

# Santa Ana High School Article of the Week #1

A brief history of "The Star-Spangled Banner" getting no respect at games (**960L**)

**Learning Target:** *Students will generate questions about ideas, arguments, analyses, perspectives, or the rhetorical presentation of text for the purpose of making an informed response to what others say*

**Instructions: READ and ANNOTATE using CLOSE reading strategies.**

**Step 1: Skim** the article using these symbols as you read:

(+) agree, (-) disagree, (\*) important, (!) surprising, (?) wondering

**Step 2: Number** the paragraphs. **Read** the article **carefully** and **make notes in the margin**.

Notes should include:

- Comments that show that you **understand** the article. (A summary or statement of the main idea of important sections may serve this purpose.)
- Questions you have that show what you are **wondering** about as you read.
- Notes that differentiate between **fact** and **opinion**.
- Observations about how the **writer's strategies** (organization, word choice, perspective, support) and choices affect the article.

**Step 3: A reread** noting anything you may have missed during the first read.

Sports history tells us that the first time the national **anthem** was sung at a sporting event was at the 1918 World Series, during World War I. On September 6, 1918, the New York Times newspaper reported on it. The article said it happened during the seventh-inning stretch of the first game between the Chicago Cubs and the Boston Red Sox. The crowd of 10,274 spectators stood up to take their afternoon yawn, which was the usual custom. Suddenly "the band broke forth to the strains of "The Star-Spangled Banner," The New York Times wrote. The ballplayers and Jackie Fred Thomas of the U.S. Navy turned to the flag hanging on a pole in right field. One by one, they joined in to sing the anthem. At the end, onlookers burst into "thunderous applause."

## **Anthem Becomes Routine**

The event made ballplayers look good to the public. Some people thought the men should have been fighting the war, instead of playing baseball. The idea caught on. Marc Ferris wrote in his book about the history of the **anthem**, that Red Sox owner Harry Frazee opened each game in Boston with it. As time passed, playing and singing "The Star-Spangled Banner" became routine at sports events. Though people have become less respectful when the anthem plays. "The next time you're at sporting event," Kyle Koster wrote on sports website The Big Lead in May, "take a look around notice how many people are locked into their phones, sipping their beer or worse during the playing of the anthem." Some baseball fans sing the anthem but shout parts of it as a joke. In Baltimore, fans of the Orioles yell "Oh"

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when they reach the verse "O say can you see."

## Protesting Is Freedom of Speech

Playing the national **anthem** before a sports event is a grand old tradition. So is making fun of it. Most people don't seem to care how other fans react to the tune. That is, until someone famous criticizes it. This can be seen in the latest **controversy** over Colin Kaepernick. The San Francisco 49ers football player refuses to stand for the song. He said he would not stand in respect as a protest. "I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses black people and people of color," Kaepernick said. "There are bodies in the street and people getting paid leave and getting away with murder." He was talking about African-Americans who have been killed by police. Kaepernick is being criticized by many, particularly political conservatives. "I think it's a terrible thing," said Donald Trump, who is running for president as a Republican, a conservative political party. "And maybe he should find a country that works better for him, let him try. It won't happen." Conservative talk show host Mark Levin agreed with Trump. "Why do people stay here with all this oppression that's taking place?" he asked, **sarcastically**.

## Flag, Anthem Controversy Is Not New

At the recent Summer Olympics in Brazil, American gymnast Gabby Douglas did not place her hand over her heart for the song. She did nothing wrong. Yet Douglas was pressured on social media to apologize. Twenty years before Douglas and Kaepernick, there was Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf. At the beginning of the 1995-1996 season, Abdul-Rauf was playing basketball for the Denver Nuggets. He said he would not salute the flag during the playing of the national anthem that year. He said the flag was a "symbol of oppression, of tyranny," The New York Times wrote. Commissioner David Stern suspended Abdul-Rauf for one game. Two days later, the National Basketball Association said he could simply stand during the song, SBNation reported. After the national anthem controversy, no one wanted to hire him, Abdul-Rauf told HoopsHype, a basketball blog, in 2010. He felt it ended his career.

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## Key Vocabulary:

**Anthem** *noun* an·them \ˈan(t)-thəm\ a formal song of loyalty, praise, or happiness

**Controversy** *noun* con·tro·ver·sy \ˈkän-trə-,vər-sē, *British also* kən-'trā-vər-sē\ argument that involves many people who strongly disagree about something : strong disagreement about something among a large group of people

**Sarcastically** *adjective* sar·cas·tic \sär-'kas-tik\ the use of words that mean the opposite of what you really want to say especially in order to insult someone, to show irritation, or to be funny

Answer each question in one or more complete sentences and by providing complete explanations.

1.. *Highlight the sentence that best suggests why Colin Kaepernick chose not to stand during the national anthem.*

2. *Discuss the author's **purpose** in writing this article. What topics come to the surface?*

3. *Write a short response to summarize the disagreement between any two people or organizations in the article. If you were to **support the claims** made by only one of these parties, who would it be? Why?*