students who do not believe in a single God.

**C** The phrase “under God” should stay in the Pledge of Allegiance, but students who object to the phrase should not have to say it.

**D** Individual schools or classes should have the right to decide if they want to include the phrase “under God” in the Pledge or not.

**E** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Be a strong participant by using phrases like these.

*In my experience . . .*

*that's similar to what I think too...*

*What makes you think that?*

*When I re-read the text, it reminded me...*

## 2. Get set...

Be ready to provide evidence to back up your position during your class discussion or debate. Jot down a few quick notes:

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### TEACHER

Whatever the debate format, ask students to use academically productive talk when arguing their positions. In particular, students should provide reasons and evidence to back up their assertions. It may be helpful to read these sample positions to illustrate some possibilities, but students should be encouraged to take their own positions about the issue at hand.

## Unit 2.10

# Should the Pledge of Allegiance say “one nation, under God”? Science Activity



This activity is designed to help you practice thinking like a scientist and to use this week's focus words. Sometimes the data are based on real research, but they should never be considered true or factual.

The students in Professor Kahn's class are sitting down after reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

“Why do we say the Pledge?” wonders Jackie.

“Good question!” says Professor Kahn. “We **recite** the Pledge to **signify** membership in a group – to show that we are Americans. We acknowledge the **principles** that are important to us, like justice for all.”

“I disagree,” says Jackie. “I think most people don't think about the words. They say the Pledge because everybody else is saying it!”

“Principles or peer pressure?” says Professor Kahn. “Let's find out!”

### Question:

Will a student's decision to say the Pledge be affected by how many other students are saying the Pledge?

### Hypothesis:

If a new student sees most people reciting the Pledge, most of the time, he or she will recite it, too.

### Materials:

- ▶ 20 students who are new to a school (new students)
- ▶ 20 classrooms of “old students” who will cooperate with the experiment

### TEACHER

#### Real Research:

-This experiment is fictitious, but is made to reflect the results of conformity studies like the ones done by Solomon Asch in the 1950's. In the Asch experiments, subjects were asked to compare the length of a line to three other lines of different lengths. On their own, people almost always gave the correct answer. However, when people watched other “subjects” (actually confederates following Asch's instructions) give wrong answers, they began giving wrong answers at a much higher rate.

**Classroom Discussion:** Summarize the real research. (People tend to modify their behavior to match other people's behavior.) Are students surprised by this finding? Why or why not? Does the finding connect to this week's topic? Which side(s) of the debate could it support?

**Procedure:**

1. Tell the 20 new students that in this school, students may choose to recite or not recite the Pledge.
2. In each of 10 classrooms, before the new student arrives, instruct 75% of the old students to recite the Pledge, and 25% not to recite it. We'll call these the "Pledge Classrooms."
3. In each of the other 10 classrooms, before the New Student arrives, instruct 25% of the Old Students to recite the Pledge, and 75% not to recite it. We'll these the "Non-Pledge Classrooms."
4. In each classroom, observe whether or not the new student recites the pledge.

**Data:**

	Number of new students who said the Pledge (out of 10)
Pledge Classrooms	9
Non-Pledge Classrooms	2

**Conclusion:**

Is the hypothesis supported or not by the data?

Supported

What evidence supports your **conclusion**?

When 75% of Old Students recited the Pledge, 9/10 new students recited the Pledge, but when only 25% of old students recited the Pledge, only 2/10 new students recited the Pledge.

How would you make this a better experiment?

Encourage students to consider sample size, number of trials, control of variables, whether the procedure is a true measure of the question, whether the experiment can be repeated by other scientists, data collection and recording systems, and other potential explanations for the outcome. Students should understand that these simple experiments represent the beginning of an exploration, not the end. If time permits, have students suggest how the experiment could be strengthened, emphasizing the use of the target words in the discussion.



# Writing Prompt

Should the Pledge of Allegiance say "one nation, under God"?

Support your position with clear reasons and specific examples. Try to use relevant words from the Word Generation list in your response.

## Focus Words

recite | allegiance | signify | principle | conclusion

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### A tool to help you think about your own writing!

Remember you can use focus words from any of the WG Units.

Check off what you accomplished:

#### Good Start

- ☐ Stated my own position
- ☐ Included 1 focus word

#### Pretty Good

- ☐ Stated my own position clearly
- ☐ Included 1-2 arguments
- ☐ Included 1-2 focus words

#### Exemplary

- ☐ Stated my own position clearly
- ☐ Included 1-2 arguments
- ☐ Included 1 counterargument
- ☐ Used 2-5 focus words

## TEACHER

Ask students to write a response in which they argue a position on the weekly topic.

Put the writing prompt on the overhead projector (or the board) so that everyone can see it. Remind students to refer to the word lists in their Word Generation notebooks as needed.

## Unit 2.10

### Source References:

- » [www.religioustolerance.org/nat\\_pledg2.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/nat_pledg2.htm)
- » [www.tnr.com/doc.mhtml?i=debates&s=rosenseverino102103](http://www.tnr.com/doc.mhtml?i=debates&s=rosenseverino102103)
- » [www.kidzworld.com/article/2267-pledge-of-allegiance-debate](http://www.kidzworld.com/article/2267-pledge-of-allegiance-debate)
- » [www.firstamendmentcenter.org/rel\\_liberty/publicschools/topic.aspx?topic=pledge\\_of\\_allegiance](http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org/rel_liberty/publicschools/topic.aspx?topic=pledge_of_allegiance)