

# Language Arts

## Objectives

### Olympic Anthem Symbolism

- ▶ To recognize symbolism in language forms such as music and poetry
- ▶ To compare language styles and forms in poetry
- ▶ To understand why anthems are used

- ◆ Ask the students to “say,” not sing, the first verse or stanza of the “Star-Spangled Banner.” Using a copy of the “Star-Spangled Banner,” students should circle the descriptive words and phrases and discuss the meanings. Example: “twilight’s last gleaming,” or the “Dawn’s early light..” What is this verse really saying? Students may respond orally.
- ◆ Ask the students to discuss why this particular song is sung and where it is sung. Discuss the terms “national” and “anthem.” Ask the students what a symbol is or can be.
- ◆ Discuss how flags, songs, logos, etc. can become “symbols” of people, places and things. (Students may use dictionary to define symbol, anthem and national.)
- ◆ Pass out the two versions of the “Olympic Anthem” Inform students that it is played or sung during the opening ceremonies of the Olympics. Originally written in Greek, it has been “freely” translated into other languages and these are two versions.
- ◆ The students should read the two versions silently, circling any unfamiliar words. After reading both, place them side by side to see if they differ in wording and in meaning. Have students answer the questions on the worksheet.

## Optional

- ◆ Create a new “Olympic Anthem”
- ◆ Create a new national anthem for the United States.
- ◆ Listen to the recording of the Olympic anthem at the: Amateur Athletic Foundation’s Paul Ziffren Sports Resource Center, 2141 W. Adams Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90018.

## Materials

“Olympic Anthem” Worksheets  
Pencils and paper  
Classroom dictionaries or thesaurus

Olympic Anthem  
Worksheet

▶ Name



What is the poem about?

Who is the person (thing or god) being appealed to?

What does the poet want to happen?

What things in nature does the poet mention?

How would listening to this anthem make you feel if you were an athlete competing in the Olympic Games?

Which version of the Olympic anthem is easiest to understand?

## Olympic Anthem Symbolism

### ▶ The Star-Spangled Banner



The national anthem was originally a poem written Francis Scott Key in 1814 while he was on a ship observing the bombardment of the Ft. McHenry in Baltimore. Years later, it was set to music. It became the national anthem in 1931.

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.

Oh, say does that star-spangled  
banner yet wave  
O'er the land of the free  
and the home of the brave?

## Olympic Anthem Symbolism

## ▶ The Olympic Anthem



Symbolism is one of the strong components expressed within the Olympic Games concept in various ways. The Greeks appreciated and honored poets and their descriptive language as part of the Olympic spirit. The “Olympic Hymn” of the modern era was written by Greeks Costis Palamas and Spiros Samaras. It was translated into French, and was used at the first Modern Olympic Games held in Athens in 1896. Since 1960, it has been used at the Opening Ceremonies of each Olympic Games. The hymn is played or sung during the opening ceremonies of the Olympics. Originally written in Greek, it has been “freely” translated into other languages and these are two versions.

### OLYMPIC ANTHEM

Ancient Immortal Spirit, chaste Father  
of all that is Beauty, Grandeur and  
Truth  
Descending appear with Thy presence  
Illuminate Thine Earth and the Heav-  
ens.

Shine upon noble endeavors wrought  
at the Games on Track and in the Field.

Crown with thy eternal evergreen  
branch  
The bodies, making them stronger and  
worthy.

Dale, Mount and Ocean, with Thy  
Light,  
white and purple, Temple, brighten!  
To Thine Temple, to Thy Worship,  
come all.  
Oh! Ancient Eternal Spirit!

### OFFICIAL OLYMPIC HYMN

Immortal spirit of antiquity,  
Father of the true, beautiful and good,  
Descend, appear, shed over us thy light  
Upon this ground and under this sky  
Which has first witnessed thy unperish-  
able fame.

Give life and animation to those noble  
games!  
Throw wreaths of fadeless flowers to the  
victors  
In the race and in the strife!  
Create in our breasts, hearts of steel!

In thy light, plains, mountains and seas  
Shine in a roseate hue and form a vast  
temple  
To which all nations throng to adore  
thee,  
Oh immortal spirit of antiquity!