

# The Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance of the United States is an expression of faithfulness to the Flag of the United States and the Republic of the United States of America. It was originally composed by Francis Bellamy in 1892 and formally adopted by Congress as the pledge in 1942. The official name of *The Pledge of Allegiance* was adopted in 1945. The last change in language came on Flag Day 1954 when the words "under God" were added.

*I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, One nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.*

# The Star Spangled Banner

"The Star-Spangled Banner" is the national anthem of the United States. The lyrics come from "Defense of Fort McHenry", a poem written in 1814 by the 35-year-old lawyer and amateur poet Francis Scott Key after witnessing the bombardment of Fort McHenry by British ships of the Royal Navy in the Chesapeake Bay during the Battle of Fort McHenry in the War of 1812.

The poem was set to the tune of a popular British song written by John Stafford Smith for the Anacreontic Society, a men's social club in London. "The Anacreontic Song" (or "To Anacreon in Heaven"), with various lyrics, was already popular in the United States. Set to Key's poem and renamed "The Star-Spangled Banner", it would soon become a well-known American patriotic song. With a range of one octave and one fifth (a semitone more than an octave and a half), it is known for being difficult to sing. Although the poem has four stanzas, only the first is commonly sung today.

"The Star-Spangled Banner" was recognized for official use by the Navy in 1889, and by President Woodrow Wilson in 1916, and was made the national anthem by a congressional resolution on March 3, 1931, which was signed by President Herbert Hoover.

The Defense of Fort McHenry  
by Francis Scott Key  
20 September 1814

Oh, 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 rockets' 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?

On the shore, dimly seen through the mists of the deep,  
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,  
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,  
As it fitfully blows, now conceals, now discloses?  
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,  
In full glory reflected now shines on the stream:

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

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore  
That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion  
A home and a country should leave us no more?  
Their blood has wiped out their foul footsteps' pollution.  
No refuge could save the hireling and slave  
From the terror of flight, or the gloom of the grave:  
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

Oh! thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand  
Between their loved homes and the war's desolation!  
Blest with victory and peace, may the heaven-rescued land  
Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation.  
Then conquer we must, for our cause it is just,  
And this be our motto: "In God is our trust."  
And the star-spangled banner forever shall wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!