

## HISTORY/HUMANITIES (SAT)

Passage 1 is adapted from Library of Congress, "The Star Spangled Banner." Passage 2 is adapted from Jennifer Davis, "Francis Scott Key: The Lawyer-Poet,"

### Passage 1

There is little basis for the legend that the tune of our national anthem was an old English drinking song. On the other hand, there is strong evidence that the members of the club for which the music was originally composed, the Anacreontic Society, frequently lifted not only their voices but also their cups in song.

In the mid-1760s, a London society of amateur musicians, the Anacreontic Society, commissioned a young church musician, John Stafford Smith, to compose music. Smith's tune, entitled "Anacreon in Heav'n," was a vehicle for singers to display technical skill through an astounding vocal range. Its musical complexity has been compared to difficult, intricate opera music.

First published in England, the tune appeared in North America before the end of the eighteenth century. The song's appeal may have been due at least in part to its unique metrical structure. Not found in any other song of the period, its striking meter\* may have been what attracted Francis Scott Key. By all accounts tone deaf, Key had already composed one other poem using the meter of the "Anacreontic Song" when he wrote "The Star Spangled Banner."

On September 14, 1814, while detained aboard a British ship during the bombardment of Fort McHenry, Francis Scott Key witnessed at dawn the failure of the British attempt to take Baltimore. Based on this experience, he wrote a poem that poses the question "Oh, say does that Star-Spangled Banner yet wave?" Almost immediately, Key's poem was published and wedded to the tune of the "Anacreontic Song." Long before the Civil War, "The Star Spangled Banner" became the musical and lyrical embodiment of the American flag.

On July 26, 1889, the Secretary of

the Navy designated "The Star Spangled Banner" as the official tune to be played at the raising of the flag. And during Woodrow Wilson's presidency, it was chosen by the White House to be played wherever a national anthem was appropriate. Still the song was variously criticized as too violent in tone, too difficult to sing, and, by prohibitionists, as basically a drinking song. But on its side, "The Star Spangled Banner" had a strong supporter in John Philip Sousa. In 1931, he opined that besides Key's "soul-stirring" words, "it is the spirit of the music that inspires." That same year, on March 3, President Herbert C. Hoover signed the act establishing Key's poem and Smith's music as the official anthem of the United States.

### Passage 2

Both law and poetry require a fluid grasp of language and a critical need for precision and economy with words; possessing these skills can be the key to making one person successful in both endeavors. There are few times in history when known poets started their professional lives in law (John Donne, Archibald MacLeish). There are also a few instances when good lawyers have been poets, such as Wallace Stevens and Francis Scott Key.

While Stevens is famous for his poetry, average Americans might be surprised to know of Key as a poet (if they indeed know anything about him). Not only did Key write his most famous poem, "Defence of Fort M'Henry," now known to all Americans as "The Star Spangled Banner," he wrote verse throughout his life. He was a devout man who had almost elected to be an Anglican priest, and so many of his poems are religious and include a few hymns and translations of psalms. He wrote elegies, brief humorous pieces, and poems memorializing the dead. It seems he had never intended these for publication but did hand them round to friends for their comfort and amusement.

Of course, most Americans know

the story of the poem “Defence of Fort M’Henry.” Key scribbled the poem on the back of an envelope while witnessing the Battle of Baltimore from a British ship on the Patapsco River. The day after the battle, someone took Key’s verses to a printer in Baltimore, who printed bills and broadsheets of the poem. In the coming months, it came to be called “The Star-Spangled Banner” and was set to the notoriously difficult-to-sing English drinking song “To Anacreon in Heaven.” It swiftly was adopted as a popular patriotic tune over one hundred

years before Congress officially named it the national anthem in 1931. “The Star-Spangled Banner” is the poem for which Key is best remembered, mainly for the historical significance behind it rather than its art.

\*recurring pattern that creates a pulse or beat

Sources: Passage 1: “The Star Spangled Banner.” Performing Arts Encyclopedia, Library of Congress. 2015. <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/ih/loc.natlib.ih/200000017/default.html> Passage 2: Davis, Jennifer. “Francis Scott Key: The Lawyer- Poet.” Law Library Blog, Library of Congress. April 2015. <http://blogs.loc.gov/law/2015/04/francis-scott-key-the-lawyer-poet>

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1. What does the author of Passage 1 mean to suggest about Francis Scott Key in lines 13-26?
    - A) His interest in the “Anacreontic Song” was likely due to its unique rhythm rather than its challenging melody.
    - B) He made a poor choice with the “Anacreontic Song” because he did not understand the vocal range it required.
    - C) He chose the “Anacreontic Song” because he did not hear well enough to recognize the problems with the musical pitch.
    - D) He wanted to pair his poem to music other than the “Anacreontic Song” but failed to find a song that was suitable
  2. As used in line 31, “detained” most nearly means
    - A) restrained.
    - B) delayed.
    - C) confined.
    - D) obstructed.
  3. What does the author of Passage 1 mean to imply about “The Star Spangled Banner” in lines 40-43?
    - A) The Civil War was a key turning point in public perception of the song.
    - B) The song underwent several key rewrites around the time of the Civil War.
    - C) The song was a symbol of American patriotism many years before the Civil War.
    - D) During the Civil War, American audiences became emotional when the song was played.
  4. As used in line 63, “fluid” most nearly means
    - A) variable.
    - B) liquid.
    - C) effortless.
    - D) unpredictable.
  5. The author of Passage 2 claims Frances Scott Key
    - A) deserves the same degree of fame as well-known poets like John Donne.
    - B) is a mostly unknown historical figure for much of the American public.
    - C) wrote most of his poetic works following unconventional methodologies.
    - D) labored to ensure that his work became available to the wider community.
  6. Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?
    - A) Lines 71-74 (“There are . . . Key”)
    - B) Lines 75-78 (“While Stevens . . . him”)
    - C) Lines 82-86 (“He was . . . psalms”)
    - D) Lines 97-100 (“The day . . . poem”)
  7. With which statement about Key would both of the authors most likely agree?
    - A) His poetry usually followed a specific rhyme scheme that lent itself to music.
    - B) He was a skilled writer whose other works have also stood the test of time.
    - C) His poem was inspired by actual events.
    - D) He was a poet who enjoyed the attention that his work received in his lifetime.

8. Which choice best describes the relationship between the passages?

- A) Passage 1 argues that “The Star Spangled Banner” is based on “Anacreon Song,” while Passage 2 takes the opposite point of view.
- B) Passage 1 describes how Key came to create “The Star Spangled Banner,” while Passage 2 explains why this song is his best-remembered work.
- C) Passage 1 states that “Anacreon Song” has more historical value than “The Star Spangled Banner,” while Passage 2 shows why “The Star Spangled Banner” is more important.
- D) Passage 1 expresses reservations about the importance of “The Star Spangled Banner,” while Passage 2 takes the opposite point of view.

9. How would the author of Passage 1 most likely respond to lines 100-104 in Passage 2?

- A) There is little evidence to support the idea that the “Anacreon Song” was a drinking song.
- B) The “Anacreon Song” offers a wide vocal range but is not technically difficult.
- C) “The Star Spangled Banner” bears little resemblance to the original “Anacreon Song.”
- D) The working title of Key’s original poem was “The Star Spangled Banner.”

10. Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?

- A) Lines 1-3 (“There is . . . song”)
- B) Lines 21-23 (“The song’s . . . structure”)
- C) Lines 30-34 (“On September . . . Baltimore”)
- D) Lines 37-40 (“Almost immediately . . . Song.”)