

## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade DBQ: The Star Spangled Banner

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### Directions:

- Read the DBQ Question. Do you understand exactly what is being asked?
- What prior knowledge do you have about the following issues
  - The War of 1812
  - The history of the Star Spangled Banner
  - Francis Scott Key
  - The Battle of Fort McHenry
  - The Flag made by Mary Pickersgill
  - American democratic ideals & principles
- How would you answer the DBQ Question even if you could not look at the documents?
- Now, look at the documents. Note that each one has it's own section. Study each question and highlight any information that will help you to answer the DBQ Question.
- Each document is followed by a single question. Write a short response to each of these questions in the blank space provided.
- When you are finished studying all of the documents, advance to part B of the question
- Finally, write a 5 paragraph essay that answers the DBQ Question.

**Historic Background:** The Star Spangled Banner is not only our national anthem, but it is a physical historical artifact – a flag four stories in length. During a 24-hour British siege on a September night during the War of 1812, the flag flew over Fort McHenry, located in Baltimore, Maryland. Despite the massive bombardment of the fort by the British attack, the American forces refused to surrender, and the flag was still flying above the fort in the morning. Francis Scott Key, was a witness to the battle. Key was so inspired by the drama of the events that he was inspired to write a poem, “The Defense of Fort McHenry”. This poem would evolve into our national anthem. During the battle, the flag was hit 11 times. After the battle, material from the flag was used to wrap one of the fallen defenders killed during the British bombardment of the fort. The flag was periodically publicly displayed, and people were even allowed to clip pieces from the flag as souvenirs! Between 1815 and 1907, eight feet of the length of the flag was snipped away. Today the flag is one of the great artifacts in the Smithsonian Institution’s Museum of American History.

**Tasks:** For Part A: Read each document carefully and answer the questions after each document.

For Part B: Use your answers from Part A, information from the documents, and your prior knowledge related to these issues to write a well organized 5 paragraph essay. In that essay please address the following DBQ question:

**DBQ Question: How have both the song and the flag from the Star Spangled Banner come to represent the sacrifices necessary to preserve American democracy and freedom?**

**Document 1:**

In June 1813, Major George Armistead arrived in Baltimore, Maryland, to take command of Fort McHenry, built to guard the water entrance to the city. Armistead commissioned Mary Pickersgill, a Baltimore flag maker, to make a flag “that the British will have no difficulty in seeing it from a distance.”<sup>1</sup> Pickersgill was requested to sew the flag in the dimensions of 30 by 42 feet. It was intended to fly from a flagpole about ninety feet high.



1. What do you think Major Armistead wanted to imply to the British by flying such a huge flag over Fort McHenry?

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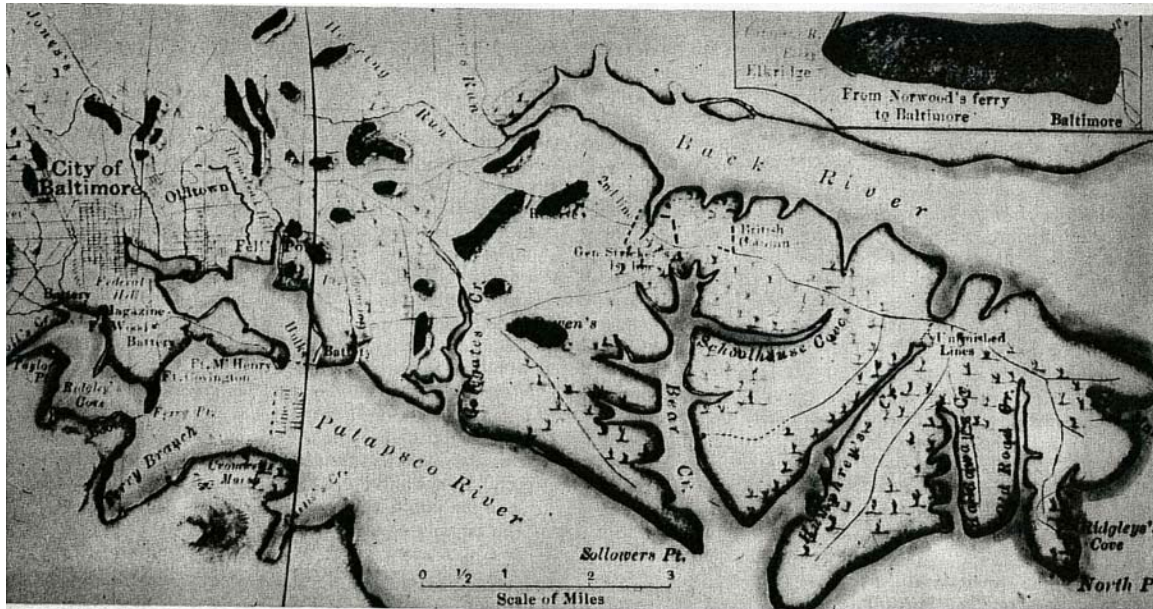
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Document 2:

