

TEACHERS AND STUDENTS:

Tell Us Your “Star-Spangled Stories”

What is the Star-Spangled Stories Contest?

The Star-Spangled Music Foundation (a 501c3 non-profit educational organization) announces a nationwide “Star-Spangled Stories” contest for all students in grades K-12 in the United States and its territories. Selected stories will be featured on www.starspangledmusic.org and on a nationally broadcast radio special.

Why Are We Celebrating Our National Anthem?

September 14, 2014 marks the two-hundredth anniversary of the auspicious morning when Francis Scott Key looked toward Baltimore’s Fort McHenry for the answer to a vital question—“Does that star-spangled banner yet wave?” At that moment, he did not know if he was in U.S. or British territory. The young lawyer was on a mission to negotiate the release of Americans held prisoner. Through the night he witnessed the perilous fight, rockets glaring, bombs bursting in air. Who had won? Was the flag he had seen at twilight still there? As his emotions soared upon learning of the American victory, he captured both his pride, relief, and excitement in lyrical verse.

For school children to military veterans, newly-naturalized citizens to Olympic champions, our national anthem connects Americans to their history and to each other. The celebration of the anthem’s 200th anniversary in September 2014 presents the opportunity for students to deepen their understanding of American history, to recognize the importance of the song as a national symbol, and to contribute to the ongoing dialogue about what it means to be American.

How Can My Students Participate?

Students should tell their story in an age-appropriate way: an essay, a picture, a song... We encourage creative approaches! Students might consider expressing their own experiences singing the anthem or hearing it at a significant event. They may choose to share personal perspectives from friends or family members. There are no limitations on style or approach. Essays should not exceed 1000 words, songs 4 minutes, or images 5 MB.

Submissions should:

- Reflect a *personal* point of view;
- Describe a *specific* experience;
- Draw a *connection* between a personal experience and the meaning of the song for all.

Teachers of all grade levels and subject areas are encouraged to use the *Banner* as a teaching tool and learning opportunity. Schools are encouraged to extend the project into visual and performing arts projects and to feature student work in their own displays, assemblies, PTA meetings, and in the wider community. Also, don’t forget to join the national sing on September 12, 2014! Videos of Banner performances can be uploaded to Youtube at any time. Use the tag “starspangledmusic” to connect to our project.

For more information, resources, and curricular connections, visit www.starspangledmusic.org.

Deadline: To receive full consideration stories should be submitted to stories@starspangledmusic.org by midnight Pacific Standard Time on November 15, 2013. Stories submitted after this deadline may still be submitted and the best work will still be featured on our website, but may arrive too late to be featured on radio. Send questions to info@starspangledmusic.org.