

**M0 – M12: UE “Interkulturelles Lernen mit Songs“ (Schwerpunkt USA / Oberstufe) komplett**

	Title (+ Singer)	(Thematic) Focus
M1	<p><b>The Star-Spangled Banner (official national anthem):</b>  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WyGseT2Figo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WyGseT2Figo</a> (with pictures)  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FqxJiuBPCs">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FqxJiuBPCs</a> (long version)</p>  	<p>National anthem                      (critical) analysis: contrast patriotism, historical meaning, content / expressions, USA as a role model?</p>
M2	<p><b>The Star-Spangled Banner (official national anthem):</b>  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WyGseT2Figo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WyGseT2Figo</a> (with pictures)  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FqxJiuBPCs">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FqxJiuBPCs</a> (long version)</p>   <p><b>America the Beautiful (“unofficial” national anthem):</b>  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TLyAyuf1I1Q">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TLyAyuf1I1Q</a> (with patriotic pictures)</p> <p><b>God Bless America (“unofficial” national anthem):</b>  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGAN-rl-OI">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGAN-rl-OI</a> (with lyrics)</p>    	<p>Patriotic songs: national anthem, unofficial national “anthems”</p>
M3	<p><b>America © Michael Patrick Kelly, 2021</b>  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3nlsMTXdHDo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3nlsMTXdHDo</a></p> 	<p>Modern: © 2021; ambivalent feelings towards the US: historical references / criticism / hope</p>
M4	<p><b>American Idiot, © Green Day, 2004</b></p>  <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ee_uujKuJMI">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ee_uujKuJMI</a></p>	<p>Post 9/11 song; it accuses the media of propaganda and creating xenophobia and fear</p>

M5	<b>American Oxygen, © Rihanna, 2015</b> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ao8cGLIMtvg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ao8cGLIMtvg</a>		Modern: © 2015; song about the American Dream; very ambiguous (especially in combination with the video clip which shows many landmarks of American history (moon landing, Martin Luther King, Obama, Statue of Liberty, immigration, police violence, ...))
M6	<b>God Bless the U.S.A.</b> <b>Original version: © Lee Greenwood, 1984</b> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-KoXt9pZLGM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-KoXt9pZLGM</a>		Very patriotic song, praising America, video: many American clichés; American Dream
M7	<b>God Bless the U.S.A., © Beyoncé, 2011</b> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XnCNHFg9y1Q">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XnCNHFg9y1Q</a>		Very patriotic song, praising America; Beyoncé: well-known version, video rather pathetic (4 <sup>th</sup> of July / Liberty Island)
M8	<b>White America, © Eminem, 2002</b> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZlzD0zTFg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZlzD0zTFg</a>		Very critical, autobiographical song; naming and shaming the dichotomy black vs. white “underprivilegedness”
M9	<b>In America © John Legend, 2017</b> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hA29HXDHW9Y">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hA29HXDHW9Y</a>  → This song could be used in the same way as M3b or as a contrast to any of the other songs in M2 or M7.		Anti-American Dream song; John Legend = famous R&B singer and activist against racial injustice and the continuing fight for civil rights.
M10	<b>American Dreams © Papa Roach, 2017</b> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i6KX2mB7LHI">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i6KX2mB7LHI</a> (video 1) <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-CXq51iC4yk">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-CXq51iC4yk</a> (video 2)   		Punk, Anti-American Dream; very explicit criticism of many different issues.
M11	<b>American Dream © will.i.am, 2021</b> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1NjH_pVai2M">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1NjH_pVai2M</a> -		Contrast: statistics + words question equality, but general (hopeful) message: anyone can make it; Suitable as an introduction or “wrap up” for the topic // pop
M12	<b>I love the USA © Weezer, 2016</b> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=amy-4jDIYgo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=amy-4jDIYgo</a>		Patriotic song? Cynical song? “Choose Your Own Adventure”

“Classics” such as “Born in the USA” (Bruce Springsteen, 1984), “Living in America” (James Brown, 1985), “This Land is Your Land” (Woody Guthrie, 1940) etc. are not included here.

“Local” songs like “New York, New York”; “West Virginia”, “California Dreaming”, “Go West”, “Empire State of Mind” etc. are not listed here either.

You might get further inspiration via Google, Bing or other search engines.

