

Teacher's Guide to Student Worksheet 3-Understanding the Lyrics

Name: _____ Date: _____

Partner's name: _____

Directions: Complete the tasks below and answer the questions.

1. One partner should read aloud the lyrics on Student Handout 2.
2. These lyrics were composed by Stephen Foster in 1856, so some of the words or phrases may sound a little odd today. What words are unfamiliar to you?
 - a. Underline these words or phrases. This includes words you might know in other contexts, but seem to have a different meaning in this song.
 - b. Look up these words in a dictionary. Pick the meaning that makes the most sense in this context.
 - c. In the space below, write the words and definitions you found:

Possible terms students look up include:

creed (chorus, line 2) – statement of belief

candidate (chorus, line 3) – a person who seeks an elected position

manfully (verse 1, line 3) – bravely; strongly; resolutely

designing (verse 2, line 1) – scheming; crafty

band (verse 2, line 1) – a group of people working together

sway (verse 2, line 2) – influence or control

Discuss these questions and write down your answers.

3. This song is meant to persuade people to vote for James Buchanan. What argument is Foster making in verse 1? Rephrase it in your own words:

Answers will vary.

Possible answer: The North and South have worked together, so they should stay united.

4. In verse 2, what simile is made on the fourth line?

“And be open as the light of day.”

Explain what you think it means. (Hint: the first two lines of this verse show how their opponents behave, but the last line shows how Democrats are different)

Answers will vary.

Possible answer: They will be open to new ideas; there will be no secrets in their party.

5. Reread verse 3.

- “the bones of Washington” refers to George Washington’s grave at Mt. Vernon, Virginia.
- “Where Jackson fought...” refers to Andrew Jackson’s famous battle at New Orleans, Louisiana, during the War of 1812.
- “...and Marion bled” refers to Francis Marion, an important leader in the Revolutionary War who fought in North Carolina and South Carolina.

Look at a map of the United States and find Virginia, Louisiana, North Carolina and South Carolina.

Why do you think Foster mentions these men and these places in a song about James Buchanan?

Answers will vary.

Possible answer: The South was where important people lived, fought, and died. The country should stay united since we share a history.