



In Flanders Fields

By John McCrae

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.



O Captain! My Captain!

By Walt Whitman

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won,
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;
 But O heart! heart! heart!
 O the bleeding drops of red,
 Where on the deck my Captain lies,
 Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up for you the flag is flung for you the bugle trills,
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths for you the shores a-
 crowding,
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;
 Here Captain! dear father!
 This arm beneath your head!
 It is some dream that on the deck,
 You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,
The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;
 Exult O shores, and ring O bells!
 But I with mournful tread,
 Walk the deck my Captain lies,
 Fallen cold and dead.

Although never mentioned by name, Abraham Lincoln is the subject of Walt Whitman's famous poem. Lincoln was assassinated on April 14, 1865, less than a week after the Civil War had ended.



I'm a Yankee Doodle Dandy

By George M. Cohan

I'm a Yankee Doodle Dandy
A Yankee Doodle do or die!
A real-life nephew of my Uncle Sam,
Born on the Fourth of July.
I've got a Yankee Doodle sweetheart,
She's my Yankee Doodle joy.
Yankee Doodle went to London just to
ride the ponies,
I am that Yankee Doodle boy.

Preamble to the Constitution

By Lorraine Griffith; Adapted by Timothy Rasinski

A choral reading for a large group or a reader's theater for seven voices

R1: The Constitution

R2: of the United States of America.

All: *We the people*

R1: The people:

R2: First the American Indian,

R3: then a flood of European immigrants,

R4: Africans,

R5: Middle Easterners,

R6: Asian peoples,

R7: South Americans

R1–R4: And they keep on coming.

All: *We the people of the United States,*

R1: The United States:

R2: All 50!

R3: From Portland, Maine, west to San Diego, California,

R4: from Fargo, North Dakota, south to El Paso, Texas,

R5: Alaska and Hawaii



Preamble to the Constitution (cont.)

- All:** *We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union,*
- R6:** That Union seemed perfect, all of the colonies became states as well as the territories to the west,
- R7:** until the southern states seceded because they wanted states' rights.
- R1:** But the Civil War ended with a more perfect union of states based upon the belief that all Americans deserved the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.
- All:** *We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice,*
- R2:** Even before the established United States, justice was valued.
- R3:** John Adams had actually defended the British in court after they had attacked and killed colonists during the Boston Massacre. Although he didn't believe in the British cause, he still believed justice was more important than retribution.
- R4:** Justice was ensured for Americans by following the fairness of John Adams in establishing a court system beginning with local courthouses and moving up to the Supreme Court in Washington, D.C.
- All:** *We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility,*
- R5:** There have been times when our nation's tranquility has been disturbed.
- R6:** But in spite of Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941,
- R7:** and the horror in New York City, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania, on September 11, 2001,
- All:** we still live in a stable and peaceful country.



Preamble to the Constitution *(cont.)*

All: *We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense,*

R2: The Air Force. No one comes close! Soar to new heights in the wild blue yonder!

All: **Nothing can stop the U.S. Air Force!**

R3: The Army. Be all you can be! Be an army of one!

All: **Hoo Ahh!**

R4: The Navy, Welcome aboard;

All: **Anchors aweigh! Full speed ahead!**

R1: The Coast Guard, Protecting America. It's our job every day!

All: **Semper Paratus. Always Ready.**

R5: And the Marines. The few, the proud.

All: **Semper Fi!**

We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare,

R7: People's basic needs must be met in a country.

R5: Needs for housing, education, transportation, and health care are overseen by our government system.

R6: Labor laws ensure that people work in safe environments and that they are paid fairly for the work that they do.



Preamble to the Constitution *(cont.)*

- All:** *We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves*
- R1:** Jefferson's promise of Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of happiness came later for many of the peoples of our nation.
- R2:** African Americans did not share the rights of whites by law until the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868.
- R3:** Women did not share in the rights of men to vote or own property until 1920 when the Suffrage Act was ratified.
- R4:** But people all around the world still look to the United States as the land of liberty for all.
- All:** *We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity,*
- R1:** That's you and me!
- R2–R3:** And our children!
- R4–R5:** And our children's children.
- R6–R7:** And their children, too!
- All:** *We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.*



Preamble to the Constitution *(cont.)*

R5: The Constitution of the United States of America has stood the test of time.

R6: Although it was signed on September 17, 1787, it still stands as a ruling document of laws, ensuring the rights and liberties that we still enjoy today.

R7: And so, let us proclaim once again for all the world to hear . . .

R1: The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States of America.

R2–R3: *We the people of the United States,*

R2–R5: *in order to form a more perfect Union,*

R2–R6: *establish justice, insure domestic tranquility,*

R2–R7: *provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare,*

All: *and secure the blessings of liberty, to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.*

Background Information

The Preamble to the Constitution is one sentence that introduces the Constitution of the United States. The Preamble does not list any specific rights or powers. It just gives the reasons for writing the Constitution. It is believed that Gouverneur Morris, a founding father, wrote the Preamble to the Constitution.

