

# ESSAY PLANNING SHEET

**Prompt Deconstruction:** Circle key phrase and ID type. Breakdown a minimum of 3 other words/phrases.

## Should United States citizens have a right to refuse to stand or participate in the National Anthem?

### Source 1: Refusing to Stand for the National Anthem: Top 3 Pros and Cons

Wednesday, May 23, 2018 | ProCon.org

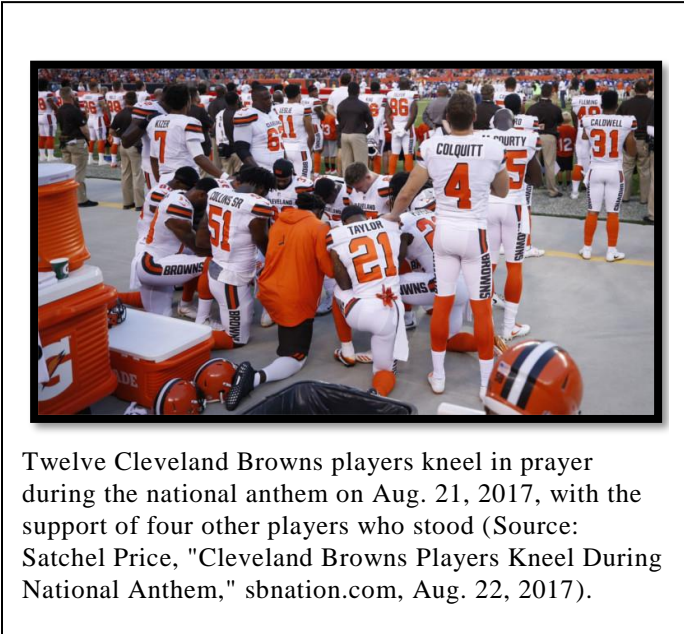
1. The current debate over kneeling or sitting in protest during the national anthem was ignited by Colin Kaepernick in 2016 and has escalated to become a nationally divisive issue. San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick first refused to stand during "The Star-Spangled Banner" on Aug. 26, 2016 to protest racial injustice and police brutality in the United States. Since that time, many other professional football players, [7] high school athletes, and [8] professional athletes in other sports [9] have refused to stand for the national anthem. These protests have generated controversy and sparked a public conversation about the protesters' messages and how they've chosen to deliver them.



Colin Kaepernick (in number seven jersey) and teammate Eric Reid kneel during the national anthem on Sep. 1, 2016 (Source: Josh Levin, "Colin Kaepernick's Protest Is Working," slate.com, Sep. 12, 2016).

2. People who support refusing to stand for the national anthem argue that athletes are justified in using their celebrity status to bring attention to important issues, and that refusing to stand for the national anthem is an appropriate and effective method of peaceful protest. People who disagree argue that football games are an inappropriate place to engage in political protest, and that not standing for the national anthem shows disrespect for the country and those who proudly support it, some with their lives.

3. The 2017 NFL pre-season began with black players from the Seattle Seahawks, Oakland Raiders, and Philadelphia Eagles kneeling or sitting during the anthem with support of white teammates. [20] [21] On Aug. 21, 2017, twelve Cleveland Browns players knelt in a prayer circle during the national anthem with at least



Twelve Cleveland Browns players kneel in prayer during the national anthem on Aug. 21, 2017, with the support of four other players who stood (Source: Satchel Price, "Cleveland Browns Players Kneel During National Anthem," sbnation.com, Aug. 22, 2017).

four other players standing with hands on the kneeling players' shoulders in solidarity, the largest group of players to take a knee during the anthem to date. Jabrill Peppers, a rookie safety, said of the protest, "There's a lot of racial and social injustices in the world that are going on right now. We just decided to take a knee and pray for the people who have been affected and just pray for the world in general... We were not trying to disrespect the flag or be a distraction to the team, but as men we thought we had the right to stand up for what we believed in, and we demonstrated that." [21] Seth DeValve, a tight end for the Browns and the first white NFL player to kneel for the anthem, stated, "The United States is the greatest country in the world. And it is because it provides opportunities to its citizens that no other country does. The issue is that it doesn't provide equal opportunity to everybody, and I wanted to support my African-American teammates today who wanted to take a knee. We wanted to draw attention to the fact that there's things in this country that still need to change." [20]

4. Some Cleveland Browns fans expressed their dissatisfaction on the team's Facebook page. One commenter posted, "Pray before or pray after. Taking a knee during the National Anthem these days screams disrespect for our Flag, Our Country and our troops. My son and the entire armed forces deserve better than that." [22]

