

Poetry and Song of the War of 1812: Part 2

by Jennifer Janzen

Suggested grade level: Intermediate/Senior

Suggested time: 1 class period

Brief Description of the Task

In this lesson students will compare various poems and songs – both primary and secondary sources – that explore the War of 1812. They will conclude their work by responding to the focus question: “**How can poetry and song help us to understand the significant events, individuals and perspectives of history?**”

Historical Thinking Concepts

- Historical Significance
- Historical Perspective-Taking
- Use of Primary Source Evidence

Learning Goals

Students will participate in an activity that will allow them to:

- Learn about the War of 1812 from a variety of sources
- Express themselves through a poem
- Understand historical perspective-taking and explore the historical significance of the War of 1812

Materials

Photocopies of all Appendices in detailed lesson plan.

Prior Knowledge

It would be an asset for students to be aware of:

- the major dates and battles of the War of 1812
- the different groups of peoples that participated in the War of 1812 (British, *Canadien*, Canadian, First Nation, American)

Assessment

- Worksheets and individual & group work contributions
- Assignment: "War of 1812 Poetry: Historical Significance & Perspective"

Detailed Lesson Plan

Focus Question: How can poetry and song help us to understand the significant events, individuals and perspectives of history?

1. Introduce (or revisit) the "Focus Question" and tell the students that the poem they are going to examine is one that they may be familiar with. Ask:

- "How many of you know the name of the American national anthem?"
- "Do any of you know when it was written or what it is about?"
- "Can any of you sing the words?" (For fun have a sing-a-long!)

2. Hand out a copy of **Appendix 1** (words to "The Defense of Fort McHenry" now known as "The Star Spangled Banner"). Also hand out **Appendix 2** (worksheet, "Poetry and Song about the War of 1812"), or write the two questions from the worksheet on the board. Have students read the poem, complete the background questions and discuss.

3. Background information for this second poem could take a number of forms. To begin, hand out **Appendix 3** (Primary Source Evidence: "The Defense of Fort McHenry").

Individually, with a partner, or in a small group, have the students research primary source documents of the original poem, broadside, and song lyrics. Scroll over the pictures in the left bottom corner of the page of the following Smithsonian website,

<http://americanhistory.si.edu/starspangledbanner/the-lyrics.aspx>

Students can continue their research by clicking on information about: "Francis Scott Key", "The Melody" and "The Anthem."

4. "The Washington Campaign" or "Burning of Washington" is the battle that preceded (came before) the "Battle of Baltimore." It is considered to be one of the most important battles of the war. To answer Question 3 of the worksheet (Appendix 3) have students access one of these websites – documentary filmmaker Brian McKenna's website at <http://galafilm.com/1812/e/events/wash.html>, Parks Canada War of 1812 site at <http://www.eighteentwelve.ca> Instruct students to click "Topics" and then type "Burning of Washington."

5. You may also choose to show a video of the battle. Recommended videos include:

- "Francis Scott Key and the Defense of Fort McHenry"
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=05-sVK1SKno&feature=related>
- *The War of 1812*. by Lawrence Hott and Diane Garey. PBS, 2011. Choose the scene "Autumn 1814- Secession Threat in New England" (approx. 12 mins.)

6. After the background research and Appendix 3 has been completed, discuss the findings.

- **"How many of you knew about these battles before we started studying them?"**
- **"Why might people forget about 'significant' parts of our past?" (Especially the American Anthem!)**
- **"How has reading these two poems and learning about the history of these two poems helped you understand the War of 1812?"**

- **"Has your opinion about the significance of the War of 1812 changed? Why or why not?"**

7. Now that the students have looked at two primary sources about events of the War of 1812 they will now look at a contemporary, secondary source.

Teaching Tip:

To prepare for the next part of this lesson you may want to review the differences between primary and secondary sources (see <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/education/008-3010-e.html>).

8. Distribute **Appendix 4** (lyrics to the song, "The War of 1812"). You may choose to watch the video of the song while the students read the lyrics, Youtube: "War of 1812 - Three Dead Trolls in a Baggie"

9. After watching the video, have students get into groups, or complete as homework, **Appendix 5** (worksheet, Song Comparison Chart 1812).

10. Once **Appendix 5** has been completed, discuss the answers as a class. Have students review all three poems and attempt to answer the focus question as an exit slip or a journal assignment.

Appendix 1: "The Defense of Fort McHenry"

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 thru 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.
Oh, 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, half conceals, half discloses?
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,
In full glory reflected now shines in the stream:
'Tis the star-spangled banner! Oh 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 washed 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 home and the war's desolation!
Blest with victory and peace, may the heav'n rescued land
Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation.
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,
And this be our motto: "In God is our trust."
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

("The Battle of Balitmore", by Francis Scott Key, 1814)

Appendix 2: Poetry & Song about the War of 1812

"The Battle of Fort McHenry"

Background Questions

1. What is the "story" of the poem? Write 2 - 3 sentences.

2. What would you need to know to be able to explain why and how this poem became the nation anthem of the United States?

Appendix 3: Primary Source Evidence – "The Defence of Fort McHenry"

<p>1. What type of source is it?</p>	<p>2. Who authored/created it?</p>	<p>3. When was it created?</p>
<p>4. What historical events/context were occurring when it was created? The "Burning of Washington" occurred previously to the "Battle of Baltimore." Why is this battle significant? List 5 - 10 facts about that event.</p>		
<p>5. Why was it created? Who was the intended audience?</p>		
<p>6. What point of view/position does the author/creator represent?</p>		
<p>7. How does the point of view/position shape the source?</p>		

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8. How might the British soldiers and sailors from the battle view this poem/song?

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9. Research the "Battle and Baltimore" and discover 5 - 10 facts about the battle.

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