
MISSION 1: "For Crown or Colony?"
Part 1: New in Town (February 21, 1770)
Document-Based Activity

Translating "The Liberty Song" from English to English

"The Liberty Song" was written to be sung to the tune of a popular English tune called "Heart of Oak." The American lyrics were written by John Dickinson and published in 1768. Dickinson was a lawyer, a governor of Delaware and Pennsylvania and a Revolutionary leader.

Directions:

Times change and so does the style of English we speak and songs we listen to. Read the first stanza of the song in the left-hand column. Notice that someone has translated it from rhyming song lyrics that read like a poem into ordinary English prose in the right-hand column.

Your job is to read the stanza your group has been assigned and to do the same thing. You may use any resources you need in order to decode the lines.

Strategies to try:

- Work out loud. Try emphasizing different words.
- Divide the sentences into parts that sound like chunks of meaning and work on each, one at a time.
- Find the words and phrases you do understand to help you make sense of the ones you don't.
- Rearrange words and phrases.

1. Come, join hand in hand, brave Americans all,
And rouse your bold hearts at fair Liberty's call;
No tyrannous acts shall suppress your just claim,
Or stain with dishonor America's name.

**1. Come all Americans, join hand in hand,
and rouse your brave hearts because
beautiful Liberty is calling you. No
actions of a dictator can hold you back
from getting what is rightfully yours, and
it also won't dishonor you as an American.**

2. Chorus
*In Freedom we're born and in Freedom we'll live.
Our purses are ready. Steady, friends, steady;
Not as slaves, but as Freemen our money we'll give.*

<p>3. Our worthy forefathers, let's give them a cheer, To climates unknown did courageously steer; Thro' oceans to deserts for Freedom they came, And dying, bequeath'd us their freedom and fame.</p> <p><i>Chorus</i></p>	
<p>4. The tree their own hands had to Liberty rear'd, They lived to behold growing strong and revered; With transport they cried, Now our wishes we gain, For our children shall gather the fruits of our pain.</p> <p><i>Chorus</i></p>	
<p>5. Then join hand in hand, brave Americans all, By uniting we stand, by dividing we fall; In so righteous a cause let us hope to succeed, For heaven approves of each generous deed.</p> <p><i>Chorus</i></p>	

(Song lyrics taken from <http://www.contemplator.com/america/liberty.html>)

NOTE TO THE EDUCATOR

One reason a document-based question can be difficult for students is that passages may be written in period grammar using vocabulary that is unfamiliar. Learners need to make sense of a passage before they can answer questions about it.

This activity challenges groups of students to work together to decode just one part of a longer piece. Assign different stanzas to groups of students and ask them to use the suggested strategies to figure out the meaning of their stanza. They should work out loud. They should begin with the parts that they do know and work out to the parts that are less familiar. When the group makes sense of the stanza, each group member should write it down.

Then, when all the groups are ready, have them report out in turn and see if the class can reach consensus about what the song means.

Given what the students may be learning about the growing tension between colonists and importers of British goods, they may be able to reason out why, in the chorus, the singers are talking about supporting the cause of liberty with their money rather than with their lives. That would come later on.