

The Star Spangled Banner

*Lyrics: Francis Scott Key
(1789 – 1843)*

Melody: John Stafford Smith

FAME 02/05

Costume- Wear red white and blue or any clothing with our flag!

Ask everyone to stand up and salute to the flag. Pass out the "Star Spangled Banner" hand out and sing together. Play CD, pick any track to play.

Fort McHenry

George Washington was an important man to our country, and today we are going to talk about an event that was important to our country. This event was captured in a song that has become our nation anthem. It tells the story of the defense of Fort McHenry during the war of 1812.

What war did we fight to become our own nation instead of being part of England? (*The Revolutionary War, 5th grade social studies*) In 1812, 38 years after the Revolutionary War, we were again at war with England, and this time fighting for shipping rights.

At the beginning of the war, Napoleon's Empire was dominating most of the aggression from Britain. By 1814, Napoleon had been defeated in Europe, which freed Britain to send more troops to North America. By the late summer of 1814, the United States had to face invasions from combined British army and naval forces from Lake Champlain, VT all the way to Chesapeake Bay, VA.

When the British attacked Washington, D.C., and set fire to the Capitol and White House, President James Madison and his family, along with his cabinet members fled to a safer location.

After attacking Washington, D.C., they sailed towards Fort McHenry near Baltimore, MD. Word soon reached Francis Scott Key that the British had carried off an elderly and much loved town Physician of Upper Marlboro, Dr. William Beanes. He was being held on one of the British battle ships as hostage. Being a well-known attorney and a good friend of Dr. Beanes, Francis Scott Key wanted his friend released. He set out on his own vessel under a white flag to meet 50 –

70 warships. Key was allowed to board the ship and speak with the admiral. He convinced the British Admiral to let Dr. Beanes go.

Although Dr. Beanes' release was secured, they were not allowed to go back to Baltimore right away. The British navy was about to attack Fort McHenry that very night! Key had been told to stay on the ship and watch for the large new flag flying over the Fort. It's lowering would mean that the fort had fallen in defeat. Key stayed awake all night long, he could only see the flag when the bombshells exploded. Finally, the next morning, at "dawn's early light," Key could see the stars and stripes floating over the fort. The British lost the battle!

Francis Scott Key was a witness to the last enemy fire to fall on Fort McHenry. Fort McHenry holds the unique designation of national monument and historic shrine.

Being an amateur poet and having been uniquely inspired, Key began to write on the back of a letter he had in his pocket. The poem was first called the "Defense of Fort McHenry" and later changed to the "Star Spangled Banner." Key's brother-in-law had several copies made and distributed. Soon, the "Star Spangled Banner" was printed all over America in newspapers and political papers and became very popular.

About the same time a popular song was being sung in local taverns and bars called "Anacreon in Heaven." Key suggested his poem be sung to the same tune. Ironically, that song was supposedly composed in England between 1770-1775 by a composer named John Stafford Smith.

In 1916 President Wilson proclaimed the "Star Spangled Banner" our National Anthem, but it wasn't made official until 1931. This year there were discussions about changing our country's National Anthem. Do you know what the objections were against the "Star Spangled Banner?" (*It's difficult to sing; starts low and goes very high*)

The Flag

Major Armistead of Fort McHenry had the largest flag ever specially made. Mary Pidersgill and her daughter worked 10 – 14 hours daily for six to eight weeks to finish it. The flag would be flown above Fort McHenry and could be seen 5 miles out in the Chesapeake Bay. The actual measurement of the flag is 30 feet x 42 feet, approximately 3 times bigger than a medium size bedroom. The Armistead family kept

the flag for many years; it changed hands several times until now its permanent home is the Smithsonian.

Harmony

In the first FAME lesson we learned three parts of composition in music. Melody, the main tune that you sing. Rhythm, the speed or beat of music. Dynamics, how loud or how soft to sing. Today we will talk about *harmony*. Harmony is provided by notes played together with the melody. It supports the melody and plays in the background to enrich the sound.

Ask the whole class to sing "Row, row, row your boat" together, (make sure everyone can sing the tune). Divide the class into two groups. Ask group 1 to start singing first. When group one finishes singing "gently down the stream," ask group 2 to start from the beginning of the song. Together the two groups made harmony.

(Play track 2) You are listening to just the melody of the "Star Spangled Banner." (Play track 1 and then track 3) Ask students to listen and compare the orchestra version and the singing version on the CD. (When listening to track 3, the girl's voice is the melody, whereas the men sing the harmony.)

Star Spangled Banner – By Francis Scott Key

*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 and bright stars, thro' the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watch'd, were so gallantly streaming?
And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof thro' 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 thro' 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, half conceals, half 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 wash'd out their foul footsteps' pollution.
No refuge could save the hireling and slave
From the terror of flight or the gloom of the grave:
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.*

*O thus be it ever when free-men shall stand
Between their lov'd home and the war's desolation;
Blest with vict'ry and peace, may the heav'n-rescued land
Praise the Pow'r that hath made and preserv'd 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!*