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Biographies of the Nation Instructional Plan
June 30, 2011

The National Anthem

Rationale

This lesson is a result of my experiences with the National Anthem. Two specific moments constantly run through my head when I think about the playing of the song and the respect one is expected to show the flag. One, in summary, involved a man who did not remove his hat during the National Anthem at a bull riding event and did not go unnoticed by the many people sitting behind him, including an outspoken veteran. You can imagine the passion in the voices telling him to remove his hat. The other instance is a time I was coaching fastpitch near a high school and the National Anthem was playing at the time school was let out. The herds of students on the sidewalk passing by became a frustration as I watched them text, talk and continue walking as the Nation's most recognizable song played. A flag that represents so much to so many flapped in the wind without an acknowledgement.

I daydream about the latter situation, only this time the students are all stopped, hats removed and hands on the heart. What a beautiful display of patriotism! This lesson, along with supporting lessons have that image in mind; it is one of many lessons geared toward teaching the history of the flag and the Anthem so students understand to what they are showing respect.

Essential Question

What does the National Anthem represent?

Standards

Historical Thinking: Standard 2 (Historical Comprehension)

Historical Thinking: Standard 3 (Historical Analysis and Interpretation)

U.S. History Content Standard Era 3 Standard 2: The impact of the American Revolution on politics, economy, and society

Historical Background

The "Star-Spangled Banner" was written by Francis Scott Key during the war of 1812. Mr. Key was aboard a ship in Baltimore harbor when he was inspired to write the poem we now hail as our National Anthem.

Baltimore benefited from one of America's strong industries on the heels of the American Revolution, trade. The city's waterfront location made anything involving ships a popular item to produce, but also left it vulnerable to attack from our greatest enemy, the British. The city feared attack during the American Revolution and built an early version of Fort McHenry. The Fort was redone between 1799 and 1802, fortifying its position as protector of Baltimore.

The star shaped fort was put to a test by the British during the war of 1812 when they attacked it on the evening of September 13, 1814. The Battle of Baltimore was just another stopping point for the British as they ransacked the Eastern seaboard, including Washington D.C.. The bombardment of Fort McHenry and the Fort's return fire created a scene that, along with many other battles, represented America's continuing struggle for independence and relief from British bullying.

Francis Scott Key, a well-known lawyer, had traveled to Baltimore to negotiate the release of Dr. William Beanes. He was successful, however, they were not allowed to return to Baltimore until the British had finished attacking Fort McHenry. The fate of the city hinged on the survival of the Fort. Amidst the smoke and rainy night, Francis knew the one thing signifying America's winning of this battle was the Garrison Flag. This 42 by 30 foot flag was specially made to be the largest flag flown so the British could see it from a great distance. From 8 miles away, Francis Scott Key was able to see the flag flying on the morning of the 14th and was inspired to write the poem known today as the Star-Spangled Banner, our National Anthem.

Lesson Activity

- A) Get 3 to 5 volunteers to come to the front of the class. These students should be knowledgeable of "popular" music. By coming to the front, they think they know the words to any song you may play for them. Play a few songs they will know and stop in the middle of a lyric. Have the students "buzz" in (slap a table, ding a bell, etc.) if they can finish the words. The idea here is that they will know the words to all of the songs you play.
- B) Have each student write the lyrics to the Star-Spangled Banner. When everyone has finished, have them stand. Read the words slowly or display them one by one. If a student misses a word, they sit down. Discuss the fact that the National Anthem is the most recognizable song in America and we don't know the words like we know our "pop" songs.
- C) Hand out Star-Spangled Banner worksheet. There are 3 questions they should be able to answer after listening to you tell the story of Francis Scott Key. There is also room for them to write 3 other facts they learned. Tell the story using Francis Scott Key as the focus.
- D) Hand the students a copy of the Star-Spangled Banner, which was first known as The Defense of Fort Mchenry. Ask them to read the entire poem. Then, after they have read it once, have them read just the first paragraph, the National Anthem. Tell them to read it like every word meant something. Like every word had a very important purpose.
Play Red Skelton's Pledge of Allegiance
(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TZBTyTWOZCM>). Preview the video first to decide how much you will show. Red addresses the phrase "under God" near the end. In the video Red Skelton states the Pledge of Allegiance with passion and has a summary/definition of each pertinent word. After watching the video, tell the kids to rewrite the National Anthem the same way he redid the Pledge.

