

TEACHING WITH PRIMARY SOURCES—MTSU

Lesson Plan: “The Star-Spangled Banner”

Grade: 2nd, 4th

Subject: Social Studies, English/Language Arts, Music

Time Required: 1 to 2 class periods

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OVERVIEW

This lesson focuses on the creation of the “Star-Spangled Banner” following the bombardment of Fort McHenry in Baltimore in September 1814. Students will analyze a historical document and draw conclusions about what this document was for, who created it, and why. Students will study the lyrics of the song and analyze the words and phrases for meaning and thematic elements.

UNDERSTANDING GOAL

Students will be able to understand and explain the meaning and significance of the “Star-Spangled Banner.”

OBJECTIVES

The learner will:

- Examine a document as a primary source;
- Analyze and explain the meaning of the document;
- Describe the significance of the document.

INVESTIGATIVE QUESTIONS

What emotions or ideals did the author intend to convey? What symbols and beliefs did he refer to in order to accomplish his goal?



[The Star Spangled Banner](#) [1913]

CURRICULUM STANDARDS

- 2.RL.KID.1 Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
- 2.RL.CS.4 Describe how words and phrases supply meaning in a story, poem, or song.
- 4.RL.KID.1 Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly; refer to details and examples in a text when drawing inferences from the text.
- 4.RL.KID.2 Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem and explain how it is conveyed through details in the text; summarize the text.
- 4.RL.CS.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that refer to significant characters and situations found in literature and history.
- 2.W.TTP.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts.
- 4.W.PDW.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- 4.W.RBPK.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research, applying grade 4 standards for reading.

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

Have the requisite materials ready before the activity:

- [Star-Spangled Banner Original Manuscript](#) (one copy per student)
- [Star Spangled Banner Song Sheet](#) (one copy per student)
- [Victor Military Band Performing Star Spangled Banner](#)
- [Victor Mixed Chorus Performing Star Spangled Banner](#)
- [Whitney Houston Singing National Anthem](#) (YouTube)

For teacher background information:

- [America's Story: Second War of American Independence](#)
- [Links Guide: War of 1812](#)
- [Today in History: Francis Scott Key](#)

PROCEDURE

Prior to the Lesson This lesson is best used with 2nd grade students who have a basic understanding of national symbols, or with 4th grade students who have a basic understanding of the events leading up to September 14, 1814 (the War of 1812).

Brief background for the lesson:

On September 13, 1814, British troops bombarded Fort McHenry in Baltimore, Maryland. Francis Scott Key was being held aboard one of the British ships and heard the bombs all night. He was so surprised to see the flag still flying over the fort the next morning that it inspired him to write the “Star-Spangled Banner.” It was officially made the national anthem by Congress in 1931.

Day 1

Step 1 Working with the entire class, discuss students’ understanding of a document. Ask the following questions to frame the discussion:

- What is a document? (e.g., a record of information)
- What are examples of common documents? (e.g., letter, diploma, passport, driver’s license)

Step 2 Explain that in this lesson students will take a close look at an important historical document. Distribute copies and engage students with the [“Original Manuscript of the ‘Star Spangled Banner.’”](#) (For 2nd grade, you may wish to display this using overhead projector or Smart Board instead of using handouts.)

Ask students to examine the document. Possible questions include:

- Where does your eye go first?
- How would you describe what you’re seeing? What do you notice about the physical condition?
- Which words or phrases can you read? Has the document been altered in any way?
- Are there any indications (e.g., names, dates) of ownership or time period?

CURRICULUM STANDARDS (cont.)

Social Studies

2.19 – Recall the origins, meaning, and lyrics of the “Star Spangled Banner”.

4.17 - Identify major causes, events, and key people of the War of 1812, including: Trade restrictions, Impressment, Battle of New Orleans, Burning of Washington, D.C., Francis Scott Key

Music

- 2.VA.Cn2.A Compare and contrast purposes of artwork from various cultures, times, and places.
- 4.VA.R2.A Interpret art by analyzing how context, relevant subject matter, and use of media shape meaning while using appropriate art vocabulary.

Step 3

Now distribute copies of the [printed song sheet](#) (since students probably cannot read cursive style in the manuscript). For 4th grade, explain that they will be working in small groups to study the document and record their responses to the following questions. Second grade students will do the lesson as a whole group and their responses will be recorded by the teacher (on the board or chart paper).

Encourage students to speculate about the document, its creator, and its context. Possible questions include:

- What do you think this document is about? What words or phrases give clues?
- What about language, its tone and style? Writing style?
- Is this a public or private document? What might have been the author's purpose in writing this? (PIE - Persuade, Inform, or Entertain)
- Who might have been the intended audience?

Help students to think about their personal responses to the document. Possible questions include:

- What surprises you about what you're seeing?
- What do you want to know about this document?

Step 4

Come back together (4th grade) as a whole group and ask students to draw conclusions about what this document was for, who created it, and why. Answer questions about word meanings at this time. (May possibly create some new vocabulary words to study for the week.)

