Do you know the “Star-Spangled Banner?” Can you sing the first verse? Fill in the blanks below and sing it out!

The year was 1814. The United States was at war with Britain, trying to prove its strength as an independent country. It was called The War of 1812, but it had stretched into years of battles. For the first few years, things were going in America’s favor, but in 1814 it looked like the British were winning. They marched into Washington and set fire to the White House and the Capitol building.

Next, the British turned toward Maryland. Their goal was to take Baltimore, an important seaport. If the British took control of Baltimore harbor, America would be in big trouble because the British would control many of the goods and supplies going into and out of the country. The people of the United States were nervous and scared.

On September 13, 1814, British warships began bombing Baltimore’s Fort McHenry. The fort, which was the only thing stopping the British from entering the city of Baltimore, was under fire for 25 hours straight!

Onboard one of the British ships was an American lawyer named Francis Scott Key. He had boarded the ship in order to convince the British to release an American prisoner. He was now stuck on the ship. All he could do was watch the attack on Fort McHenry from the ship’s deck.

By the “dawn’s early light” of the next morning, Key gazed out across the water and, to his great surprise, he spotted the American flag flying above Fort McHenry.

That meant the fort had not been taken over by the British—IT HAD NOT SURRENDERED! America would survive this war!

Key was so inspired by the sight of the flag waving in the distance that he wrote a song on the back of a letter he had in his pocket. Key named the song “The Defence of Fort McHenry.” The song was later set to the tune of a popular song of the day and renamed “THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER.” It quickly became a hit.

In 1931, well over a hundred years after it was written, the “Star-Spangled Banner” was officially named the national anthem of the United States by President Woodrow Wilson.

O say can you ___________________;
by the dawn’s early ________________,
What so proudly we hail’d at the ________________ last gleaming,
Whose broad _______________ and bright ________________ through the perilous fight
O’er the ramparts we ________________ were so gallantly streaming?
And the ________________ red glare,
the bombs ________________ in air,
Gave proof through the ________________ that our flag was still ________________,
O ________________ does that star-spangled banner ________________
O’er the land of the ________________ and the home of the ________________?

The true story of the Star-Spangled Banner!
TRY THIS AT HOME!

Quick! Take a POP QUIZ to see what you really know about the flag of the United States, and DESIGN YOUR OWN FLAG.

WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

CHECK OUT THE US FLAG AS IT LOOKS TODAY.
Yes, you’ve probably seen it a thousand times, but have you ever looked at it really closely?

COLORS OF YOU!
WHAT COLORS WILL YOU USE? COLORS CAN HAVE MEANING, TOO. AT RIGHT ARE SOME MEANINGS CONNECTED TO COLORS.

SYMBOLS OF YOU!
WHAT SYMBOLS WILL YOU HAVE ON YOUR FLAG? SYMBOLS CAN SHOW A LOT OF THINGS, ABOUT YOU.

SYMBOLS CAN SHOW:
- how many people are in your family
- what you believe or support
- where you live
- what you like
- your age
- or anything else that is important to you

DESIGN A FLAG TO REPRESENT YOU!

COLORS OF YOU!
WHAT COLORS WILL YOU USE? COLORS CAN HAVE MEANING, TOO. AT RIGHT ARE SOME MEANINGS CONNECTED TO COLORS.

1. How many stars are on the flag?..............
2. How many white stripes are on the flag?..........
3. How many red stripes are on the flag?.............

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