## 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=FqxJ\\_iuBPCs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FqxJ_iuBPCs) (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=FqxJiuBPCs> (long version)



Oh, say can you see, by the dawn's<sup>1</sup> early light,  
What so proudly we hailed<sup>2</sup> at the twilight<sup>3</sup>'s last gleaming<sup>4</sup>?  
Whose broad stripes and bright stars thru the perilous<sup>5</sup> fight,  
O'er the ramparts<sup>6</sup> we watched were so gallantly<sup>7</sup> 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?  
On the shore, dimly seen through the mists of the deep,  
10 Where the foe's<sup>8</sup> haughty host in dread silence reposes<sup>9</sup>,  
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep<sup>10</sup>,  
As it fitfully blows, half conceals<sup>11</sup>, half discloses<sup>12</sup>?  
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam<sup>13</sup>,  
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!  
And where is that band who so vauntingly<sup>14</sup> swore  
That the havoc<sup>15</sup> 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.  
20 No refuge could save the hireling and slave  
From the terror of flight, or the gloom<sup>16</sup> 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!  
Oh! thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand  
25 Between their loved home and the war's desolation.<sup>17</sup>  
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,  
And this be our motto: "In God is our trust."  
30 And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

<sup>1</sup> first light of the day  
<sup>2</sup> to greet <sup>3</sup> opposite of "dawn"  
<sup>4</sup> to shine <sup>5</sup> dangerous  
<sup>6</sup> barricade <sup>7</sup> brave



<sup>8</sup> enemy <sup>9</sup> to rest  
<sup>10</sup> steil  
<sup>11</sup> to cover <sup>12</sup> to uncover  
<sup>13</sup> light

<sup>14</sup> in an arrogant way  
<sup>15</sup> chaos

<sup>16</sup> misery

<sup>17</sup> greyness

## **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/> (19/02/2023); <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-37208404> (19/02/2023)

<https://www.mtsu.edu/first-amendment/article/2148/national-anthem-government-regulation#:~:text=Most%20controversies%20centering%20on%20%E2%80%9CThe,anthem%20in%20silent%20protest%20against> (19/02/2023); <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/04/sports/football/anthem-kneeling-sports.html> (19/02/2023); <https://www.republicworld.com/sports-news/other-sports/was-colin-kaepernick-fired-from-the-49ers-nfl-star-cut-ties-with-team.html> (19/02/2023)

## M2: Patriotic Songs: The Star-Spangled Banner (official national anthem)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WyGseT2Figo> (with pictures) or [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FqxJ\\_iuBPCs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FqxJ_iuBPCs) (long version)



Oh, say can you see, by the dawn's<sup>1</sup> early light,  
What so proudly we hailed<sup>2</sup> at the twilight<sup>3</sup>'s last gleaming<sup>4</sup>?  
Whose broad stripes and bright stars thru the perilous<sup>5</sup> fight,  
O'er the ramparts<sup>6</sup> we watched were so gallantly<sup>7</sup> 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?  
On the shore, dimly seen through the mists of the deep,  
10 Where the foe's<sup>8</sup> haughty host in dread silence reposes<sup>9</sup>,  
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep<sup>10</sup>,  
As it fitfully blows, half conceals<sup>11</sup>, half discloses<sup>12</sup>?  
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam<sup>13</sup>,  
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!  
And where is that band who so vauntingly<sup>14</sup> swore  
That the havoc<sup>15</sup> 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 gloom<sup>16</sup> 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!  
25 Oh! thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand  
Between their loved home and the war's desolation.<sup>17</sup>  
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!

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<sup>8</sup> enemy <sup>9</sup> to rest  
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<sup>13</sup> light

<sup>14</sup> in an arrogant way  
<sup>15</sup> chaos

<sup>16</sup> misery

<sup>17</sup> greyness

## M2: Patriotic Songs: 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
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<https://edition.cnn.com/interactive/2018/07/us/national-anthem-annotated/> (19/02/2023); <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-37208404> (19/02/2023)  
<https://www.mtsu.edu/first-amendment/article/2148/national-anthem-government-regulation#:~:text=Most%20controversies%20centering%20on%20%E2%80%9CThe,anthem%20in%20silent%20protest%20against> (19/02/2023); <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/04/sports/football/anthem-kneeling-sports.html> (19/02/2023); <https://www.republicworld.com/sports-news/other-sports/was-colin-kaepernick-fired-from-the-49ers-nfl-star-cut-ties-with-team.html> (19/02/2023)

## M2: Patriotic Songs: America the Beautiful (“unofficial” national anthem):

- Very patriotic song, praising the beauty of America; many people consider it the unofficial anthem
- It was first a poem written in 1893 by Lee Bates.
- At least 70 tunes had been composed until Samuel A. Ward’s music was chosen in 1910.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TLyAyuf111Q> (with patriotic pictures)