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The Baltimore area at the time of the British attack.

Since waterways were important means of transporting supplies, weapons, and troops during the early American period, Many of the largest towns sprang up along the eastern shores of the nation. These towns became very important to the economic strength of the fledgling nation of the United States of America.

**1. Why would it have been important to have military forts near these large cities?**

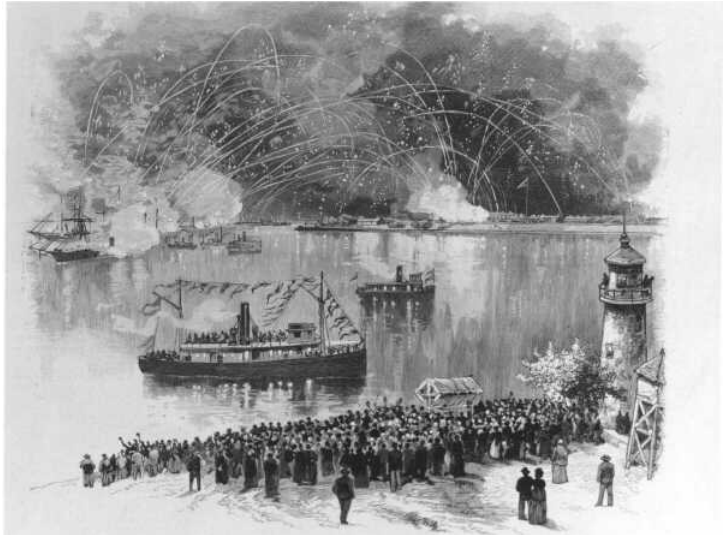
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**Document 3:**

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On August 24, 1814, British General Ross and his 5,000 troops defeated an American army twice its size in a battle near Washington, D.C. That same night, British troops entered Washington. They set fire to the United States Capitol, the President's Mansion, and other public buildings. The local militia fled. President James Madison and his wife Dolley barely escaped. The next British target was the city of Baltimore, Maryland – the third largest city in the young nation. By the morning of September 13, 1814, the British navy was ready to strike Fort McHenry and enter Baltimore Harbor. At 6:30 AM, Admiral Cochrane's ships began a 25-hour bombardment of the fort. Rockets whistled through the air and burst into flame wherever they struck.



Major Armistead, commander of Fort McHenry and its defending force of one thousand troops, ordered his men to return fire, but their guns couldn't reach the enemy's ships. When British ships advanced on the afternoon of the 13<sup>th</sup>, however, American gunners badly damaged them, forcing them to pull back out of range. All through the night, Armistead's men continued to hold the fort, refusing to surrender

**1. How would you describe the feelings of the soldiers who fought to protect Fort McHenry, and the city of Baltimore?**

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**2. After the losses at Washington, what do you think the people of Baltimore thought would happen to them during the British assault?**

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**Document 4:**

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Francis Scott Key was a wealthy Maryland lawyer and amateur poet. Key would be forced to watch the battle from an unusual point of view – held captive on the deck of a British warship flying a flag of truce. Key and a friend, John S. Skinner, had sailed to the ship under a similar white truce flag. They were hoping to gain the release of Dr. William Beanes, a friend who had been captured earlier by the British. While the two men were negotiating, the assault on Fort McHenry started. Fearing that the men would reveal British naval strategies, they were detained on the British truce ship.

