

Francis Scott Key, the Flag and the Song

By Carol Montgomery

Reader 1: Francis Scott Key heard his friend was captured by the British.

Key: I must help my friend, Dr. Beanes.

Reader 2: It was during the War of 1812.

Key: I will get help for Dr. Beanes. He is a good man and has helped many people.

Reader 1: Dr. Beanes was taken on a British ship.

Reader 2: Key rode on a small U.S. ship to see Dr. Beanes.

Key: It's good this ship has a white flag. That way they will know we are a truce ship.

Reader 1: Key and a U.S. agent spoke to General Ross.

Key: Please, let my friend go free. He is a good man.

Ross: No, we will not let him go. He is not our friend.

Key: Here is a stack of letters from British men who were hurt. You will read how Dr. Beanes has helped them.

Reader 2: General Ross took the stack.

Ross: Thank you. I will read these. But, I don't think I will change my mind.

Key: I'm sorry to hear that. Your men will tell you how kind Dr. Beanes has been to them when they were hurt.

Ross: My men?

Key: Yes, sir. The British men wrote their own stories.

Ross: I see. Hmmm... I look forward to reading them. I'll call you when I'm ready.

Key: Yes, sir!

Reader 1: General Ross left. Later, the men talked again.

Ross: Thank you for the letters. Dr. Beanes has been very kind to our men. They have asked that I be kind to him.

Key: Does that mean he can go free?

Ross: Yes, we will let him go free. But, not tonight. You men know too much and we will soon bomb the fort.

Key: Oh, my!

Ross: I must go now. You will go back on your ship under British guard.

Key: Yes, sir.

Reader 2: So, Key, Dr. Beanes and the U.S. agent went back to their ship. They had British guards.

Reader 1: Dr. Beanes was glad to see his friend, Francis.

Beanes: Thank you for coming, my friend. I am so glad to see you.

Key: I'm glad to see you, too. Are you well?

Beanes: Oh, yes! I'm fine as fish bait!

Key: *(laughs)* As long as they don't throw you in the water! I just wish the war was over.

Beanes: Me, too. But, look at the good side.

Key: What's that?

Beanes: The British guards didn't bring any garlic, onions, or leeks with them.

Key: What do you mean?

Beanes: I hate leaks in ships!

Key: *(moans)* I see they didn't dampen your sense of humor.

Beanes: No, sir! There's always time to smile. It's just harder to smile in a battle.

Key: True. I hope our flag will still be flying at the end. That will make me smile. I heard they'll be bombing soon.

Beanes: Well, maybe this stormy weather will help keep the fort safe.

Reader 1: The men waited. The bombs and rockets started flying.

Reader 2: The British pulled back so they were out of reach. Fort McHenry's bombs landed short.

Key: It looks like the sky is filled with fire.

Beanes: I keep hoping it will stop soon.

Reader 1: But, it didn't stop soon. The bombs and rockets flew for 25 hours.

Reader 2: When the bombing did stop Key strained to see the flag.

Key: What flag is flying over the fort? Can you see it?

Beanes: Not yet. I hope it's our flag that will wave good morning to freedom.

Reader 1: The men watched with hope in their hearts.

Key: At last, a bright streak of gold in the sky. Do you see the flag? Does she wave to us yet?

Beanes: Yes! Yes! She waves!

Key: She's grand!

Beanes: And huge!

Key: Where's my pen? I must write this down... Oh, say can you see...by the dawn's early light...

Reader 2: Key had a British tune in his mind. New words came to match the tune.

Reader 1: After the battle the men were set free.

Reader 2: That night Key penned a poem.

Reader 1: The poem was printed in the local newspaper. Soon the whole country knew the poem and the song that went with it.

Reader 2: In 1931 the song was proclaimed the national anthem of the United States.

Ross: What's the name of that song?

All: The Star-Spangled Banner!



Curriculum Links (Valid in 2013)

NOTE: Not all historians agree on the details of the story of “The Star Spangled Banner.” For example, some say there was one huge flag while others say there were two flags—one smaller storm flag that would have been flying during the stormy night. The Smithsonian Institute says in their article “The Story Behind the Star Spangled Banner”: “It was this storm flag—not the garrison flag now known as the Star-Spangled Banner—which actually flew during the battle. The garrison flag, according to eyewitness accounts, wasn’t raised until the morning.” (link below)

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history-archaeology/flag.html>

Smithsonian’s article “The Story Behind the Star Spangled Banner.” Small print, but lots of info on the song AND the flag. Links to 16 photo clickable slide show includes the flag, the people involved, Fort McHenry, and more.

