

Celebrating Community

The Star Spangled Banner

The “Star-Spangled Banner” is the name of our national anthem. It is also another word for our American flag. A man named Francis Scott Key wrote the national anthem in 1814. And he originally wrote four verses! Here’s the first verse—it’s full of big words and ideas. Look below to find out what some of the words mean.

To HAIL means to give a special greeting

Oh, say, can you see, by the dawn’s early light,

What so proudly we hailed at the twilight’s last gleaming?

This part is talking about the stripes and stars on the American Flag.

PERILOUS means dangerous.

Whose broad stripes and bright stars, through the perilous fight,

O’er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming?

RAMPARTS are walls that protect a fort.

And the rockets’ red glare, the bombs bursting in air,

Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.

SPANGLES are sparkles. Our flag looks like it’s covered in sparkling stars!

O say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave

O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave ?

These are both nicknames for the United States.