

Teacher Project Pack for Older Students

The Star Spangled Banner: The Story & the Song

Overview

The flag is one of our nation's most important symbols and is the central character of our national anthem. This project introduces students to the key historical events that led to the creation of this important song, helping them to learn the lyrics to *The Star Spangled Banner* and expand their overall understanding of our nation's history.

To complete this project, students will . . .

- learn about key historical events that led to the creation of our national anthem through a multimedia presentation.
- learn the lyrics to *The Star Spangled Banner* with the assistance of a primary-source, multimedia presentation.
- compare and contrast illustrations of historical song sheets for *The Star Spangled Banner* and contemplate the effective use of symbols.
- design their own song sheets based on their understanding of the song's lyrics and what these words mean to them individually.

Objectives

Upon completing this project, students will be able to . . .

- describe key historical events that led to the creation of our national anthem.
- sing the words to *The Star Spangled Banner*.
- demonstrate their understanding of the song's lyrics and what these words and the flag mean to them personally.

Standards

This project meets the following Illinois learning standards and goals for grades 4-6 in Language Arts, Social Science, and Fine Arts.

- 1A.** Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections.
- 1B.** Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency.
- 1C.** Comprehend a broad range of reading materials.
- 2A.** Understand how literary elements and techniques are used to convey meaning.
- 2B.** Read and interpret a variety of literary works.
- 5A.** Locate, organize, and use information from various sources to answer questions, solve problems, and communicate ideas.
- 14E.** Understand United States foreign policy as it relates to other nations and international issues.
- 14F.** Understand the development of United States political ideas and traditions.
- 16B.** Understand the development of significant political events.
- 25A.** Understand the sensory elements, organizational principles, and expressive qualities of the arts.
- 25B.** Understand the similarities, distinctions, and connections in and among the arts.
- 26A.** Understand processes, traditional tools, and modern technologies used in the arts.
- 26B.** Apply skills and knowledge necessary to create and perform in one or more of the arts.
- 27A.** Analyze how the arts function in history, society and everyday life.
- 27B.** Understand how the arts shape and reflect history, society and everyday life.

Guidelines

Prepare materials for implementation: You will need Microsoft PowerPoint® or the free [PowerPoint reader](#); the appropriate free version of Microsoft [Windows Media Player](#)®; *The Star Spangled Banner: The Story of Our National Anthem* (multimedia and PowerPoint files) and *The Star Spangled Banner: The Lyrics* (multimedia file); the MP3 audio files of *The Star Spangled Banner* Chalmers and Case recordings; copies of *The Star Spangled Banner* Information Sheet; copies of the Historical Song Sheets activity and the accompanying song sheets; copies of the national anthem lyrics; and copies of the Designing a Song Sheet activity.

Allow for sufficient time to implement: Students will need three 40-minute class sessions to complete the main project components; plan appropriately for any extension activities you wish to complete.

Be flexible with implementation: Keep in mind that some students may need extra time to complete the activities scheduled for each of the three sessions. Consider implementing various extension activities to reinforce student learning.

Directions

Session 1: Introduction to Our National Anthem

1. Explain to students that this project will help them to learn about some important historical events that led to the creation of *The Star Spangled Banner* and to learn to sing the national anthem. Additionally, inform students that they will demonstrate their understanding of the song's lyrics and what these words and the flag mean to them individually through a fun arts-based activity.

2. Ask students to share stories of when they have heard *The Star Spangled Banner* being played or sung (e.g., at the start of sporting events). Tell students that *The Star Spangled Banner* has been recorded by many bands and sung by many people over the years. Then tell them that the Library of Congress has several recordings of our national anthem on its website, some of which are more than 100 years old! Then play either the [Chalmers baritone and chorus recording](#) (1914) or the [Case soprano and chorus recording](#) (1917).
3. Lead a class discussion about *The Star Spangled Banner* to encourage students to share what they know about our national anthem. Questions to spark the discussion might include the following:
 - a. Who wrote the poem that became the lyrics (words) for the *Star Spangled Banner*? (Francis Scott Key)
 - b. What event happened that inspired the writing of the poem? (The battle between the Americans and the British at Fort McHenry)
 - c. Where did this battle take place? (Fort McHenry, Baltimore, Maryland)
 - d. When did this battle take place? (September, 1814)
 - e. Why did this battle happen? (The British wanted to take the city of Baltimore, an important international port)
 - f. How did this battle inspire Key to write his poem? (After watching the 25-hour battle, he saw the flag still flying over Fort McHenry at dawn and knew that America had persevered)
4. Hand out *The Star Spangled Banner* Information Sheets to check each student's prior knowledge. Be sure to make students aware that this is an information sheet and not a test that will be graded.