<http://www.mdhs.org/digitalimage/key-francis-scott-1779-1843-0>

Maryland Historical Society webpage on Francis Scott Key with a **beautiful large portrait**, but little information.

http://www.smithsonianmag.com/people-places/Reluctant_Patriot.html?c=y&page=3

Smithsonian’s article “Francis Scott Key, the Reluctant Patriot.” Interesting for you or mature students.

<http://www.mamaslearningcorner.com/free-printables-for-francis-scott-key-unit-study/>

“Free Printables for Francis Scott Key Unit Study” for **elementary and ELL** students from Mama’s Learning Corner. Looks like grade 2-3. Helpful!

<http://www.musick8.com/html/ideadisplay.php?ibid=256>

Short Star Spangled Banner Readers Theater script with 9 parts and 15 Readers. Unfortunately, you’d probably have to retype it to make it printable.

http://www.teachercreatedmaterials.com/curriculum_files/free/activities/july2012/Star%20Spangled%20Banner.pdf

Readers Theater script from Teacher Created Materials **on the making of the flag hoisted over Fort McHenry that Francis Scott Key saw flying.** (It’s Mary Pickersgill’s story.) Includes some activities and ELL suggestions. Lots of color illustrations, so it takes a LONG time to load. Printable for classroom use. Cast = 6 This color-coded script would complement our script “Francis Scott Key and The Star-Spangled Banner.”

<http://www.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=5286>

Scholastic’s short lesson plan on “The Star-Spangled Banner” for grades PreK-6 and based on a book The Star-Spangled Banner.

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<http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Patriotic-Songs-Readers-Theatre-FREEBIE-411434>

“Patriotic Songs Readers Theatre” scripts from Teachers Pay Teachers. Each song has been written for 4 readers. I did NOT download this free script, but the teacher, has a very good rating (3.9/4.0). We have a script perfect for Choral Readers Theater entitled “The Star-Spangled Banner Lyrics.”

<http://amhistory.si.edu/starspangledbanner/>

Smithsonian’s interactive website on “The Star Spangled Banner” with information and questions on the war, the flag, the song, the legacy, and an opportunity to interact. Students can zoom in on the flag. **Includes a link to a MP3 19th century recording of the song.** (Under the “Lyrics” section where all the 4 verses are in small print.)

<http://amhistory.si.edu/starspangledbanner/educational-resources.aspx>

Variety of lesson plans related to “The Star Spangled Banner” from The Smithsonian’s Museum of American History. I did not review the lessons or video, but this webpage includes **PDF links to the following:**

- Grades K-2, “Math and Measuring the Star-Spangled Banner”
- Grades 3-5, “Historians are Detectives”; “Music, Poetry, and History”; “Measuring the Flag”
- Grades 3-8, “A History of the War of 1812 and the Star-Spangled Banner”
- Grades 6-8, “Understanding and Using Primary and Secondary Sources in History”; “Poetry and Our National Anthem”; “The Museum Environment and Preservation”
- “Broad Stripes and Bright Stars Video—Acts 1-4 with Teacher’s Guide
- Instructions on “How to Use this [online] Resource in Your Classroom” (i.e., “Collect Stars Activity”, “Interactive Flag”, “Share Your Story.”

http://www.coreknowledge.org/mimik/mimik_uploads/lesson_plans/122/Oh%20Say%20Can%20You%20Sing.pdf

“Oh, Say, Can You Sing?” unit with 5 lessons for **grade 2 on learning to SING “The Star-Spangled Banner.”**

<http://www.americanheritage.org/>

[AHEF National Elementary Extraction 08 11 StarSpangledBanner.pdf](#)

“The Star-Spangled Banner” **lesson plan for grade 2 or ELL students. GREAT worksheets and lyrics!**

<http://www.teachervision.fen.com/history/us-history/printable/7228.html>

“The Story of the Star-Spangled Banner” printables for grades 3-6. (Note: TeacherVision only lets you print 3 items if you’re not a member.)

http://www.coreknowledge.org/mimik/mimik_uploads/lesson_plans/136/Star%20Spangled%20Math.pdf

“Star-Spangled Math”: a 10-day unit focusing on The Star-Spangled Banner (i.e., history) with **math applications for grade 4.**

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http://www.coreknowledge.org/mimik/mimik_uploads/lesson_plans/136/Star%20Spangled%20Math.pdf

PDF lyrics of The Star Spangled Banner in large print (one page).

