

## O Say, Can You . . . Sing?

### New project re-teaches the national anthem.

When thousands of baseball fans head to ballparks this summer [2006], chances are they'll have trouble reciting the words to our national anthem. Two out of three Americans don't know the words to "The Star-Spangled Banner," according to a recent Harris Poll.

As a result, the National Anthem Project, spearheaded by music educators, is dedicated to re-teaching people the words to America's official song. A cross-country campaign kicked off in January 2006, touring cities in the West from Los Angeles to Seattle.

### Getting Vocal

The tour includes interactive exhibits and a singing contest. In each location, the singer who belts out the best version of the national anthem wins a \$1,000 donation to a school music education program of his or her choice. In Richmond, Virginia, an 11-year old boy took home the top prize.

Why don't people know the words to our country's most famous tune? "We see it as a consequence that music education programs are being diminished in schools," project spokesperson Elizabeth Lasko told *Weekly Reader*. "[People who do] know the words say they learned them in school."

### Piece of History

The nationwide anthem tour will culminate , or end, in Baltimore, Maryland, at Fort McHenry on September 14. That date and that place are when and where Francis Scott Key penned the poem that later became the national anthem.

According to the National Anthem Project, the song represents our country's history and culture. Many people sing it at community events.

"We want people to know the words so they sing it together," says Lasko. "If you're taught as a young person to sing it, you'll always be able to sing it." For more information on the National Anthem Project and tour cities, visit [www.theanthemproject.org](http://www.theanthemproject.org).

## "The Star-Spangled Banner"

During the War of 1812, Francis Scott Key wrote the poem that later became the national anthem.

On September 13, 1814, Key watched British ships bomb Fort McHenry in Baltimore, Maryland. The next morning, he spotted the American flag still flying over the fort. The sight inspired him to write the poem. In 1931, Congress made it the national anthem.

Here is the first verse of the four-verse song:

O 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, through the perilous fight,  
O'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming?  
And the rocket's 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?





# interactive                    in        ·        ter        ·        active

## Advanced Definition

### adjective

1. acting or able to act with one another or upon one another.
2. allowing two-way communication between a computer and the person operating it.

## Spanish cognate

*interactivo*: The Spanish word *interactivo* means interactive.

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## These are some examples of how the word or forms of the word are used:

1. Many hands-on exhibits offer **interactive** experiences.
2. This week, it's an **interactive** web page that lets students see different pieces of a movie by jumping to different parts of the world on a map online.
3. "Cyberbullying is when a child torments, humiliates or tries to frighten another child using **interactive** technology," online safety expert Parry Aftab told Weekly Reader. Instead of teasing or picking on kids in the school yard, bullies have new territory-cyberspace.
4. Sixth Graders Marina Gagliano (Front) and Kerry O'Conner Of Wellwood Middle School in Fayetteville, New York, label parts of a microscope on an **interactive** whiteboard. The whiteboard allows students to use their fingers to click and tap answers on the projected image.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. The number of Americans that do not know the words to the National Anthem is

- A. 50%.
- B. three out of four.
- C. two out of three.
- D. everyone.

2. Lasko thinks that Americans do not know the song's words because

- A. they are not as patriotic as they used to be.
- B. they do not watch enough baseball.
- C. parents are not teaching their children the words.
- D. music programs are diminishing in schools.

3. Francis Scott Key wrote the National Anthem in

- A. Los Angeles.
- B. Boston.
- C. Washington, D.C.
- D. Baltimore.

4. In January 2006, the National Anthem Project toured cities

- A. on the West Coast.
- B. in the Midwest.
- C. in Canada.
- D. in the South.

5. Does the prize awarded in the singing contest match the goals of the tour? Why or why not?

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