

M1: THE NATIONAL ANTHEM OF THE USA: THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER



video (1): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WyGseT2Figo> (with pictures)

video (2): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FqxJiuBPCs> (long version)



Step 1:

Watch the first version of “The Star-Spangled Banner” and explain to what extent the musical arrangement (voice, instruments, speed, ...) and the pictures influence your impressions of the American national anthem.

These expressions might help you:

dawn = the first light or beginning of the day; **twilight** = the last light of the day; **perilous** = dangerous; **rampart** = barricade;

Step 2:

Now focus on the text (ll. 1-8). Compare your first impressions to how you feel about these lyrics. Give evidence (quotes, lines) to explain your considerations.

Step 3:

Discuss whether a text like this is still appropriate today – especially for a country like the US.

Extra task: You may take the “long version” (ll.1-32) into account as well.



M1: The Star-Spangled Banner (official national anthem)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WyGseT2Fiqo> (with pictures) or https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FqxJ_iuBPCs (long version)

<p>Oh, say can you see, by the dawn's¹ early light, What so proudly we hailed² at the twilight³'s last gleaming⁴? Whose broad stripes and bright stars thru the perilous⁵ fight, O'er the ramparts⁶ we watched were so gallantly⁷ streaming? 5 And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air, Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there. Oh, say does that star-spangled banner yet wave O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?</p> <p>10 On the shore, dimly seen through the mists of the deep, Where the foe's⁸ haughty host in dread silence reposes⁹, What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep¹⁰, As it fitfully blows, half conceals¹¹, half discloses¹²? Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam¹³, In full glory reflected now shines in the stream: 15 'Tis the star-spangled banner! Oh long may it wave O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!</p> <p>And where is that band who so vauntingly¹⁴ swore That the havoc¹⁵ of war and the battle's confusion, A home and a country should leave us no more! 20 Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps' pollution. No refuge could save the hireling and slave From the terror of flight, or the gloom¹⁶ 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!</p> <p>25 Oh! thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand Between their loved home and the war's desolation.¹⁷ Blest with victory and peace, may the heav'n rescued land Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation. Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just, 30 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!</p>	<p>¹ first light of the day ² to greet ³ opposite of "dawn" ⁴ to shine ⁵ dangerous ⁶ barricade ⁷ brave</p> <p>⁸ enemy ⁹ to rest ¹⁰ steil ¹¹ to cover ¹² to uncover ¹³ light</p> <p>¹⁴ in an arrogant way ¹⁵ chaos</p> <p>¹⁶ misery</p> <p>¹⁷ greyness</p>
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M1: The Star-Spangled Banner (official national anthem):

Background information:

- Official national anthem since 1931; usually only the first part (ll.1-8) is sung.
- Originally a poem entitled "The Defense of Fort McHenry".
- Written by Francis Scott Key in 1814 during the War of 1812.
- The verses tell of the Battle of Baltimore, a days-long siege between British and American forces
 - ➔ Message: celebration of patriotism; America = land of the free and the brave
 - ➔ However: controversial for various reasons
 - Francis Scott Key used to be a slaveholder
 - Lyrics very martial: for example l. 5, l. 10, ll.20ff., ll.28f. (reference to the War of 1812, references to slavery; l. 5 can be misunderstood as an acceptance of rockets etc., also compare ll.28f.)
- There are very specific rules (the "Flag Code"):
 - Everyone is expected to stand and face the flag; military personnel or veterans have to salute, all other people have to stand with the right hand over heart.
 - Singing is not obligatory, but it is highly encouraged.
 - In the past, changing (even embellishing) the anthem in a performance could be punished.
 - In most schools, students do not have to sing the national anthem every day, but are required to say the Pledge of Allegiance at the beginning of every day
 - The anthem has to be played before all important sports events, some associations like the NFL or NBA explicitly require certain forms of "respect" (In 2016, Colin Kaepernick was the first (NFL) player who was expelled for kneeling down as a form of protest (BLM) while the anthem was played.

Sources:

<https://edition.cnn.com/interactive/2018/07/us/national-anthem-annotated/> (last accessed March 19, 2023);

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-37208404> (last accessed March 19, 2023);

<https://www.mtsu.edu/first-amendment/article/2148/national-anthem-government-regulation#:~:text=Most%20controversies%20centering%20on%20%E2%80%9CThe,anthem%20in%20silenent%20protest%20against> (19/02/2023); <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/04/sports/football/anthem-kneeling-sports.html> (last accessed March 19, 2023);

<https://www.republicworld.com/sports-news/other-sports/was-colin-kaepernick-fired-from-the-49ers-nfl-star-cut-ties-with-team.html> (last accessed March 19, 2023)