<http://www.apples4theteacher.com/holidays/flag-day/short-stories/the-star-spangled-banner.html>

“The Star-Spangled Banner” story in larger font. No pictures.

<http://www.usmint.gov/kids/teachers/lessonPlans/atb/view.cfm?id=1324>

United States Mint lesson plan for grades 9-12 on “Key to the National Anthem” with worksheets based on the “Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine Quarter.” Some pages would be **adaptable for middle school and gifted elementary students.**

<http://starspangledtrail.net/chesapeake-at-war/bay-regions/washington-dc/>

National Park service page on the burning of Washington D.C. August 24, 1814, by the British (less than a month away from the bombardment of Fort McHenry). This page refers to the severe thunderstorm that put out the D.C. fires and caused serious wind damage.

http://voices.washingtonpost.com/capitalweathergang/2010/07/the_thunderstorm_that_saved_wa.html

Washington Post article “The Thunderstorm That Saved Washington.” Shares from the book Washington Weather about the storm that interrupted the burning of Washington D.C. with “a small tornado”; thus, causing further damage and blowing two British vessels ashore.

National Park Service’s Lesson Plan on “The Rockets Red Glare: Francis Scott Key and the Bombardment of Fort McHenry” (grades 5-12 with small print, extensive vocabulary and original documents):

*** I am listing the pages separately in case you want to “pick and choose”. :)

<http://www.nps.gov/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/137fomc/137FOMC.htm>

National Park Service’s lesson plan on **“The Rockets Red Glare: Francis Scott Key and the Bombardment of Fort McHenry”**. This is the introduction page to the extensive lesson from U.S. history for grades 5-12 (small print and extensive vocabulary, but GREAT references and thought-provoking questions). Includes Table of Contents of the links below and more.

<http://www.nps.gov/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/137fomc/137getting.htm>

Inquiry Question, “What do you think this photograph shows?”—answer not obvious, but it’s a portion of Fort McHenry and if you check this link you’ll see more information about it: <http://www.nps.gov/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/137fomc/137visual2.htm>

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<http://www.nps.gov/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/137fomc/137facts1.htm>

“Determining the Facts–Reading 1: **Armistead’s Account of the Battle**”–Major **George Armistead was the Commander of Fort McHenry during the British bombardment of the War of 1812.** “This reading is transcribed from his report on the bombardment of the fort” from the original government document. Includes 5 comprehension questions (some with 2-6 parts).

<http://www.nps.gov/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/137fomc/137facts2.htm>

National Park Service’s “Determining the Facts–Reading 2: **Francis Scott Key and the Writing of the Star-Spangled Banner**” reading comprehension lesson on with 5 questions (Some questions have 2-3 parts.)

<http://www.nps.gov/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/137fomc/137facts3.htm>

“Determining the Facts–Reading 3: Defence of Fort McHenry”. **Document and link to transcript of the original poem/song lyrics.** Includes 5 comprehension questions (some with 2-3 parts).

<http://www.nps.gov/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/137fomc/137facts4.htm>

National Park Service’s “Determining the Facts–Reading 4: After the Battle.” Describes **what happened after the Baltimore battle and what happened to Francis Scott Key’s song.** Includes reading comprehension lesson on with 5 questions (Some questions have 2-3 parts.)

<http://www.nps.gov/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/137fomc/137visual1.htm>

National Park Service’s “Illustration 1: Fort McHenry in 1814” with 5 comprehension questions (some with 2-3 parts).

<http://www.nps.gov/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/137fomc/137visual6.htm>

National Park Service’s “Visual Evidence–Photo 3: The Star Spangled Banner Today” with 5 comprehension questions (some with several parts).

