

# American Voices



## Lesson – *Our National Anthem*

Companion Video – “Star-Spangled Banner”

### Suggested Grade Level

Grades 1-4

### Objective

Students will learn to sing our National Anthem, “Star-Spangled Banner.” Students will understand the importance and history of this song and connect it with our local history of the War of 1812.

### Suggested Materials

- BPO video of “Star-Spangled Banner”
- “Star-Spangled Banner” music and lyrics (provided)
- Picture of the original American flag (you can find an interactive one at: <https://tinyurl.com/y3f4mzrw>).
- War of 1812 in Western New York timeline (provided)

### New York State Arts Standards

MU:Pr4.2.1a-4a

MU:Cn10.1.1b-4b

### New York State Social Studies Standards

Standard 1: History of the United States and New York

Standard 3: Geography

Standard 5: Civics, Citizenship, and Government

### Procedure

- 1) Share the video of the BPO’s performance of the “Star-Spangled Banner.” Students can sing along.
- 2) Ask students to describe the American flag, as best they can. How many stripes does it have, and how many stars? What do the stripes and the stars stand for?
- 3) Show students a picture of the flag that inspired the “Star-Spangled Banner” (you can find one at: <https://tinyurl.com/y3f4mzrw>). How is it different from our current flag?
- 4) Francis Scott Key wrote the lyrics to the “Star-Spangled Banner” when he saw this flag flying over Baltimore’s Fort McHenry at the end of an important battle against the British during the War of 1812. He was being held captive on a British ship and waited all through the night for the smoke from the bombs to clear so that he could see if the flag,



## Lesson – *Our National Anthem* (continued)

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our “star-spangled banner,” was still waving. Every once in a while, the glare of a rocket would light up the night sky enough for him to get a glimpse of the flag. He knew that if the American flag was still waving, we had not lost the battle. “And the rocket’s red glare, the bombs bursting in air, gave proof through the night that our flag was still there!” Can you imagine being a prisoner on the enemy’s ship, waiting all night and asking yourself, “Oh, say, does that star spangled banner still wave o’er the land of the free and the home of the brave?”

### Questions for Discussion:

- a) This song is our National Anthem. What is an anthem? When might you sing this song?
- b) The War of 1812 was the Americans’ fight to confirm their independence from Great Britain and establish their sovereignty on the world’s stage. How do the lyrics of the “Star-Spangled Banner” capture this patriotism?
- c) Why was our flag so important to Francis Scott Key and why is it still such an important symbol to Americans? When you see it flying, what does it mean to you?

### Extended Learning – Local History

Western New York was the site of many decisive events during the War of 1812. The British used their Canadian territory to attack the United States from the North, and this region was in many direct conflicts. Share with students the information from the provided timeline in any way you choose: create your own classroom timeline using the information or mark on a map the important locations in our region where notable events happened.

Go to <http://oldfortniagara.org/> for more resources.



## WAR OF 1812 – NIAGARA REGION

**Background: 1790 - 1812** Although the United States had declared independence in 1776, England had not fully accepted defeat following the Revolutionary War. English Navy ships were forcing American sailors to join their Navy, and both France and England restricted U.S. trade. The U.S. wanted to continue expanding into the Northwest region as well, but were blocked by the British and their Native American Indian allies. Tensions between countries were rising.

**1811** Seneca Chief Red Jacket and U.S. military leaders meet at Niagara Falls - local Native Americans decide to join the U.S. in a fight against the British.

**June 18, 1812** After extensive debate within Congress, U.S. President James Madison declares war with England.

**July 12, 1812** 1st official battle fought at Fort Detroit - General William Hull writes a polite, 3-page letter to the citizens of Canada stating, "...the U.S. army has invaded your country...I come to protect you, not injure you..." The fort, however is soon surrounded by British and Native American troops and is surrendered in disgrace.

**Oct 13, 1812** Battle of Queenston - From this battle, it becomes clear that this would not be "a mere matter of marching" as predicted by Thomas Jefferson and others. Both generals, American General MacDonough and British General Brock, are killed.

**May 27, 1813** Using the cannon and man-power of Fort Niagara, Americans destroy Fort George across the Niagara River.

**Aug 24, 1813** British burn American villages in the Niagara region.

**Sept 10, 1813** The great Battle of Lake Erie is won by Commander Oliver Perry, shifting control of the Lake to the U.S., thus enabling food and supplies to be transported to the troops more easily. British and Canadian troops will now be supplied with smuggled food from the New England States.

