



National anthems are an important part of a countries' identity. Encyclopedia Britannica describes a national anthem as a hymn or song expressing patriotic sentiment and either governmentally authorized as an official national hymn or holding that position in popular feeling. During the 19th and early 20th centuries, most European countries followed Britain's example, some national anthems being written especially for the purpose, others being adapted from existing tunes. The sentiments of national anthems vary, from prayers for the monarch to allusions to nationally important battles or uprisings.

What makes a good national anthem? Review the Canadian, American and French national anthems. Which one do you prefer? Why? What criteria did you use to make your judgement?

As a class, identify a minimum of five criteria to evaluate a national anthem (there are two examples you may use below):

- 1) *The anthem must be informative with respect to the nation*
- 2) *The anthem must be reasonably short*
- 3) ...
- 4) ...
- 5) ...

Using your criteria you must find the best anthem in the world (Anthem Idol). You must hand in the following:

- ***a clearly written rationale explaining by using the criteria agreed upon the class***
- ***a brief history of the anthem (when it was written and adopted? Who wrote it?)***
- ***a copy of the words***

Start your search at <http://www.national-anthems.net/>

Have fun!



When you are finished with the first part of the assignment you can proceed to the tasks below.

In true *American* and *Canadian Idol* fashion, there are always poor performances. Your task now shifts to identify those anthems that are less than stellar.

Using the same criteria as the first task, you now need to do the following:

- ***identify the worst national anthem***
- ***find the worst performance of a national anthem***



Oh Canada

The version that gained the widest currency was made in 1908 by Robert Stanley Weir, a lawyer and at the time Recorder of the City of Montréal. A slightly modified version of the 1908 poem was published in an official form for the Diamond Jubilee of Confederation in 1927, and has since been generally accepted in English speaking Canada. Following further minor amendments, the first verse of Weir's poem was proclaimed as Canada's national anthem in 1980. The version adopted pursuant to the National Anthem Act in 1980 reads as follows:

*O Canada! Our home and native land!
True patriot love in all thy sons command.
With glowing hearts we see thee rise,
The True North, strong and free!
From far and wide, O Canada,
We stand on guard for thee.
God keep our land glorious and free !
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.*

The Star-Spangled Banner

"The Star-Spangled Banner" is the national anthem of the United States of America. The lyrics come from a poem written in 1814 by Francis Scott Key, a then 35-year-old amateur poet who wrote "Defence of Fort McHenry" after seeing the bombardment of Fort McHenry at Baltimore, Maryland, by Royal Navy ships in Chesapeake Bay during the War of 1812. The poem was set to the tune of a popular British drinking song, written by John Stafford Smith for the Anacreontic Society, a London social club. "The Star-Spangled Banner" was recognized for official use by the Navy in 1889 and the President in 1916, and was made the national anthem by a congressional resolution on March 3, 1931 which was signed by President Herbert Hoover.

*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?*