## Is Refusing to Stand for the National Anthem an Appropriate Form of Protest?

**Pro 1:** When one believes the United States is not living up to its ideals of freedom, liberty, and justice for all, refusing to stand for the national anthem is appropriate and justified. Colin Kaepernick said, "I'm not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses black people and people of color... To me, this is bigger than football and it would be selfish on my part to look the other way. There are bodies in the street and people getting paid leave and getting away with murder." [1] Many other athletes have since refused to stand for the national anthem for similar reasons. [7] Denver Broncos linebacker Brandon Marshall, who also has knelt during the national anthem, said, "the message is I'm against social injustice... I'm not against the military or police or America at all." [2]

**Pro 2:** When a national figure such as an NFL player refuses to stand for the national anthem, it shocks people into paying attention and generates conversation. Many people were shocked and offended when Colin Kaepernick refused to stand for "The Star-Spangled Banner," [12] and the resulting debate has continued as additional players joined the protest. [6] NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell originally disagreed with those actions, but later praised what he called a movement from protest to progress: "I truly respect our players wanting to speak out and change the community... We want them to use that voice." [16] Social media has given a voice to strong opinions on both sides, including members of the armed forces who express support for Kaepernick's right to protest by posting under the hashtag #VeteransForKaepernick. [5]

**Pro 3:** Not standing for the national anthem is a legal form of peaceful protest, which is a First Amendment right. President Obama said Kaepernick was "exercising his constitutional right to make a statement. I think there's a long history of sports figures doing so." [3] The San Francisco 49ers said in a statement, "In respecting such American principles as freedom of religion and freedom of expression, we recognize the right of an individual to choose and participate, or not, in our celebration of the national anthem." [1] A letter signed by 35 US veterans stated that "Far from disrespecting our troops, there is no finer form of appreciation for our sacrifice than for Americans to enthusiastically exercise their freedom of speech." [12]

**Con 1:** Refusing to stand for the national anthem shows disrespect for the flag and members of the armed forces. The national anthem pays respect to the people who have risked their lives, been injured, or died defending the United States. Carole Isham, a great-great-great-granddaughter of the writer of the national anthem (Francis Scott Key) stated that "it just blows my mind that somebody like (Kaepernick) would do what he does to dishonor the flag of this country and the national anthem when we have young men and women overseas fighting for this country, people that have died for this country." [13] Drew Brees, New Orleans Saints quarterback, supported Kaepernick's message but disagreed with the delivery: "[I]t's an oxymoron that you're sitting down, disrespecting that flag that has given you the freedom to speak out." [18]

**Con 2:** Not standing for the national anthem is an ineffective and counterproductive way to promote a cause. Clemson University football coach Dabo Swinney said in a press conference: "I don't think it's good to be a distraction to your team. I don't think it's good to use your team as the platform." [4] President Obama expressed concern that not standing for the national anthem can get in the way of the message: "As a general matter, when it comes to the flag the national anthem and the meaning that holds for our men and women in uniform and those who've fought for us -- that is a tough thing for them to get past to then hear what his [Kaepernick's] deeper concerns are." [3] Malcolm Jenkins, safety for the Philadelphia Eagles, supported Kaepernick's message but said, "My grandfather served [in the military]. And this is a country that I love. So, me not standing for the national anthem isn't really going to get me the results that I want." [19]

**Con 3:** Refusing to stand for the national anthem angers many and sows division in our country. Kaepernick and others who have refused to stand for the national anthem have caused division among their teams, their fans, and across the country. The Santa Clara police union hinted they would boycott providing security at games after Kaepernick revealed his reasons for protesting the national anthem and wore socks depicting pigs in police uniforms. [14] [15] Fans have been burning Kaepernick's jersey to show their distaste for his actions. One video of a jersey on fire posted on Facebook was captioned, "He says he's oppressed making \$126 million. Well, Colin, here's my salute to you." [17]