Oh beautiful for heroes proved  
In liberating strife<sup>1</sup>  
Who more than self, their country loved  
And mercy more than life  
5 America, America may God thy gold refine  
'Til all success be nobleness  
And every gain divined  
And you know when I was in school  
We used to sing it something like this, listen here  
10 Oh beautiful, for spacious skies  
For amber waves of grain  
For purple mountain majesties  
Above the fruited plain  
But now wait a minute, I'm talking about  
15 America, sweet America  
You know, God done shed his grace on thee  
He crowned thy good, yes he did, in brotherhood  
From sea to shining sea  
You know, I wish I had somebody to help me sing this  
20 (America, America, God shed his grace on thee)  
America, I love you America, you see  
My God he done shed his grace on thee  
And you oughta love him for it  
'Cause he, he, he, he crowned thy good  
25 He told me he would, with brotherhood  
(From sea to shining Sea)  
Oh Lord, oh Lord, I thank you Lord  
(Shining sea)

<sup>1</sup> conflict

**M2: Patriotic Songs: God Bless America (“unofficial” national anthem):**



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= kGAN-rl-OI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGAN-rl-OI) (with lyrics)

God bless America, land that I love  
Stand beside her and guide her  
Through the night with the light from above  
From the mountains to the prairies  
5 To the oceans white with foam  
God bless America, my home sweet home  
God bless America, land that I love  
Stand beside her and guide her  
Through the night with the light from above  
10 From the mountains to the prairies  
To the oceans white with foam  
God bless America, my home sweet home  
From the mountains to the prairies  
To the oceans white with foam  
15 God bless America, my home sweet home  
God bless America, my home sweet home

**Background information:**

Today, for many Americans it is their unofficial national anthem of the US: “This simple one-verse song became an overnight hit, and a hopeful song as war threatened. “It’s not a patriotic song,” composer Irving Berlin said in a 1940 interview, “but an expression of gratitude for what this country has done for its citizens, of what home really means.”” <https://www.kennedy-center.org/education/resources-for-educators/classroom-resources/media-and-interactives/media/music/story-behind-the-song/the-story-behind-the-song/god-bless-america/> (19/02/2023)

### **M3: AMERICA (© Michael Patrick Kelly, 2021)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3nIsMTXdHDo>



Step 1: Listen to the song:

- Summarize the main message.
- Then have a closer look at the lyrics and underline passages that prove your findings.
- Bonus task: Mark historical references with a third color and be able to explain them.

Touching ground on Ellis Island	15	Tell me, will you keep your promise?
Searching for the promised land		I have come to find the solace
Am I a legal alien coming home?		glowing in your flame of liberty
Fifty steps to win my freedom		Even though you've got your demons
5 Pushing to the golden fever		In the end, your better angels
Running through your maze of steel and stone	20	always change the course of history
Somewhere between your stars and stripes		Somewhere between your stars and stripes
I think I see dawn's early light		I still can see dawn's early light
Where is the love now?		Where is the love now?
10 Let it rise, let it rise		Let it rise, let it rise
America, America	25	America, America
Wake up, wake up, wake up all your hopes and dreams		Wake up, wake up, wake up all your hopes and dreams
America, America		America, America
Stand up, stand up, stand up for what you believe		Stand up, stand up, stand up for what you believe

Step 2:

Discuss whether Michael Patrick Kelly's position – as presented in this song – corresponds to your own views.

## M4: AMERICAN IDIOT ( © Green Day, 2004)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ee\\_uujKuJMI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ee_uujKuJMI)



Listen to the song and watch the video:

- Discuss the style of the music, the language, the main topics, the general message.

	Don't wanna be an American idiot!	25	Hey, Hey, Hey, Hey, Hey, Hey!
	Don't want a nation under the new media		Alright, England!
	And can you hear the sound of hysteria?		I sing "Eh-oh"
5	The subliminal <sup>1</sup> mind fuck America!		Let's sing "Eh-oh", "eh-oh"
	Alright!		C'mon!
	Welcome to a new kind of tension	30	Hey, Hey, Hey, Hey, Hey, Hey!
	All across the alien nation		Alright!
	Where everything isn't meant to be okay		Are you guys ready to sing along?
10	Television dreams of tomorrow		I want to you sing so loud!
	We're not the ones who're meant to follow		That every fucking Redneck in America
	For that's enough to argue	35	Hears you tonight alright!
	England!		Don't want to be an American idiot
	Well, maybe I'm the faggot <sup>2</sup> America		One nation controlled by the media
15	I'm not a part of a Redneck <sup>3</sup> agenda(alright!)		Information age of hysteria
	Now everybody do the propaganda		Go!
	And sing along to the age of paranoia	40	It's going out to idiot America
	Alright!		Welcome to a new kind of tension
	Welcome to a new kind of tension		All across the alien nation
20	All across the alien nation		Where everything isn't meant to be okay
	Where everything isn't meant to be okay		Television dreams of tomorrow
	Television dreams of tomorrow	45	We're not the ones who're meant to follow
	We're not the ones who're meant to follow		For that's enough to argue
	For that's enough to argue		C'mon!

