

Music, Poetry, and History: The National Anthem

Objective: Students will be able to recite the first verse and paraphrase “The Star-Spangled Banner.” Students will also be able to explain why Francis Scott Key wrote these words in 1814.

Time: 20-100 minutes, depending on the activities, plus 5 minutes per day for several days for memorization

Skills: Memorization, poetry analysis, poetry writing, vocabulary, paraphrasing, singing, teamwork, word processing

Content area: Arts- Music, Language Arts- Reading, Language Arts- Story telling, Language Arts- Vocabulary, Language Arts- Writing (composition), Social Studies- United States history

Materials:

- ◆ Copies of “The Star-Spangled Banner” (attached)

Standards:

NCHS History Standards

K-4 Historical Thinking Standards

2A: Identify the author or source of the historical document or narrative

2B: Reconstruct the literal meaning of a historical passage

K-4 Historical Content Standards

4E: The student understands national symbols through which American values and principles are expressed.

5-12 Historical Thinking Standards

2A: Identify the author or source of the historical document or narrative and assess its credibility.

2B: Reconstruct the literal meaning of a historical passage.

5-12 U. S. History Content Standards

Era 4: Expansion and Reform (1801—61)

1A: The student understands the international background and consequences of the Louisiana Purchase, the War of 1812, and the Monroe Doctrine.

The Star-Spangled Banner Project

IRA/NCTE Standards for the English Language Arts

1. Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).

Introduction:

Every American should know at least the first verse of “The Star-Spangled Banner.” This activity provides guidelines for incorporating a study of Key’s poem in language arts class, supported by the music teacher. The bombing of Fort McHenry by the British during the War of 1812 is a spectacularly dramatic moment in our history. Before beginning this activity, make sure your class is familiar with the history of the Star-Spangled Banner.

- ◆ Consider reviewing the vocabulary and written description in [A History of the War of 1812 and the Star-Spangled Banner](#) with your students as an introduction to the topic.
- ◆ Visit the National Museum of American History’s Web site at <http://www.americanhistory.si.edu/starspangledbanner> for more information, multimedia, and interactive opportunities based on the Star-Spangled Banner.
- ◆ Listen to a 19th-century version of the song at <http://www.americanhistory.si.edu/starspangledbanner/mp3/song.ssb.dsl.mp3>

The Star-Spangled Banner Project

Activities:

The following may be used as an assignment, in which a student completes one or more of the activities at home or during class time.

- ◆ In language arts class, have students read, comprehend, and discuss the poem written by Francis Scott Key. He wrote the poem with a specific musical tune in mind, which you can hear at <http://www.americanhistory.si.edu/starspangledbanner/mp3/song.anac.dsl.mp3>. Many of the vocabulary words in the poem are unusual and require special focus. Defining these words can be assigned as homework or done in class, with the use of a dictionary.
- ◆ Divide the class into groups of three or four. Assign each group a verse of the song. Have each team paraphrase their assigned verse, clarifying the meaning for themselves and the rest of the class. If computers are available, have each group, first, type out the original verse, and second, type their paraphrased version/ Have students memorize the first verse (at least) and be able to easily read the other stanzas.
- ◆ Have students rewrite their own version of the national anthem, based on their understanding of Key's poem, or their own concept of what our national anthem might be.
- ◆ In music class, have students practice singing "The Star-Spangled Banner." By the end of this study unit, they should be able to sing the first verse (at least) without reading the words.

The Star-Spangled Banner

by Francis Scott Key (1814)

O say can you see by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming;
Whose broad stripes and bright stars, through the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming?
And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there,
O say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

On the shore dimly seen through the mists of the deep,
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,
As it fitfully blows, now conceals, now discloses?
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,
In full glory reflected now shines on the stream,
'Tis the star-spangled banner – O long may it wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore,
That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion
A home and a country should leave us no more?
Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps' pollution.
No refuge could save the hireling and slave
From the terror of flight, or the gloom or the grave.
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

Oh! thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand
Between their loved homes and the war's desolation!
Blest with victory and peace, may the heaven-rescued land
Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation.
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,
And This be our motto: "in God is our trust,"
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

THE
STAR SPANGLED BANNER

A PATRIOTIC SONG.

Baltimore. Printed and Sold at CARRS Music Store 36 Baltimore Street.
Air, Anacreon in Heaven.

Con Spirito

O! say can you see by the dawn's early light What so
proudly we hail'd at the twilight's last gleaming Whose broad stripes & bright stars thro' the
perilous fight, O'er the ramparts we watch'd stre so gallantly streaming. And the
Rockets red glare, the Bombs bursting in air Gave proof through the night that our

125b (Adapt'd & Arr'd by T.C.)

Sheet music to the Star-Spangled Banner appears courtesy of Corbis-Bettman.

The Star-Spangled Banner Project

2^d time Chorus.

Flag was still there, O! say does that star spangled Banner yet wave, O'er the
Land of the free, and the home of the brave.

On the shore dimly seen through the mists of the deep,	And where is that band who so vauntingly swore
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence re-	That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,	A home and a country, shall leave us no more,
As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses;	Their blood has wash'd out their foul footsteps' pollu-
tion.	
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,	No refuge could save the hireling and slave,
In full glory reflected now shines in the stream,	From the terror of flight or the gloom of the grave,
'Tis the star-spangled banner, O, long may it	And the star-spangled banner, in triumph doth
Wave,	O'er the Land &c.

(4)
O! thus be it ever when freemen shall stand,
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For the First.

Con Spirito

Song.

(Adap^d & Arr^d by T. C.) (Pl. 2.)

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