<http://www.nps.gov/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/137fomc/137visual6.htm>

National Park Service’s “Putting It All Together” page with 5 activities (grades 5-12):

- “You Are There”
- “Debating the War of 1812”
- “The Theme of Our Nation”
- “Whose Star-Spangled Banner”?
- “Places That Define the Community” (Based on the fact that Fort McHenry helps define the Baltimore community students are asked to identify and search local historic sites in their communities.)

<http://www.nps.gov/fomc/forteachers/upload/FSK-Writing-About.pdf>

National Park Service lesson plan “**What was Francis Scott Key writing about?**” for **grades 4-5.**

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<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/images/uc29.1.jpg>

Image of the first printed music of “The Star Spangled Banner.”

http://www.ehow.com/how_13380_interpret-star-spangled.html

“How to Interpret the Star-Spangled Banner”—eHow’s explanation of verse one. (Verse 3 refers to the British, but it’s seldom sung now.)

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/flagday/>

U.S. Flag Activities and Crafts from Enchanted Learning. Includes poem writing prompts.

Puns

http://www.holmdelschools.org/schools/satz/eng_dept/Writing%20Workshop/Figurative%20Language/MAIN%20puns.htm

Extensive page on puns with lots of examples.

<http://www.lessonsnips.com/lesson/learnhomonyms>

Lesson plan for 3rd-5th grade, ESL, or gifted primary students on homonyms. Homonyms are fun to use in puns. The lesson is available as a PDF link from the red button that says “get lesson.” **Suggestion:** Tell the students they don’t have to figure out every pun on the worksheet (in download). Let them have a few minutes to try alone, and then let them work in groups or help each other.

<http://www.princetonol.com/groups/iad/lessons/high/Stephanie-puns.htm>

“Pop Art Sculpture” lesson plan on interpreting a pun into a 3-D paper maché sculpture based on a pun. Could be adapted to a 2-D drawing or poster.

<http://teachling.wvu.edu/node/71>

“Fun with Puns” lesson plan for grades 6-8, but could be adapted for a younger audience. The real value is in her examples of puns.

<http://volweb.utk.edu/Schools/bedford/harrisms/puns.htm>

Grades 6-8. Examples of puns in sentences.

YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDKfw8nysLA>

“History of the Star Spangled Banner” from David Barton and Wallbuilders. 7:45

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dSoJHf18Qe0>

“Folding a full-size replica of the Star-Spangled Banner” with visitors to the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History. Sooooooooooooo BIG! This gives an **excellent perspective of the flag’s size**. “We always get people crying.” 3:27

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H_OmXuDokHE

Air Force Tech Sgt. “Robert Carter—Star Spangled Banner at UND Football Aug 30 2012” sings powerfully in his camouflage fatigues. 2:01

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Uvf6eL5I_g

Instrumental music to “The Star Spangled Bannera’ with pictures, bombs bursting, and **readable lyrics streaming**. Not easy to sing, but well done. 1:30

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1gZ6VYXIW2A>

“The Star Spangled Banner Lyrics Cover” with photo slides and streaming lyrics sung by Eleazar Del Rosario. This is in a lower key (not so high, but low for sopranos). 1:59

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ETrr-XHBjE>

“U.S. National Anthem by the Academy Choirs” with the U.S. Army Herald Trumpet Corps singing and playing “The Star-Spangled Banner” before an NFL event. (Cameo shots of former President George Bush (senior) and former President Bill Clinton. 2:39

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

“Blind Disabled Girl Sings a Breathtaking Star Spangled Banner”—16-year-old gifted teen. 2:18

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vPKp29Luryc>

“Star Spangled Banner lyrics vocals and beautiful photos” Women’s voices. 1:28

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1QmeEdFOSc>

“Whitney Houston sings the National Anthem—Star Spangled Banner” from “Television’s Greatest Moments.” Shows clips of military saluting the flag. Brief interviews with one in the military and his mom—who was on the other side of the globe when Whitney sang. Expresses the connection the song can give. 3:40

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i9rMkoW-Rvg>

“Star Spangled Banner—One Man Quartet” by a gifted college voice major. (Note: Flag is not placed quite properly, but will your students notice?) 1:37