<sup>1</sup> subliminal = influences or messages affect your mind without you being aware of it

<sup>2</sup> faggot = offensive term for gay / homosexual

<sup>3</sup> Redneck = a poor white person without education, especially one living in the countryside in the southern US, who has prejudiced ideas and beliefs



## M5: AMERICAN OXYGEN<sup>4</sup> © RIHANNA, 2015

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ao8cGLIMtvq>

(1) **Getting started:** Note down your associations with the title of the song.

(2) **Listen to the song and have a look at the lyrics:**

(a) **Choose words that describe how the song makes you feel (and be prepared to explain why.)**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Afraid</li> <li>• Amused</li> <li>• Angry</li> <li>• Annoyed</li> <li>• Anxious</li> <li>• Apathetic</li> <li>• Apprehensive</li> <li>• Arrogant</li> <li>• Ashamed</li> <li>• Astonished</li> <li>• Awful</li> <li>• Bad</li> <li>• Bewildered</li> <li>• Bored</li> <li>• Brave</li> <li>• Calm</li> <li>• Careful</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certain</li> <li>• Charged</li> <li>• Charming</li> <li>• Cheerful</li> <li>• Cheery</li> <li>• Clumsy</li> <li>• Comfortable</li> <li>• Condemned</li> <li>• Confused</li> <li>• Content</li> <li>• Cooperative</li> <li>• Courageous</li> <li>• Crazy</li> <li>• Creepy</li> <li>• Cruel</li> <li>• Dangerous</li> <li>• Defeated</li> <li>• Defiant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delightful</li> <li>• Depressed</li> <li>• Determined</li> <li>• Disappointed</li> <li>• Disgusted</li> <li>• Disinterested</li> <li>• Disturbed</li> <li>• Dizzy</li> <li>• Dull</li> <li>• Eager</li> <li>• Elated</li> <li>• Embarrassed</li> <li>• Energetic</li> <li>• Encouraging</li> <li>• Energetic</li> <li>• Envious</li> <li>• Evil</li> <li>• Excited</li> <li>• Fair</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faithful</li> <li>• Fantastic</li> <li>• Fearful</li> <li>• Fierce</li> <li>• Fine</li> <li>• Foolish</li> <li>• Fortunate</li> <li>• Friendly</li> <li>• Frightened</li> <li>• Frustrated</li> <li>• Funny</li> <li>• Generous</li> <li>• Gentle</li> <li>• Glad</li> <li>• Good</li> <li>• Grumpy</li> <li>• Happy</li> <li>• Healthy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hungry</li> <li>• Jealous</li> <li>• Jittery</li> <li>• Jolly</li> <li>• Kind</li> <li>• Lazy</li> <li>• Lively</li> <li>• Lovely</li> <li>• Lucky</li> <li>• Mad</li> <li>• Nasty</li> <li>• Naughty</li> <li>• Nervous</li> <li>• Nice</li> <li>• Nutty</li> <li>• Obstinate</li> <li>• Panicky</li> <li>• Perfect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pleasant</li> <li>• Pleased</li> <li>• Prepared</li> <li>• Proud</li> <li>• Quiet</li> <li>• Ready</li> <li>• Relieved</li> <li>• Reluctant</li> <li>• Repulsive</li> <li>• Restless</li> <li>• Sad</li> <li>• Scared</li> <li>• Scary</li> <li>• Selfish</li> <li>• Shocked</li> <li>• Silly</li> <li>• Sleepy</li> <li>• Smiling</li> </ul>
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<https://i.pinimg.com/originals/ce/bc/99/cebc99d2bdc5ff361c74cbd2da643f40.jpg> (last accessed: March 19, 2023)

(b) **Have a look at the text and try to summarize the main message of the song.**

5	Breathe out, breathe in American oxygen Every breath I breathe <sup>2</sup> Chasin' this American Dream We sweat for a nickel and a dime <sup>3</sup> Turn it into an empire Breathe in, this feeling American, American oxygen	20	Breathe out, breathe in American oxygen Every breath I breathe Chasin' this American Dream We sweat for a nickel and a dime Turn it into an empire Breathe in, this feeling American, American oxygen
10	American oxygen Breathe in, this feeling American, American Oxygen	30	American oxygen Breathe in, this feeling American, American Oxygen
15	Oh say can you see <sup>4</sup> , this is the American Dream Young girl, hustlin' <sup>5</sup> On the other side of the ocean You can be anything at all In America, America I say, can't you see Just close your eyes and breathe	35	American oxygen Breathe in, this feeling American, American Oxygen  Oh say can you see, this is the American Dream Young boy, hustlin' Tryna <sup>6</sup> get the wheels in motion But he can be anything at all In America, America I say, can't you see
		40	Just close your eyes and breathe

