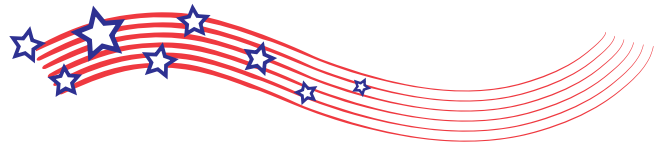
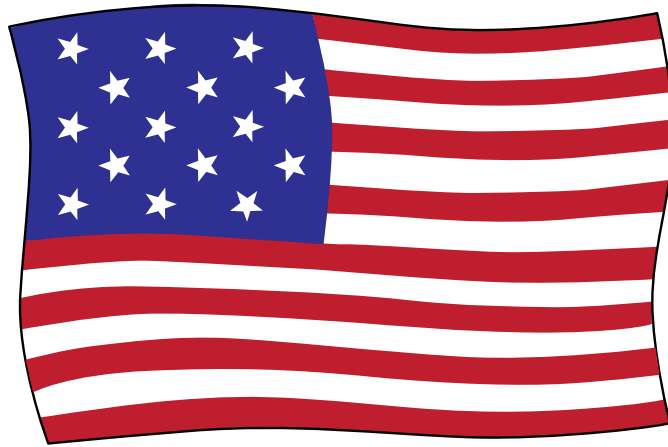


# The Star-Spangled Banner



The lyrics of "The Star-Spangled Banner" come from a poem written by Francis Scott Key. During the War of 1812, Key was detained on a British ship early one morning following a major battle at Fort McHenry. Key saw the U.S. flag still raised and flying, and was inspired to write the poem that would later be set to music to become "The Star-Spangled Banner." During the American Civil War, the song became popular among Union troops and supporters. It was made the official U.S. national anthem in 1931. The actual "star-spangled banner" — the 30-foot-tall flag Key spotted from the ship — can be seen on display at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History.



1. Why do you think the sight of the flag that morning inspired Francis Scott Key to write a poem that is now the U.S. national anthem?

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2. What other songs do you think would make a good national anthem?

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