Example: O' say can you SEE...*to see, to find beauty, to take in the view...*by THE DAWN'S EARLY LIGHT...*the light that signals a new day, a new beginning, a new journey...*What so PROUDLY...*to take pride, to feel something inside that makes your jaw quiver...*

Leave it open ended as to whether they are to define the important words or restate them. Some may want a dictionary. An Oxford English Dictionary would be the most accurate for them to define words such as "hailed."

- E) Discuss the struggles of this assignment and if the Star Spangled Banner is still a good National Anthem. Ask the students to think of what Francis Scott Key was feeling when he wrote the poem; ask them to think about what he wanted people to read in this poem. Keep in mind the essential question: What does the National Anthem Represent?
- F) Assign the students to write a new National Anthem. (optional, depending on the discussion of the Star Spangled Banner)
- G) Assign the students to answer the essential question: What does the National Anthem Represent?

Student Assessment

Star-Spangled Banner worksheet/listening guide (6 questions)

New National Anthems

Answers to Essential Question (scored on completion...used for later discussion)

Sources and Resources

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_Scott_Key (Francis Scott Key Biography)

<http://www.usflag.org/francis.scott.key.html> (Francis Scott Key)

<http://www.legion.org/flag/code> (Flag acts)

<http://www.nps.gov/fomc> (Fort McHenry)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Baltimore (Battle of Baltimore)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TZBTyTWOZCM> (Red Skelton Video)

<http://www.nps.gov/fomc/forteachers/index.htm> (Lesson plans and Teacher's Guide for related lessons and background information)

<http://americanhistory.si.edu/starspangledbanner/francis-scott-key.aspx> (Background)

Bibliography

"Francis Scott Key." *USFlag.org: A Website Dedicated to the Flag of the United States of America*. Web. 30 June 2011. <<http://www.usflag.org/francis.scott.key.html>>.

Weybright, Victor. "Francis Scott Key." *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*. Web. 30 June 2011. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_Scott_Key>.

"Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine - For Teachers (U.S. National Park Service)." *U.S. National Park Service - Experience Your America*. Web. 30 June 2011. <<http://www.nps.gov/fomc/forteachers/index.htm>>.

Reflection

I have not done this lesson, but I am planning on doing it next year. I am excited to tell the story of Francis Scott Key; it's short, but it can be an exciting tale that leads to an understanding of the most recognizable song in America. Also, I am planning on having discussion about Red Skelton's Pledge of Allegiance and his comments on the "under God" phrase. What a great discussion to lead kids through!

Images

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/service/pnp/thc/5a50000/5a50100/5a50172r.jpg>



Portrait of Francis Scott Key

<http://www.francisscottkey.com/images/francis-scott-key-2.gif>



Portrait of Francis Scott Key

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/e/e4/Ft._Henry_bombardement_1814.jpg/300px-Ft._Henry_bombardement_1814.jpg



A VIEW of the BOMBARDMENT of Fort McHenry, near Baltimore, by the British fleet, taken from the Chesapeake since the Command of Admirals Cochrane & Cockburn, on the morning of the 13th Sep: 1814 which lasted 24 hours & thrown from 1300 to 1600 shells in the Night, attempted to land by forcing a passage up the Bay branch but were repulsed with great loss.