<sup>4</sup> oxygen = O<sub>2</sub>(Sauerstoff);

<sup>2</sup> to breathe = atmen, breath = Atem;

<sup>3</sup> nickel = 5 cents, dime = 10 cents

<sup>4</sup> Oh say can you see" = first line of the US national anthem (Hymne) <sup>5</sup> to hustle: double meaning = to hurry / to be a prostitute

<sup>6</sup> tryna = trying to

**(3) Now watch the video :**

**(a) Use a second color and mark the words in (2a) which you would choose now.**

**(b) Try to identify some of the scenes presented in the video and complete the mind map below.**

**USA**

**(4) Good angel or bad angel? Take your notes as a starting point and discuss this question.**

**M6: GOD BLESS THE U.S.A. ( © Lee Greenwood, 1984)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-KoXt9pZLGM>

Make at least five screenshots of scenes which deal with  
“typical” American life and explain your choice.



## M6: Good Bless The USA © Lee Greenwood, 1984

	If tomorrow all the things were gone		From Detroit down to Houston
	I worked for all my life		And New York to L.A.
	And I had to start again		Where's pride in every American heart
	With just my children and my wife	25	And it's time we stand and say
5	I thank my lucky stars		That I'm proud to be an American
	To be living here today		Where at least I know I'm free
	'Cause the flag still stands for freedom		And I won't forget the men who died
	And they can't take that away		Who gave that right to me
	And I'm proud to be an American	30	And I'd gladly stand up next to you
10	Where at least I know I'm free		And defend Her still today
	And I won't forget the men who died		'Cause there ain't no doubt
	Who gave that right to me		I love this land
	And I'd gladly stand up next to you		God Bless the U.S.A.
	And defend Her still today	35	And I'm proud to be an American
15	'Cause there ain't no doubt		Where at least I know I'm free
	I love this land		And I won't forget the men who died
	God Bless the U.S.A.		Who gave that right to me
	From the lakes of Minnesota		And I'd gladly stand up next to you
	To the hills of Tennessee	40	And defend Her still today
20	Across the plains of Texas		'Cause there ain't no doubt
	From sea to shining sea		I love this land
			God Bless the U.S.A.

## M7: GOD BLESS THE U.S.A. ( © version by Beyoncé, 2011)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XnCNHFg9y1Q>



Step 1: Watch the video and describe the atmosphere.

Step 2: Identify elements you would expect from such a patriotic song (text / video clip).

Step 3: Discuss whether living in the US is something you can be proud of.

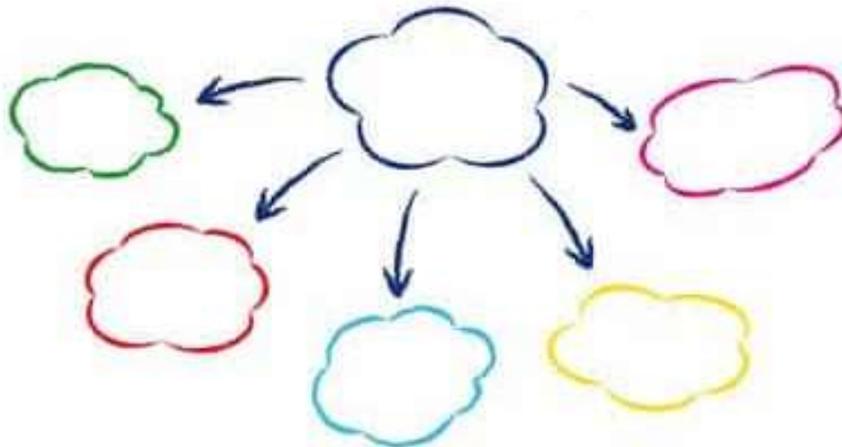
	If tomorrow all the things were gone I worked for all my life And I had to start again With just my family by my side.	25	From Detroit down to Houston And New York to L.A. Where's pride in every American heart And it's time we stand and say
5	I thank my lucky stars To be living here today 'Cause the flag still stands for freedom And they can't take that away		That I'm proud to be an American Where at least I know I'm free And I won't forget the men who died Who gave that right to me
	And I'm proud to be an American	30	And I'd gladly stand up next to you And defend Her still today 'Cause there ain't no doubt I love this land God Bless the U.S.A.
10	Where at least I know I'm free And I won't forget the men who died Who gave that right to me And I'd gladly stand up next to you And defend Her still today	35	And I'm proud to be an American Where at least I know I'm free And I won't forget the men who died Who gave that right to me And I'd gladly stand up next to you And defend Her still today
15	'Cause there ain't no doubt I love this land God Bless the U.S.A.		'Cause there ain't no doubt I love this land God Bless the U.S.A.
	From the lakes of Minnesota To the hills of Tennessee	40	
20	Across the plains of Texas From sea to shining sea		



**Step 1:**

Write down the first five words or phrases that come into your mind when you read the first lines of this song. Then explain your ideas to your partner and create a mind map together.