The men were forced to watch as the day-long bombardment waged on. Key later wrote to a friend, “It seemed as though mother earth had opened up and was vomiting shot and shell in a sheet of fire and brimstone... The heavens aglow were a seething sea of flame.”<sup>6</sup> During the night, a rain squall covered the harbor. The men lost sight of Fort McHenry, and could only hear the drone of the endless shells being fired at the fort.



**1. What do you think Francis Scott Key was feeling when he lost sight of Fort McHenry?**

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**Document 5:**  
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Early the next morning, Major Amistead watched the British navy sail away; the Americans had won. On board the truce ship, Key and Skinner peered across the water as the rising sun burned off the predawn mist, and their hearts rose: an American flag still flew over Fort McHenry. Key called it “a most merciful deliverance.”<sup>8</sup> Allowed to sail back to Baltimore as the British fleet departed, Francis Scott Key took a letter from his pocket and quickly began to jot down a song about the events he’d just seen unfold.

Interviewed later, Key would say “my heart spoke. Does not such a country, and such defenders of their country deserve a song?”<sup>9</sup> Key wrote his poem “The Defense of Fort McHenry”, and intended that it be sung to the tune of a popular tavern song of the period. Within a few weeks, his lyrics had been published in newspapers throughout the nation under a new title “The Star Spangled Banner”.

**1. How do you think this song affected American’s sense of national pride?**

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## Defence of Fort McHenry

The annexed song was composed under the following circumstances -

A gentleman had left Baltimore, in a flag of truce for the purpose of getting released from the British fleet, a friend of his who had been captured at Marlborough.—He went as far as the mouth of the Patuxent, and was not permitted to return lest the intended attack on Baltimore should be disclosed. He was therefore brought up the Bay to the mouth of the Patapsco, where the flag vessel was kept under the guns of a frigate, and he was compelled to witness the bombardment of Fort McHenry, which the Admiral had boasted that he would carry in a few hours, and that the city must fall. He watched the flag at the Fort through the whole day with an anxiety that can be better felt than described, until the night prevented him from seeing it. In the night he watched the Bomb Shells, and at early dawn his eye was again greeted by the proudly waving flag of his country.

Tune - Anacreon in Heaven.

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 watch'd, 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, 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, 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, shall 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.

O! thus be it ever when freemen shall stand,  
Between their lov'd home, and the war's desolation,  
Blest with vict'ry and peace, may the Heav'n rescued land,

### Original Broadside<sup>10</sup>

Praise the Power that hath made and preserv'd 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,  
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**Document 6:**

On the previous page is the first known printing of Key's poem. Called a broadside, it was probably printed in Baltimore on Sept. 17, 1814. The pictured broadside once belonged to Judge Joseph H. Nicholson, who was married to Key's wife's sister. It is also transcribed for you. When Americans sing their national anthem, they only sing the first verse of Francis Scott Key's song. Read through the remaining three verses of the song.

**1. In what ways do these extra verses change your understanding of what Key witnessed?**

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**2. In what ways do these extra verses clarify Key's feelings of American patriotism?**

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**Document 7:**

While Francis Scott Key's song was known to most Americans within a few years, the flag that inspired it remained an Armistead family keepsake. It was exhibited occasionally at patriotic gatherings in Baltimore but largely unknown outside of that city until the 1870s. During that time, the increasing popularity of Key's anthem and the American public's developing sense of national heritage transformed the Star-Spangled Banner from a family keepsake into a national treasure. In 1907 the descendants of Major Armistead loaned the Star-Spangled Banner to the Smithsonian Institution, and in 1912 the loan to a gift. Currently, the flag is undergoing a protective restoration. It will be displayed in the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of American History, when the renovations to that building are completed in the summer of 2008.