5. On Friday, Sep. 22, 2017, President Donald Trump stated his opposition to NFL players kneeling during the anthem: "Wouldn't you love to see one of these NFL owners, when somebody disrespects our flag, to say 'Get that son of a b\*\*\*\* off the field right now. Out! He's fired. He's fired!'" [23] The statement set off a firestorm on both sides of the debate. Roger Goodell, NFL Commissioner, said of Trump's comments, "Divisive comments like these demonstrate an unfortunate lack of respect for the NFL, our great game and all of our players, and a failure to understand the overwhelming force for good our clubs and players represent in our communities." [23]
6. The controversy continued over the weekend as the President continued to tweet about the issue and others contributed opinions for and against kneeling during the anthem. On Sunday, Sep. 24, in London before the first NFL game played after Trump's comments, at least two dozen Baltimore Ravens and Jacksonville Jaguars players knelt during the American national anthem, while other players, coaches, and staff locked arms, including Shad Khan, who is the only Pakistani-American Muslim NFL team owner. [24] Throughout the day, some players, coaches, owners, and other staff kneeled or linked arms from every team except the Carolina Panthers. The Pittsburgh Steelers chose to remain in the locker room during the anthem, though offensive tackle and Army Ranger veteran Alejandro Villanueva stood at the entrance to the field alone, for which he has since apologized. [27] Both the Seattle Seahawks and Tennessee Titans teams stayed in their locker rooms before their game, leaving the field mostly empty during the anthem. The Seahawks stated, "As a team, we have decided we will not participate in the national anthem. We will not stand for the injustice that has plagued people of color in this country. Out of love for our country and in honor of the sacrifices made on our behalf, we unite to oppose those that would deny our most basic freedoms." [25]



Indiana Fever players kneel during the national anthem before their Sep. 22, 2017 WNBA playoff game against the Phoenix Mercury (Source: Stephen Douglas, "Indiana Fever Kneel for National Anthem before WNBA Playoff Game," thebiglead.com, Sep. 21, 2017).

7. The controversy has jumped to other sports as every player on WNBA's Indiana Fever knelt on Friday, Sep. 22 (though WNBA players have been kneeling for months); Oakland A's catcher Bruce Maxwell kneeled on Saturday becoming the first MLB player to do so; and Joel Ward, of the NHL's San Jose Sharks, said he would not rule out kneeling. [28] [29] [30] [31]
8. The country was still debating the issue well into the week, with Trump tweeting throughout, including on Sep. 26: "The NFL has all sort of rules and regulations. The only way out for them is to set a rule that you can't kneel during our National Anthem!" [26]

9. On May 23, 2018, the NFL announced that all 32 team owners agreed that all players and staff on the field shall "stand and show respect for the flag and the Anthem" or face "appropriate discipline." However, all players will no longer be required to be on the field during the anthem and may wait off field or in the locker room. [32] [33] The new rules were adopted without input from the players' union. [33] On July 20, 2018, the NFL and the NFL Players Association (NFLPA) issued a joint statement putting the anthem policy on hold until the two organizations come to an agreement. [34]



## Source 2: Star-Spangled Protest

Why an athlete's refusal to stand for the national anthem has sparked such intense debate

[October 10, 2016](#) /By Carl Stoffers/ Upfront Magazine

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1. When the national anthem played before an NFL preseason game in August, San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick remained seated on the sidelines instead of standing like almost everyone else in the stadium.
2. Kaepernick expected some criticism for his protest—carried out, he said, to call attention to police brutality and racial injustice in the U.S.—but what followed was a firestorm. Many accused him of thumbing his nose at America by not joining in a patriotic ritual that's long been a fixture at sporting events.
3. “There's ways to make change w/o disrespecting & bringing shame to the very country & family who afforded you so many blessings,” read one of thousands of angry tweets. It came from Kaepernick's biological mother, Heidi Russo, who gave him up for adoption as a child.
4. Others praised him for taking a principled stand, and even President Obama seemed to sympathize.
5. “I think he cares about some real, legitimate issues that have to be talked about,” Obama said during a press conference while visiting China.
6. The debate over Kaepernick's actions raises two questions: How did the national anthem become so [integral](#) to organized sports, and why do Americans have such strong feelings about it?
7. “It's part of our national religion to believe in the flag and Betsy Ross and the national anthem,” says Orin Starn, professor of cultural anthropology at Duke University in North Carolina. “When these national symbols are called into question, it makes people angry.”



Colin Kaepernick (*at right, kneeling*), joined by teammate Eric Reid in San Diego on September 12, during Kaepernick's third national anthem protest  
Marcio Jose Sanchez/AP Images