America, hahaha, we love you  
How many people are proud to be citizens  
Of this beautiful country of ours, the stripes and the stars  
For the rights that men have died for to protect?  
The women and men who have broke their necks  
For the freedom of speech  
The United States government has sworn to uphold



© Gooseman - Fotolia.com

The first lines you have just read are from “White America” (2002), an autobiographical song by Eminem. Read the info text before you go to step 2.

When Eminem released his first album in 1996, no one would have expected that he would become such a successful and influential artist. By now, he has won 15 Grammy Awards, 8 American Music Awards, 17 Billboard Music Awards, an Oscar Award and a lot more.<sup>1</sup>

He is said to have “conquered Black music” and “broken racial barriers”. In the 1990s, rap / hip hop was still dominated by Afro-Americans, who often expressed their “underprivilegedness” with this kind of music. It had been unthinkable before that a white artist would use “their” style and become successful. But coming from an “underprivileged” family himself, Eminem became the first (white) rapper who gave “a voice and lyrics to the disaffected and disadvantaged white families” (condescendingly referred to as “white trash”).

Despite all this, his reputation is quite controversial: while his rap music is mainstream now, he rather confirmed the general stereotype of the criminal gangster rapper genre by using offensive language at the beginning of his career.

**Step 2:**

**Listen to the song now and underline / mark all passages which express this dichotomy<sup>2</sup> black – white.**

	America, hahaha, we love you		Who would've thought, standing in this mirror, bleaching my hair
	How many people are proud to be citizens		With some peroxide, reaching for a t-shirt to wear
	Of this beautiful country of ours, the stripes and the stars	25	That I would catapult to the forefront of rap like this?
5	For the rights that men have died for to protect?		How could I predict my words would have an im- pact like this?
	The women and men who have broke their necks- For the freedom of speech		I must've struck a chord with somebody up in the office
	The United States government has sworn to uphold	30	'Cause Congress keep telling me I ain't causing nothin' but problems
10	(Yo, I want everybody to listen to the words of this song)		And now they're saying I'm in trouble with the government
	Or so we're told		I'm loving it, I shoveled shit all my life, and now I'm dumping it on
	I never would've dreamed in a million years I'd see	35	
	So many motherfuckin' people who feel like me		<u>Chorus:</u> White America, I could be one of your kids
15	Who share the same views and the same exact beliefs		White America, little Eric looks just like this
	It's like a fucking army marching in back of me		White America, Erica loves my shit
	So many lives I touched, so much anger aimed		I go to TRL, look how many hugs I get
	In no particular direction, just sprays and sprays		
	And straight through your radio waves, it plays and plays	40	White America, I could be one of your kids
20	'Til it stays stuck in your head, for days and days		White America, little Eric looks just like this
			White America, Erica loves my shit

<sup>1</sup> [www.eminem.com](http://www.eminem.com) & <https://www.levelman.com/how-eminem-conquered-black-music-and-white-privilege-with-the-marshall-mathers-lp-6b450f54920c/> & <https://english.elpais.com/culture/2022-10-18/50-years-of-eminem-the-rapper-who-survived-addiction-and-controversy-capable-of-ending-any-career.html> & <https://www.zdf.de/nachrichten/panorama/eminem-50-geburtstag-100.html>

<sup>2</sup> dichotomy = a division or contrast between two groups or things that are completely opposite to and different from each other (OLD)

I go to TRL, look how many hugs I get  
 Look at these eyes, baby blue, baby just like yourself  
 45 If they were brown, Shady'd lose, Shady sits on  
 the shelf  
 But Shady's cute, Shady knew Shady's dimples  
 would help  
 Make ladies swoon, baby (ooh, baby)  
 50 Look at my sales  
 Let's do the math, if I was black, I woulda sold half  
 I ain't have to graduate from Lincoln High School  
 to know that  
 But I could rap, so fuck school, I'm too cool to go back  
 55 Give me the mic, show me where the fucking stu-  
 dio's at  
 When I was underground no one gave a fuck I was  
 white  
 No labels wanted to sign me, almost gave up, I  
 60 was like  
 "Fuck it, " until I met Dre, the only one to look past  
 Gave me a chance and I lit a fire up under his ass  
 Helped him get back to the top, every fan black  
 that I got  
 65 Was probably his in exchange for every white fan  
 that he's got  
 Like damn, we just swapped, sitting back looking  
 at shit, wow  
 I'm like my skin is it starting to work to my benefit  
 70 now? it's-  
Chorus: [White America, (...) how much hugs I get]  
 See, the problem is I speak to suburban kids  
 Who otherwise woulda never knew these words  
 exist  
 75 Whose moms probably woulda never gave two  
 squirts of piss  
 'Til I created so much motherfucking turbulence  
 Straight out the tube, right into your living rooms  
 I came  
 80 And kids flipped when they knew I was produced  
 by Dre  
 That's all it took, and they were instantly hooked  
 right in