**1. What factors led the American people to think of this flag as an important historical artifact?**

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**2. In your opinion, why is it important for Americans to preserve this flag for future generations?**

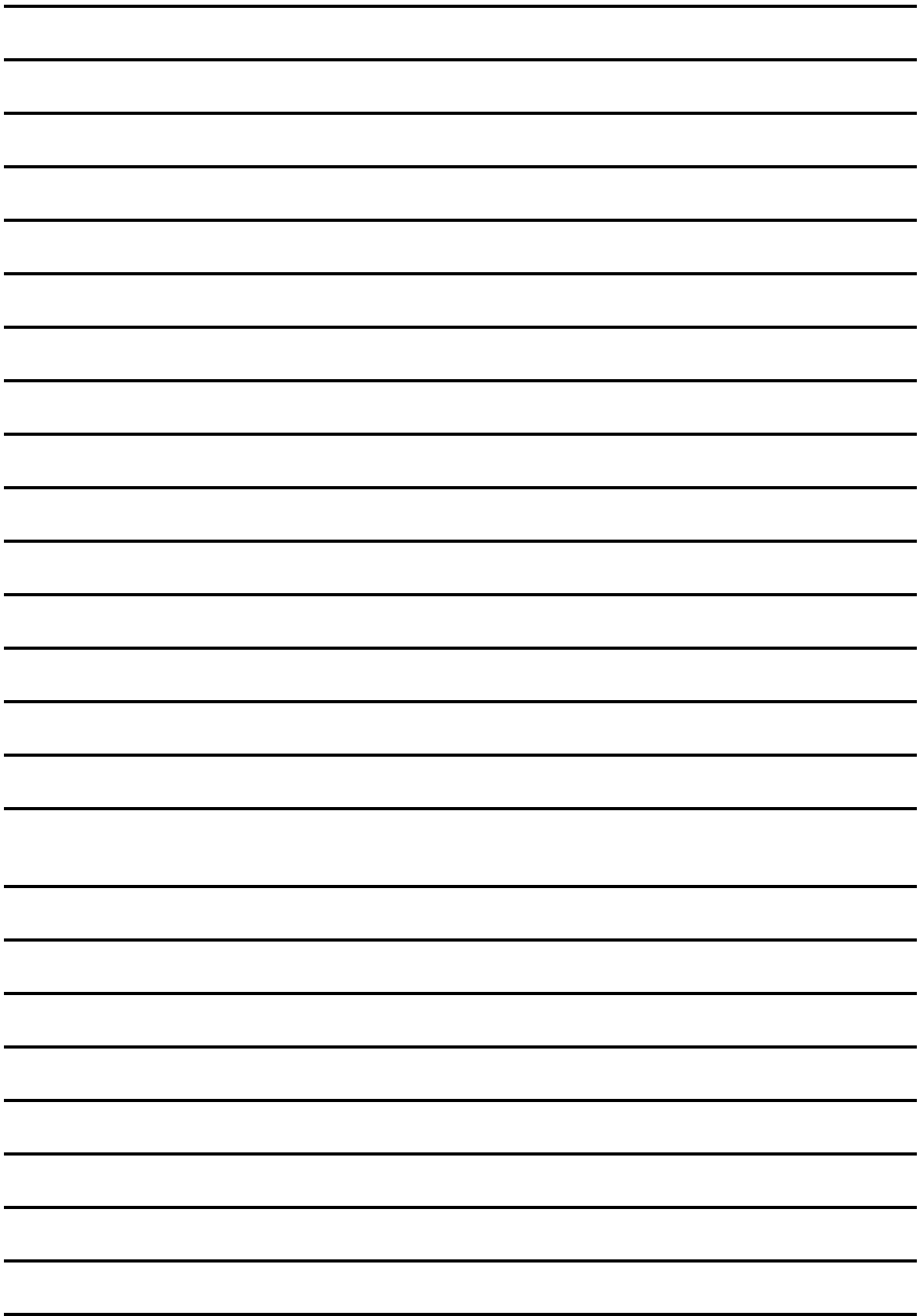
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**DBQ Rubric**