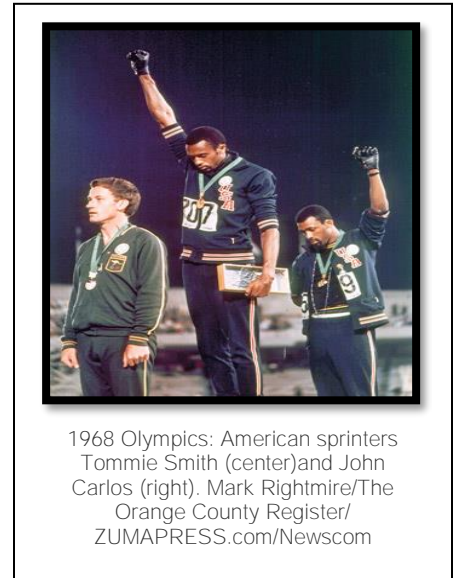
### The War of 1812

8. Francis Scott Key, a lawyer from Maryland, wrote “The Star-Spangled Banner” on Sept. 14, 1814, after witnessing the [bombardment](#) of Fort McHenry in Baltimore by British ships during the War of 1812. Key was inspired by the [tattered](#) American flag that remained flying above the fort during the battle, and wrote a poem about it. The poem was later set to the tune of a popular English song and became the national anthem by an act of Congress in 1931.
9. It was first performed at baseball games in the mid-1800s, and it became more widespread in baseball in the period of intense patriotism that swept the nation during World War II (1939-45).
10. Pat Courtney, a spokesman for Major League Baseball, said that the national anthem has been performed before all MLB games since 1942 and that “it remains an important tradition that has great meaning for our fans.”
11. Other sports also incorporated the song into their pregame rituals. Today, all four major sports leagues ask fans and players to stand and remove their hats while the anthem plays. But no league does it with more pomp and circumstance than the NFL, which often stages elaborate displays featuring a giant flag and jet-fighter flyovers.

### An American Tradition

12. Most other countries don't have similar rituals. For example, national anthems aren't typically played before Japanese baseball games or German hockey games. Why the difference? According to Starn, it probably lies in America's history.
13. Unlike most nations, the U.S. wasn't created on a common platform of religion or ancestry. Instead, Americans are bound by ideas and concepts—that all people are created equal, for example—and something that represents those ideas, like an anthem, can come to seem vitally important, even [sacred](#).

14. “We’re the most sports-obsessed society in the history of the world, and we’re also a nation that’s obsessed with patriotism and pride in identity,” Starn says. “You can’t be a politician who doesn’t wear a flag lapel pin, and you can’t go to an NFL game and not hear the anthem.”
15. Kaepernick isn’t the first athlete to be criticized for slighting the anthem, whether intentionally or not. In 1968, U.S. sprinters Tommie Smith and John Carlos were expelled from the Olympics in Mexico City for raising gloved fists in a “black power” salute while on the medal stand during the playing of the national anthem. Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf of the Denver Nuggets was suspended by the NBA in 1996 for refusing to stand during the anthem. And at the Rio Olympics this summer, gold medal gymnast Gabby Douglas was **lambasted** on social media for not placing her hand over her heart while the anthem played—even after she explained that as a member of a military family, she had learned to stand with arms at her sides.
16. Given how strongly many Americans feel about the anthem, it’s not surprising that protests like Kaepernick’s have been relatively rare. When he repeated the protest during a second preseason game, however, he was joined by a teammate. And during the first week of the NFL season, players from several teams chose to kneel or raise fists during the anthem. In early September, Megan Rapinoe, an American soccer player, knelt during the anthem before a women’s pro soccer league game in support of Kaepernick.
17. Following his second protest, the 49ers announced that Kaepernick had lost the starting quarterback job to Blaine Gabbert. The team said the decision was based solely on performance, but others wondered whether Kaepernick had been harmed by the outcry over his actions.
18. “It’s the step off the cliff that most athletes aren’t going to take,” says Starn. “You might have LeBron James wearing a Black Lives Matter shirt, but the national anthem has always seemed sacred, and you would just put your hand over your heart and stand up like everyone else.”



Source 3:  
 Divided We Sit Cartoon  
 By: Keith Knight



# Source 4: **An entire German soccer team took a knee before a game, echoing the NFL anthem protests**

By: Dennis Green | Business Insider | Oct. 14, 2017, 3:55 PM

1. A Berlin-based soccer team knelt before a game on Saturday.
2. Both players and officials of Hertha Berlin got down on one knee prior to the game "For a tolerant Berlin and an open-minded world, now and forevermore!" according to a tweet by the team.
3. "We are living in the 21st century, not the 18th century, but there are some people who haven't developed their ideologies accordingly," one of the the teams players, Sebastian Langkamp, told Sky Sports in an interview, according to the BBC. "If we can give them a bit of help in doing so, then that's good."

4. The gesture, which NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick started in 2016 when he knelt during the playing of the national anthem prior to a game, was originally a protest over how the US, and particularly the police, treats black people and people of color.

5. The protest's spread to Europe is just another symptom of the spotlight placed on the gesture after President Donald Trump made it a signature issue, telling a crowd in Arizona in September that any player that kneels in the NFL should be fired.

6. Since then, kneeling and other gestures of protest or solidarity have spread across the league.



7. NFL commissioner Roger Goodell called on teams and owners this week to curb the practice. The NFL said Friday it will not be seeking a change in rules to force players to stand, however.
8. Hertha lost to their opponent, Schalke, 0-2.