**Sept 20, 1813** British General Henry Proctor with Shawnee War Chief Tecumseh are ordered to consolidate their forces at Burlington Heights.

**Oct 5, 1813** Battle of the Thames - before reaching Burlington Heights, Proctor & Tecumseh are pursued by American General William Henry Harrison and Kentucky Riflemen. Tecumseh is killed and along with him, all hopes of an independent Indian Nation disintegrate.

**Dec 10, 1813** The U.S. burns Newark (Niagara-on-the-Lake) – families are driven out of their homes into a winter blizzard.



**Dec 18, 1813** To retaliate for Newark, the British burn Lewiston and Youngstown.

**Dec 19, 1813** Fort Niagara is captured by the British in a night raid.

**Dec 30, 1813** The British burn Black Rock and Buffalo, completing the devastation of the Niagara frontier (Oliver Perry's ships were trapped in ice on Lake Erie and were unable to assist).

**Niagara Campaign of 1814** It had become clear that Napoleon would soon be defeated in Europe and British veteran soldiers would be redeployed to Canada. U.S. Secretary of War John Armstrong was eager to win a victory in Canada before British reinforcements arrived and he therefore stepped up efforts to strengthen American troops. Stronger generals were appointed, appropriate clothing administered to the troops and more nutritious food ordered. A meat packer, Sam Wilson from Troy, New York was offered a contract to supply the troops with fresh meat. He was careful to label the sacks, "U.S." for United States, but the hungry young soldiers enthusiastically referred to the packages as gifts from "Uncle Sam" - an icon was born.

## END OF THE WAR - NATIONAL STAGE

**Aug 24, 1814** British occupy, then burn Washington, D.C. in a surprise attack. President Madison is too far away to get there in time to order all government papers removed from the White House. His wife, Dolley Madison not only takes care of this task in the president's absence, she also insists that White House workers remove the famous Gilbert Stuart painting of George Washington. She rolls the canvas up and takes it with her as her carriage rolls out of town just before the British arrive. A stunning victory!

**Sept 12-13, 1814** Battle of Baltimore and Fort McHenry, flying the famous American flag so it could be seen from a great distance. Francis Scott Key is aboard a British ship negotiating the release of an American prisoner, sees the flag and pens the words to "Star-Spangled Banner."

**Dec 24, 1814** Treaty of Ghent signed, confirming American independence.

**Jan 8, 1815** Battle of New Orleans - Andrew Jackson's decisive win against British regulars under the command of British Admiral Sir George Cockburn.

**Feb 17, 1815** War of 1812 officially ends with U.S./British exchange of ratification.



# The Star Spangled Banner

Francis Scott Key

SERVICE VERSION

Attributed to  
John Stafford Smith



O say! can you see, by the dawn's ear - ly light, What so  
On the shore, dim - ly seen thro' the mists of the deep, Where the  
O thus be it ev - er when free - men shall stand Be -



proud - ly we hail'd at the twi - light's last gleam - ing? Whose broad stripes and bright  
foe's haugh - ty host in dread si - lence re - pos - es, What is that which the  
tween their loved homes and the war's des - o - la - tion! Blest with vic - t'ry and



stars, thro' the per - il - ous fight, O'er the ram - parts we watch'd, were so  
breeze, o'er the tow - er - ing steep, As it fit - ful - ly blows, half con -  
peace, may the heav'n - res - cued land Praise the Pow'r that hath made and pre -



gal - lant - ly stream - ing! And the rock - ets' red glare, the bombs burst - ing in  
ceals, half dis - clos - es? Now it catch - es the gleam of the morn - ing's first  
served us a nat - tion. Then con - quer we must, for our cause it is



air, Gave proof thro' the night that our flag was still there.  
beam, In full glo - ry re - flect - ed now shines on the stream;  
just, And this be our mot - to: "In God is our trust."

Chorus ( $\text{♩} = 96$ )



O say, does that Star - Span - gled Ban - ner yet  
'Tis the Star - Span - gled Ban - ner, O long may it  
And the Star - Span - gled Ban - ner in tri - umph shall



wave O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?  
wave O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!  
wave O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!