By J. M. W. Turner
Painted in 1814
Engraved by J. M. W. Turner
Published by J. M. W. Turner

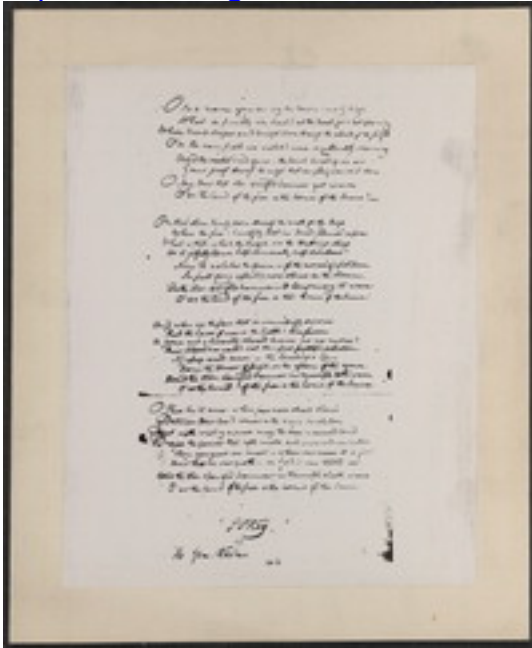
Artist drawing of the bombardment of Fort McHenry

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/d/d7/Terra_Rubra.jpg/800px-Terra_Rubra.jpg



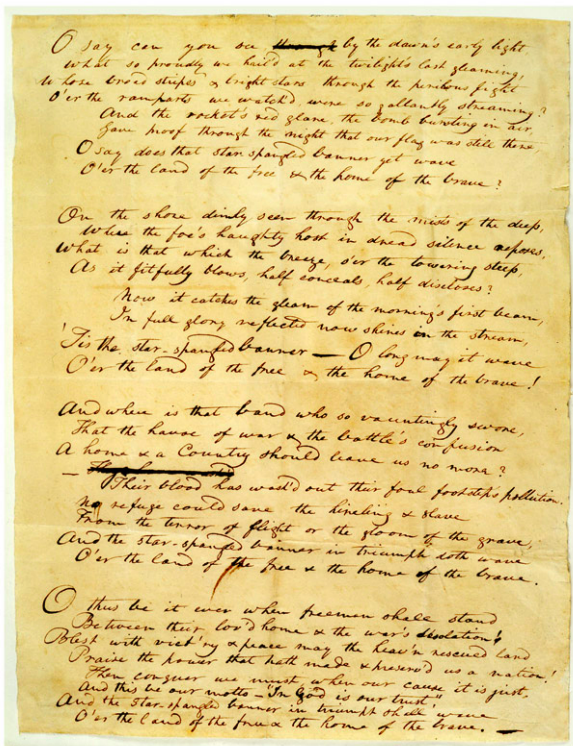
Terra Rubra....Francis' childhood home

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/natlib/ahas/service/ssbanner/100010478/0001t.jpg>



The "Defense of Fort McHenry" Poem written by Francis Scott Key

http://americanhistory.si.edu/starspangledbanner/images/4100_01_LG.jpg



The Star Spangled Banner 1814 by Francis Scott Key

The "Defense of Fort McHenry" Poem written by Francis Scott Key

http://www.si.edu/Encyclopedia_SI/nmah/images/banner.jpg



The Garrison Flag....Currently on display at the American History Museum

Name: _____

The Star-Spangled Banner

1. Who wrote the National Anthem?

2. What event triggered the writing of our National Anthem?

3. Where was it written?

4. Write 3 facts from the story told to you that you remember



Star-Spangled Banner

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, thru the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming?
And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.
O 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,
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,
As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,
In full glory reflected, now shines on the stream:
Tis the star-spangled banner: O, 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 swore
That the havoc 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.
No refuge could save the hireling and slave
From the terror of flight or the gloom 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.

O, thus be it ever when freemen shall stand,
Between their loved home and the war's desolation!
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"
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!