Ask students to summarize what they know about the "Star-Spangled Banner." Possible questions include:

- What was happening during this time period?
- What words or phrases specifically refer to the War of 1812 and the bombardment that Key witnessed?
- What importance does this document have?

Step 5

Ask students to identify the phrases that made the strongest impression on them, or their favorite words or phrases from the song.

For 4th grade, have them write out a response explaining their choice(s) of favorite words or phrases or why a particular phrase made such a strong impression on them.

For 2nd grade, create a class chart with words and phrases recorded by the teacher.

Day 2**Step 6**

With the entire class, listen to the three performances of the song:

- [Victor Marching Band Performing Star Spangled Banner](#)
- [Victor Mixed Chorus Performing Star Spangled Banner](#)
- [Whitney Houston Singing Star Spangled Banner](#)

Step 7

Once all versions have been heard, ask students the following questions:

- Which one most closely matches the mood that the lyrics inspired in them?
- Does the song make more of an impression with the words sung by a group or an individual?
- Which style of performance do they prefer?

Step 8

As a final reflection, have students write about an event where they have seen or heard the national anthem performed: at a ballgame, an Independence Day celebration or parade, a Veterans Day memorial service or parade, etc. Discuss why the anthem is played at these type of events. Younger students may choose to illustrate the event and write a descriptive caption.

EVALUATION

- Teacher observation of collaborative work. (50% of grade for activity – based on participation in class and small group discussions)
- Teacher observation of critical thinking. (50% of grade for activity – based on verbal and written responses to discussion questions)
- For the written reflection in question 5, teachers may choose to use the [rubric](#) provided for grading. (See separate sheet “Opinion/Argument Rubric, Grade 4” courtesy of Elk Grove Unified School District, Elk Grove, CA.)

EXTENSION

- Have students work with the music teacher to rehearse and perform “The Star-Spangled Banner.”
- Have students work with the art teacher to create artwork that includes stars, stripes, and the colors red, white, and blue.



[Star-spangled banner](#) [n.d.;
detail]

Opinion/Argument Rubric, Grade 4

	4	3	2	1
	(Above Grade Level)	(At Grade Level)	(Approaching Grade Level)	(Below Grade Level)
Focus/Opinion CCSS*: > W - 1a > W - 1b > W - 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responds skillfully to all parts of the prompt States an opinion that demonstrates an insightful understanding of topic/text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responds to all parts of the prompt States an opinion that demonstrates an understanding of topic/text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responds to most parts of the prompt States an opinion that demonstrates limited understanding of topic/text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responds to some or no parts of the prompt Does not state an opinion and/or demonstrates little to no understanding of topic/text
Organization CCSS: > W - 1a > W - 1c > W - 1d > W - 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizes ideas and information into purposeful, coherent paragraphs that include an elaborated introduction with clear thesis, structured body, and insightful conclusion Uses linking words, phrases, and clauses skillfully to connect reasons to opinion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizes ideas and information into logical introductory, body, and concluding paragraphs Uses linking words and phrases appropriately to connect reasons to opinion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizes ideas and information in an attempted paragraph structure that includes a sense of introduction, body and conclusion Uses some linking words and/or phrases to connect reasons to opinion but simplistically 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not organize ideas and information coherently due to lack of paragraph structure and/or a missing introduction, body, or conclusion Uses no linking words or phrases
Support/Evidence CCSS: > RIT - 1 > W - 1b > W - 9b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports opinion skillfully with substantial and relevant facts, details, and/or reasons Provides insightful explanation/analysis of how evidence supports opinion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports opinion with relevant facts, details, and/or reasons Provides clear explanation/analysis of how evidence supports opinion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports opinion with minimal and/or irrelevant facts, details, and/or reasons Provides some explanation/analysis of how evidence supports opinion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not support opinion with facts, details, and/or reasons Provides no or inaccurate explanation/analysis of how evidence supports opinion
Language CCSS: > L - 1 > L - 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses purposeful, correct, and varied sentence structures Demonstrates creativity and flexibility when using conventions (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling) to enhance meaning Uses precise and sophisticated academic and domain-specific vocabulary appropriate for the audience and purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses correct and varied sentence structures Demonstrates grade level appropriate conventions; errors are minor and do not obscure meaning Uses academic and domain-specific vocabulary appropriate for the audience and purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses some repetitive yet correct sentence structure Demonstrates some grade level appropriate conventions, but errors obscure meaning Uses limited academic and/or domain-specific vocabulary for the audience and purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not demonstrate sentence mastery Demonstrates limited understanding of grade level appropriate conventions, and errors interfere with the meaning Uses no academic or domain-specific vocabulary

*CCSS – Common Core State Standards alignment (“W” = Writing strand; “RIT” = Reading – Informational Text; “L” = Language strand)

*Courtesy of Elk Grove Unified School District
Elk Grove, CA*