

American Symbols & Holidays | Worksheet



Name: _____ Date: _____

YOUR MISSION: CURATE THE MUSEUM. The Museum of American Symbols has hired you—and the collection is in your hands: a flag whose design is a coded message, an anthem written under bombardment, and the days that carry the nation’s memory. Watch the episode, then execute the tasks as you take on more responsibility.

Level 1 | GALLERY GUIDE—Tour the Collection

A guide must know every piece. As you watch, match each item to its meaning—write the letter in the blank.

1. ____ The 13 stripes	A. The name of the national anthem
2. ____ The 50 stars	B. July Fourth—the adoption of the Declaration of Independence, 1776
3. ____ Francis Scott Key	C. Represent the 50 states of the Union
4. ____ The Star-Spangled Banner	D. Honors all who have served in the military, living or not
5. ____ The Statue of Liberty	E. Represent the original 13 colonies that formed the Union
6. ____ Independence Day	F. Honors those who died while serving in the U.S. military
7. ____ Memorial Day	G. Wrote the anthem’s words while watching the British bombard Fort McHenry
8. ____ Veterans Day	H. France’s “gift of friendship,” standing on Liberty Island in New York Harbor

Level 2 | CONSERVATOR—Decode the Flag, Restore the Anthem

The flag’s design is a coded message. Decode it—then examine the museum’s oldest document.

Design element	What it stands for
The color BLUE	_____ _____
The color RED	_____ _____
The color WHITE	_____ _____
Why we pledge to the flag itself	_____

Scan to watch episode:



PRIMARY SOURCE—“The Star-Spangled Banner,” Francis Scott Key, 1814. Key wrote these lines at dawn, after watching the British bombard Fort McHenry through the night.

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 watched, were so gallantly streaming?
 And the rocket's 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?

1. **Underline** the phrase proving the flag survived the night-long bombardment.
2. **Circle** two images of the battle itself.

3. What did the flag still flying at dawn **prove**—and why did that “spangled” sight inspire Key?

Level 3 | HOLIDAY COMMITTEE—Accept, Reject, or Revise

Three proposals await. Federal holidays carry the nation's memory—they commemorate what shaped the country or honor those who served it. Rule on each **using that standard**.

Proposal	Accept, Reject, or Revise?	Why (cite the standard)
"National Ice Cream Day—a fun summer day off!"		
"First Responders Day—honoring the police and firefighters who protect Americans."		
"Moon Landing Day—celebrate our first steps."		

Visitor correction: tell a visitor the difference between Memorial Day and Veterans Day:

Memorial Day honors: _____ Veterans Day honors: _____

Level 4 | CHIEF CURATOR—The New Exhibit

On a separate sheet of paper, sketch a symbol to represent American values. Fill out the placard below that explains what each element means.

Element 1 _____ represents _____.
Element 2 _____ represents _____.

Rank achieved: ☐ Guide ☐ Conservator ☐ Committee ☐ Chief Curator

Answer Key | American Symbols & Holidays

Level 1 | Gallery Guide

1-E, 2-C, 3-G, 4-A, 5-H, 6-B, 7-F, 8-D

Level 2 | Conservator

1. **Blue:** loyalty, devotion, truth, justice, and friendship. **Red:** courage, zeal, and passion. **White:** purity and correct conduct. **Why we pledge to the flag:** because it represents all that the country stands for—its history and its values of “liberty and justice for all.”
2. **Underline:** “Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.” **Circle (any two):** “the rocket’s red glare,” “the bombs bursting in air,” “the perilous fight.”
3. **Sample answer:** The flag still flying proved the fort—and America—had survived the relentless British attack. Key was awestruck by American resilience, strength, and bravery, and the sight of the flag glittering (“spangled”) in the sunlight inspired the anthem’s name. Look for “the fort or nation survived,” “resilience,” “the flag as proof.”

Level 3 | Holiday Committee

1. **Ice Cream Day—Reject.** It commemorates no event or figure that shaped the nation and honors no one’s service; “a fun day off” is exactly what a federal holiday is not for.
2. **First Responders Day—Accept or Revise.** Honoring those who protect and serve fits the standard set by Memorial Day and Veterans Day; a revised ruling (e.g., folding it into an existing observance) is also defensible. Grade the reasoning against the standard.
3. **Moon Landing Day—Accept** (or a well-argued reject). It commemorates a real event in the nation’s history—like Independence Day and Columbus Day commemorate theirs. A reject arguing the calendar can’t honor everything is acceptable if it cites the standard. Look for every ruling anchored to “commemorates what shaped the nation/honors those who served,” not personal taste.
4. **Visitor correction:** Memorial Day honors those who **died** while serving in the U.S. military; Veterans Day honors **all** who have served, whether or not they died while serving.

Level 4 | Chief Curator

Exhibits will vary. Mark student responses correct if the placard (1) names an American value; (2) explains what every design element means—no decoration without meaning, just as each stripe, star, and color of the flag carries meaning; and (3) connects the symbol to America, not just to the value in the abstract. Look for the decode-to-encode move—students applying the flag’s own design logic to a symbol of their invention.

Note: This worksheet can be completed with the episode alone or as part of the full lesson—see the accompanying lesson plan.