The flag of the UK is officially called the Union flag, because it embodies the emblems of three countries united under one monarch.

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|  | The Union Flag is commonly known as the Union Jack, although the exact origin of the name is unclear.  |

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The Union Flag should be flown with the broader diagonal band of white uppermost in the hoist (near the pole) and the narrower band of white uppermost in the fly (furthest from the pole).

The emblems that appear on the Union Flag are the crosses of the three patron Saints:

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|  | the white diagonal cross, or saltire, of St Andrew, for Scotland, on a blue ground;  |

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|  | the red cross of St George, for England, on a white ground; and  |

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|  | the red diagonal cross attributed to St Patrick, for Ireland, on a white ground. |

Wales is not represented on the Union Flag because by the time the first version of the flag appeared, Wales was already united with England.

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|  | The Welsh Flag, a red dragon on a field of white and green, dates from the fifteenth century.  |

**History of the Union Flag**

The Union Flag underwent a gradual development. The first one was created in 1606, when England and Scotland were united under one King (James I of England/James VI of Scotland), by combining the flags of St George and St Andrew.

In the seventeenth century the flag underwent several changes. After the execution of Charles I in 1649, Oliver Cromwell the Lord Protector introduced a special Commonwealth flag consisting of St George's cross and the gold harp of Ireland. When Charles II was restored to the throne in 1660 he reintroduced the Union Flag of James I.

The final version of the Union Flag appeared in 1801, following the union of Great Britain with Ireland, with the inclusion of the cross of St Patrick. The cross remains on the flag although only Northern Ireland now remains part of the United Kingdom.