And they connected with me too, because I  
 85 looked like them  
 That's why they put my lyrics up under this microscope  
 Searching with a fine tooth comb, it's like this rope  
 Waiting to choke, tightening around my throat  
 Watching me while I write this, like, "I don't like  
 90 this note"  
 All I hear is, lyrics, lyrics, constant controversy  
 Sponsors working round the clock to try to stop  
 my concerts early  
 Surely hip-hop was never a problem in Harlem,  
 95 only in Boston  
 After it bothered the fathers of daughters starting  
 to blossom  
 So now I'm catching the flak from these activists  
 when they ragging  
 100 Actin' like I'm the first rapper to smack a bitch or  
 say "faggot, " shit  
 Just look at me like I'm your closest pal  
 The posterchild, the motherfucking spokesman  
 now, for-  
 105 Chorus: [White America, (...) how much hugs I get]  
 So to the parents of America, I am the Derringer  
 Aimed at little Erica to attack her character  
 The ringleader of this circus of worthless pawns  
 Sent to lead the march right up to the steps of  
 110 Congress  
 And piss on the lawns of the White House  
 To burn the - and replace it with a Parental Advi-  
 sory sticker  
 To spit liquor in the faces of this democracy of hy-  
 115 pocrisy  
 Fuck you, Ms. Cheney  
 Fuck you, Tipper Gore  
 Fuck you with the freest of speech  
 This Divided States of Embarrassment will allow  
 120 me to have  
 Fuck you  
 Hahaha, I'm just playing, America  
 You know I love you

### Step 3:

**Discuss whether for you, this song has a real message or rather deals with Eminem himself.**

## M9: IN AMERICA (© John Legend, 2017)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hA29HXDHW9Y>



### Step 1: Listen to the song:

- Summarize the main message.
- Then have a closer look at the lyrics and underline passages that prove your findings:  
Use two different colors to highlight similarities and differences to either one of the songs in M2 or M7.
- **Bonus task:** Analyze the stylistic devices and their effect.

	In America, in America		They say I'm free in America
	I poured my sweat in America	25	In America, in America
	This land is my land		I still can't breath in America
5	It's America		Watch them squeezing my neck
	I broke my back for America		Watch them bullets connect
	All of money I make		We still gon' fight in America
	All of these chances I take	30	Won't just stand around
	Just paying my rent in America		Can't watch it go down
10	Won't just stand around		Won't just stand around
	Watch it go down		Watch it go down
	Won't just stand around		But maybe it's a long shot
	Watch it go down	35	Maybe it's a fantasy
	But maybe it's a long shot		We've given it all that we've got
15	Maybe it's a fantasy		Maybe we can live a dream
	We've given it all that we've got		Oh, oh
	Maybe we can live a dream		Can we build a new life was it ever meant
	Oh, oh	40	that we...
	Can we build a new life was it ever meant		Could make it in America
20	that we...		Make it in America (8x)
	Could make it in America		My hopes right here in America
	Make it in America		In America, in America
	In America, in America	45	My hope, my prayer in America

### Step 2:

Discuss whether John Legend's<sup>1</sup> position – as presented in this song – corresponds to your own views.

<sup>1</sup> Famous soul and R&B & pop star (born in 1978)

## M10: American Dreams © Papa Roach, 2017

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i6KX2mB7LHI>



### Step 1:

Watch the first 25 seconds and write down all associations you have with the title.

### Step 2:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-CXq51iC4yk>



You will be surprised that there is another version of the video (which was actually released before this one.)

Watch this video: summarize the central message and choose at least one of the following tasks:

- (a) Focus on the music and describe to what extent it underlines the overall message.
- (b) Focus on the video itself: find examples of topics you would consider important.
- (a) Focus on the lyrics: Underline / mark (“analyze”) different topics by using different colors.

### Step 3:

Now watch the complete other version of the video.

- (a) Explain whether your first impression of the song has changed now. Why? / Why not?
- (b) Compare how the “Anti-American-Dream attitude” is conveyed here in contrast to the other video.