5. Hand out copies of the national anthem lyrics and ask students to follow along as you play the anthem again. Encourage students to take the lyric sheet home and practice singing the song with their families.

Session 2: The Story of Our National Anthem

1. Show students *The Star Spangled Banner: The Story of Our National Anthem Story* [multimedia presentation](#) (.wmv file).
2. Hand out the partially completed *The Star Spangled Banner* Information Sheets, then direct students to complete column 2 while they view *The Star Spangled Banner: The Story of Our National Anthem Story* [PowerPoint presentation](#) (.ppt file). **NOTE:** This presentation does not contain narration nor timings, so you will need to hit Enter/Return to advance through the slides.
3. When students have finished, ask them compare their answers to see how many questions they answered correctly the first time versus the second time and to see how much they've learned!
4. After, show *The Star Spangled Banner: The Lyrics* [multimedia presentation](#) several times, encouraging students to sing along with you as they view it.

Session 3: *Star Spangled Banner* Song Sheets

1. Facilitate a class discussion in which students relate what they have learned about the story of *The Star Spangled Banner*.
2. Show *The Star Spangled Banner: The Lyrics* [multimedia presentation](#), encouraging students to sing along with you as they view it.
3. Show students various song sheets for *The Star Spangled Banner*.¹

¹ **Citations:** great_seal.gif – “First Die of the Great Seal of the United States, close-up view.” 1782. Old Military and Civil Records LICON, Textual Archives Services Division (NWCTB), National Archives. ARC Identifier: 596742. Accessed 10/05 http://media.nara.gov/Public_Vaults/00725_2004_002_A.gif; song_sheet_A.gif – “Star-spangled banner.” America Singing: Nineteenth-Century Song Sheets, Library of Congress Rare Book and Special Collections Division. [as113170] <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi->

4. Then have students work in groups or pairs to complete the Historical Song Sheets activity.
5. After, direct students to design their own song sheets for *The Star Spangled Banner*, using the song sheet template. (You may choose to have students finish this assignment at home or in another class session.) When they've finished, hang the song sheets in the classroom or in a school hallway.

Assessment

Review the suggested project rubric.

Extension Activities

Word Scramble Competition

1. Divide the class into several groups.
2. Give each group a baggie with the first verse of *The Star Spangled Banner* cut into strips by lines (see Word Scramble Competition Extension Activity Pack).
3. Direct the groups to compete against the other groups to be the first team to arrange the strips into the correct order of the song.

Measure Out the Fort McHenry Flag

1. Go outside, or to a very large space such as the school gymnasium, and measure out the dimensions of the Fort McHenry flag (30 feet wide and 42 feet long), marking each corner.
2. Have students stand around the perimeter so that they get a sense of how big the flag really is.
3. If possible, have someone take a picture of the students from a vantage above, then post the picture on a classroom or school wall.

[bin/query/r?ammem/amss:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(as113170\)\); song_sheet_B.gif - De Marsan, H., publisher. "Das star-spangled banner." \[as113160\] \[http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/amss:@field\\(DOCID+@lit\\(as113160\\)\\)\]\(http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/amss:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(as113160\)\)\)](#)

Make the Fort McHenry Flag

Make a quarter-size 1812 Fort McHenry flag out of construction paper.

(Beware, this activity requires A LOT of paper.)

1. Measure and cut out eight red and seven white stripes that are .5 foot wide and 10.5 feet long, taping or stapling them together.
2. Measure and cut out a blue square, 4 feet by 4 feet. Place the square on top of the stripes, securing it in the top left corner. Measure and cut out 15 white stars, each .5 foot from point to point, and tape or staple them to the blue square in the top left hand corner.
3. If possible, take a picture of the students with the flag and place on the classroom wall.

Make a Flag Collage

1. As a class or individually, make a list of places where the American flag is flown.
2. Have students take photographs or draw pictures of various places that the flag flies in your community.
3. Use the photos or drawings to make a flag collage.
4. Hang the flag collage in a school hallway or present it to the school board, the town mayor, or the local American Legion. The presentation ceremony could feature students singing the national anthem.

Star Spangled Banner Dramatization

Stage a dramatic reading or an actual production of [*The Star Spangled Banner: A Dramatic Retelling of the Story of Our National Anthem*](#). You may wish to perform the reading or production before other classes, the school, or the community.