



The Star-Spangled Banner



The national anthem of the United States of America is a song called The Star-Spangled Banner. The words of the song, known as lyrics, come from a poem written by lawyer and author Francis Scott Key. Francis was born in 1779 and witnessed the Battle of Baltimore in 1814. During this battle, Francis saw the British army try to conquer Fort McHenry by the coast in Locust Point. The fort was not conquered and, as the sun rose, Francis could see a large flag still flying above the fort. He wrote a poem about what he saw called Defence of Fort M'Henry and the words of this poem became the USA's national anthem.

The lyrics have been set to a popular British tune called The Anacreontic Song. The music was written by John Stafford Smith who was born in 1750. He was a composer and he played the organ for churches.

Q1: Who wrote the music that the lyrics were set to?



Q2: ...and witnessed the Battle of Baltimore in 1814.

What do you think that this phrase means?



Q3: At what time of day did Francis see the flag? Explain how you know.

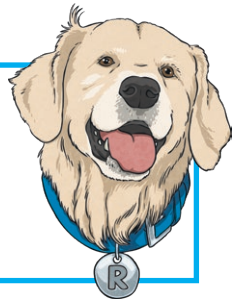


The lyrics to The Star-Spangled Banner are:

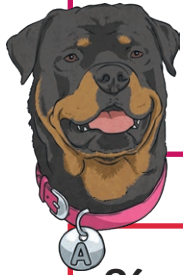
Oh, say! Can you see, by the dawn's early light,
what so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming;
whose broad stripes and bright stars, through the perilous fight,
over the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming?
And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.
Oh, say! Does that star-spangled banner yet wave
over the land of the free and the home of the brave?

Q4: Fill in the missing words from the poem:

...the land of the _____ and the home of the _____.



Q5: Find and copy one word that the poet uses to show that the fight was dangerous.



Q6: ...what so proudly we hailed...

What do you think that this phrase means?



Q7: Explain why the poet felt reassured during the explosions that happened at night.



On the shore, dimly seen through the mists of the deep,
where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes.
What is that which the breeze, over the towering steep,
as it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?
Now, it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam;
in fully glory reflected, now shines in the stream.
'Tis the star-spangled banner! Oh, long may it wave
over the land of the free and the home of the brave!



Q8: ...as it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?

In this phrase, what do you think **half conceals, half discloses** means?

Q9: Why is it difficult to see the shore?

Q10: Why does the flag shine in the stream?

Q11: Sum up what you think the main message of the lyrics is.





A Journey to America: Extending Reading Skills

The Star-Spangled Banner **Answer Sheet**

Q1: Who wrote the music that the lyrics were set to?

Accept 'John Stafford Smith' only.

Q2: ...and witnessed the Battle of Baltimore in 1814.

What do you think that this phrase means?

Accept any answer which relates to Francis having seen the battle occurring, such as: I think that this phrase means that Francis was there and saw the battle happening.

Q3: At what time of day did Francis see the flag? Explain how you know.

Accept any answer which refers to a time early in the morning and uses the phrase 'as the sun rose' as evidence from the text, such as: I think that Francis saw the flag early in the morning because it says that he saw it 'as the sun rose' and that happens at 7 a.m. where I live.

Q4: Fill in the missing words from the poem:

...the land of the **free** and the home of the **brave**.

Q5: Find and copy one word that the poet uses to show that the fight was dangerous.

Accept 'perilous' only.

Q6: ...what so proudly we hailed...

What do you think this phrase means?

Accept any answer which captures the meaning of the phrase, such as: I think that the phrase means something that the people looked at fondly and were boasting about.

Q7: Explain why the poet felt reassured during the explosions that happened at night.

Accept any answer which refers to the light from the explosions allowing the poet to see that the flag remained in place, such as: The poet felt reassured during the explosions because they lit up the sky and allowed him to see that the flag was still there.

Q8: ...as it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?

In this phrase, what do you think half conceals, half discloses means?

Accept any answer which refers to something being half visible and half out of sight, such as: I think that it means you can see half of it but you can't see the other half.

Q9: Why is it difficult to see the shore?

Accept any answer which refers to the shore being obscured by mist from the sea, such as: It is difficult to see the shore because there is a lot of sea mist that is hiding it.

Q10: Why does the flag shine in the stream?

Accept any answer which refers to the sunlight making the flag stand out as it reflects in the water of the stream, such as: The flag shines in the stream because the sun is shining on it which is making it look vibrant when it reflects in the water.

Q11: Sum up what you think the main message of the lyrics is.

Accept any reasonable summary of the texts which includes all of the following points:

- **The flag survives the battle.**
- **It can be seen through the night and by the first light of the morning.**