

The Pledge of Allegiance

**"I pledge allegiance"
...I promise to be true**

The Pledge of Allegiance

**"to the flag"
...to the symbol of our country**

The Pledge of Allegiance

**"of the United States of America"
...each state that has joined to
make our country**

The Pledge of Allegiance

"and to the Republic"
*...a republic is a country where
the people choose others to
make laws for them. The
government is for the people*

The Pledge of Allegiance

"for which it stands,"
...the flag means the country

The Pledge of Allegiance

"one Nation"
...a single country

The Pledge of Allegiance

"under God"
...the people believe in a supreme being

The Pledge of Allegiance

"indivisible,"
...the country cannot be split into parts

The Pledge of Allegiance

"with liberty and justice"
...with freedom and fairness

The Pledge of Allegiance

"for all."

***...for each person in the country...
you and me***

The History of the Pledge and National Anthem



Beginnings of the Pledge

- First published September 8, 1892
- First recited by more than 12 million public school students on Columbus Day 1892
- Francis Bellamy of Rome, New York is the author



Phrases added over time



The original Pledge was... I pledge allegiance to my flag and the republic for which it stands; one Nation indivisible, With Liberty and Justice for all

Over time, the following phrases were added...

- “the flag of the United States”
- “of America”
- “under God”



In 1942, it became the official “Pledge to the Flag” in the U.S. Flag Code





History of the National Anthem



- If there is anything taken more seriously than the US flag, it's possibly the national anthem. The Star-Spangled Banner accompanies just about every major American function, and at major sporting events a significant honor is bestowed on those asked to sing what is probably the best known national anthem in the world.
- But, listen to the words and it tells of a moment in US history when the war with the British was being fought and of one man's relief in seeing the US flag still flying after a vicious bombardment.

Before the Battle

The War of 1812 had been a particularly nasty conflict with the British. They had burned down the Capitol and White House in Washington, and were set on taking the port of Baltimore, which was protected in part by Fort McHenry. After an initial land attack had been thwarted, 16 ships of the British fleet positioned themselves for a massive attack on the fort.



Who was Francis Scott Key and why was he there?

Before the British fleet came within canon range of Fort McHenry, two Americans, Colonel John Skinner and a lawyer and part-time poet by the name of Francis Scott Key, had gone out to one of the British ships. They had come to negotiate the release of Dr. William Beanes, a friend of Key who had been seized following the attack on Washington. The British agreed, but all three had learned too much about the forthcoming attack and were detained by the British on board the frigate *Surprise* until it was over.

The Defense of Fort McHenry

The attack started on September 12th, 1814, and continued for the next two days. Skinner, Beane and Key watched much of the bombardment from the deck and, through the nights of the 12th and 13th they caught glimpses of the star-shaped fort with its huge flag - 42ft long, with 8 red stripes, 7 white stripes and 15 white stars. It had been specially commissioned to be big enough that the British could not possibly fail to see it from a distance.



The first words of the poem



- In the dark of the night of the 13th of September, the shelling suddenly stopped - through the darkness they couldn't tell whether the British forces had been defeated, or the fort had fallen.
- As the sun began to rise, Key peered through the lifting darkness anxious to see if the flag they had seen the night before was still flying. And so it was that he scribbled on the back of an envelope the first lines of a poem he called Defense of Fort M'Henry:

*O, say can you see, by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hail'd at the twilight's last gleaming*

The Americans Are Victorious

*What is that which the breeze
o'er the towering steep, As it
fitfully blows, half conceals, half
discloses?*

But finally the sun rose, and with
intense relief and pride he saw
that the fort had withstood the
onslaught ...

*'Tis the star-spangled banner - O
long may it wave O'er the land of
the free and the home of the
brave.*



The poem becomes a hymn and anthem

- On the way back to shore, and later in his hotel room, he completed all four verses of the poem, and the following morning he took it to his brother-in-law, a local judge, who thought it so good that he arranged to have it printed as a handbill.
- It is very likely that Key only ever intended this as a poem. However, there was a very popular tune of the time which had the same form and metre, and there can be no doubt that Key was heavily influenced by it - ironically, this was the tune of a British drinking song!
- When the handbills were printed, they bore the name of this tune to which the poem should be sung - Anacreon in Heaven. Nobody is sure whether this was Key's idea, or whether his brother-in-law had made the connection, but to this day the American National Anthem is sung to the tune of a British drinking song.

It becomes official...

- Key made a number of hand-written copies of his original poem, introducing the occasional change. But it wasn't just Key that made alterations; various editors along the way have also had a hand in altering spelling, punctuation and even the words. The original text of the poem has therefore varied depending on where you read it.
- In 1916, President Woodrow Wilson ordered that it should become the National Anthem played by the military and naval services, but it wasn't until March 3rd, 1931 that it was officially designated as the National Anthem by act of Congress:

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the
United States of America in Congress assembled, That the
composition known as The Star-Spangled Banner is designated as
the National Anthem of the United States of America.*