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

**Score of 5**

- Thoroughly addresses all aspects of the task by accurately analyzing and interpreting most of the documents.
- Incorporates relevant outside information
- Richly supports outline with relevant facts, examples, and details
- Writes a well-organized outline, consistently demonstrating a logical and clear plan of organization.
  - Includes a strong introduction
  - Includes a strong conclusion
  - Includes an original thesis statement

**Score of 4**

- Addresses all aspects of the task by accurately analyzing and interpreting most of the documents.
- Incorporates relevant outside information
- Supports outline with relevant facts, examples and details-may be more descriptive than analytical
  - Writes a well-organized outline, demonstrating a logical and clear plan of organization
  - Includes a good introduction
  - Includes a good conclusion
  - Includes a clear thesis statement
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**Score of 3**

- Addresses most aspects of the task or all aspects in a limited way
- Incorporates limited or no relevant outside information
- Uses some facts, examples, and details-but is more descriptive than analytical
  - Writes a satisfactorily developed outline, demonstrating a general plan of organization
  - States the theme in the conclusion
  - Includes a thesis statement

**Score of 2**

- Attempts to address some aspects of the task by accurately analyzing and interpreting most of the documents
- Incorporates limited or no outside information
- Uses few facts, examples, and details-simply restates contents of documents
- Writes a poorly organized outline, lacking focus
  - Has a vague or missing introduction
  - Has a vague or missing conclusion
  - Lacks a clear thesis statement

**Score of 1**

- Shows limited understanding of the task with vague, unclear references to the documents
- Presents no relevant outside information
- Attempts to complete the task but demonstrates a major weakness in organization
  - Uses few or no accurate or relevant facts, details, or examples
  - Has vague or missing introduction or conclusion

**Score of 0**

- Fails to address the task
- Writing is illegible
- Blank paper



## References

1. "Reluctant Patriot" (2004). Smithsonian Magazine. Retrieved from: <http://www.smithsonianmagazine.com/issues/2004/september/patriot.htm>
2. "The Flag is Full of Stars" (1996). Dale Gallon. Retrieved from: <http://www.bcpl.net/~etowner/ffs.html>
3. "The Battle of Baltimore" Map (1814). Retrieved from: [http://www.myedgemere.com/local\\_history/1814\\_map.jpg](http://www.myedgemere.com/local_history/1814_map.jpg)
4. "The Battle of Fort McHenry". Retrieved from: <http://www.bcpl.net/~etowner/ssbintro.html>
5. Francis Scott Key. (2007). WP Clipart. Retrieved from: [http://www.wpclipart.com/US\\_History/revolution/Francis\\_Scott\\_Key.png](http://www.wpclipart.com/US_History/revolution/Francis_Scott_Key.png)
6. "Reluctant Patriot" (2004). Smithsonian Magazine. Retrieved from: <http://www.smithsonianmagazine.com/issues/2004/september/patriot.htm>
7. "The Star Spangled Banner". Retrieved from: <http://www.star-spangled-banner.info/>
8. "Reluctant Patriot" (2004). Smithsonian Magazine. Retrieved from: <http://www.smithsonianmagazine.com/issues/2004/september/patriot.htm>
9. Francis Scott Key Quote. (2007). Retrieved from: [http://thinkexist.com/quotes/francis\\_scott\\_key/](http://thinkexist.com/quotes/francis_scott_key/)
10. *The Story of the Star Spangled Banner*. (2007). Retrieved from: [http://americanhistory.si.edu/SSB/6\\_thestory/fs6.html](http://americanhistory.si.edu/SSB/6_thestory/fs6.html)
11. *Donation of the Star Spangled Banner*. (1912). Retrieved from: <http://siarchives.si.edu/history/exhibits/thisday/december/19703a.jpg>