Give concrete examples.

Extra: Describe clichés of “typical” Americans as shown in the video.

### Step 4:

Compare and discuss your considerations with a partner. (Add further aspects to your list).

**M10: American Dreams © Papa Roach, 2017**

50

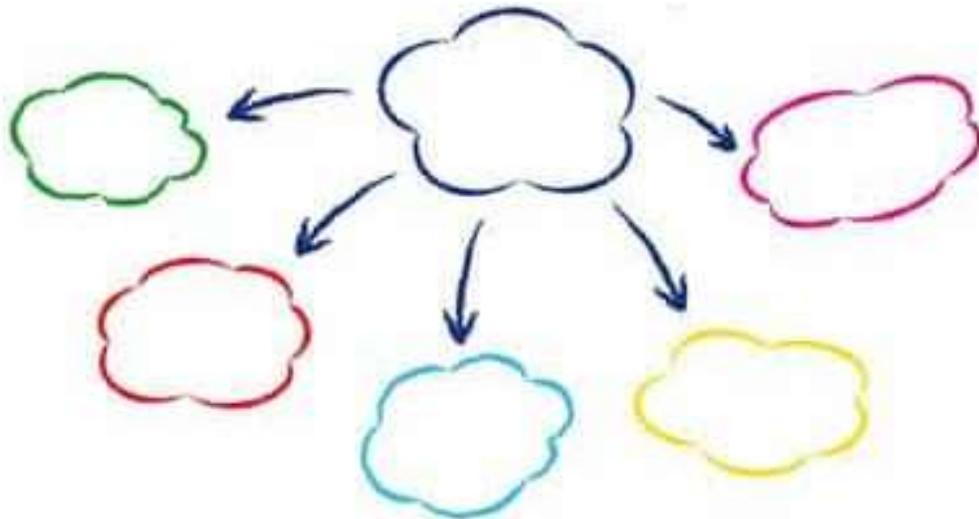
It feels like American dreams caught on fire	Got us all wearing black every Sunday
We're tearing down the white picket fences	70 And I'm growing numb to the violence
A soldier bleeds and a soldier dies	Sing along to the sound of the sirens
Have you ever thought that war was a sickness?	We're trying to keep ourselves alive
55 I'm a son of it, fucked up from it	But it's hard to get by when it feels like
Casualty of my family 'cause of it	Something's wrong here, or so it seems
We dare to dream or live to die	75 'Cause I'm not sleeping in
Reunited by the truth at the right time	American dreams, American lies
Something's wrong here, or so it seems	We're trying to see through the smoke in our eyes
60 'Cause I'm not sleeping in	So give me the truth, don't tell me your lies
American dreams, American lies	'Cause it's harder to breathe when you're buried alive
We're trying to see through the smoke in our eyes	80 By American dreams
So give me the truth, don't tell me your lies	'Cause I'm not sleeping in
'Cause it's harder to breathe when you're buried alive	American dreams, American lies
65 By American dreams	We're trying to see through the smoke in our eyes
With every bullet hole, there's a blood stain	So give me the truth, don't tell me your lies
Another family that's struggling to keep sane	85 'Cause it's harder to breathe when you're buried alive
'Cause their neighborhood ain't a safe place	By American dreams (2x)

**M11: AMERICAN DREAM © WILL.I.AM, 2021**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1NjH\\_pVai2M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1NjH_pVai2M)



Get inspired by this song and write down as many associations as you can think of.



oseman - Fotolia.com

## M12: I LOVE THE USA © WEEZER 2016

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=amy-4jDIYgo>



### Background information:

Weezer wrote this song as part of a NASA collaboration to celebrate the Juno mission. It was released on June 30, 2016 as the spacecraft approached Jupiter ( which entered the planet's orbit on July 4, 2016).

Although it seems patriotic at a first glance, there is more than a hint of sarcasm in the song, with passages such as "I love the USA, f--k yeah, this place is great" and "Home of the brave, dog on a leash."

<sup>1</sup>

It's probably not what NASA had in mind, but it is said to be quite typical of Weezer.

In an interview, the song's co-author, Sam Hollander, explained, "I don't think the song was written as cynically as it might sound. It's almost a **Choose Your Own Adventure**, like you can infer **whatever you want out of it.**"

### Task 1:

After this teaser, **choose your own adventure** and write your own lyrics that might fit to the description above.

Try to make use of stylistic devices.

### Task 2:

Watch the video version.

Now here some background information again: The video clip was released just before the second TV debate between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton during their presidential campaigns.

Discuss **whatever you want out of it.**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.songfacts.com/facts/weezer/i-love-the-usa>