

Journal Activity – Here Comes the Sun

“Here Comes the Sun” – listen ([Beatles](#) and/or [Nina Simone](#)), answer the questions, share out

Here comes the sun, doo-doo-doo-doo
Here comes the sun, and I say
It's alright

Little darlin', it's been a long, cold, lonely winter
Little darlin', it feels like years since it's been here

Here comes the sun, doo-doo-doo-doo
Here comes the sun, and I say
It's alright

Little darlin', the smile's returning to their faces
Little darlin', it seems like years since it's been here

Here comes the sun
Here comes the sun, and I say
It's alright

Sun, sun, sun, here it comes
Sun, sun, sun, here it comes
Sun, sun, sun, here it comes
Sun, sun, sun, here it comes
Sun, sun, sun, here it comes

Little darlin', I feel that ice is slowly melting
Little darlin', it seems like years since it's been clear

Here comes the sun, doo-doo-doo-doo
Here comes the sun, and I say
It's alright

Here comes the sun, doo-doo-doo-doo
Here comes the sun
It's alright

It's alright

Source: [Musixmatch](#); Songwriters: George Harrison

Questions to consider:

- "Here comes the sun, and I say it's ..." What would *you* say next?
- What is this song about for you?
- Do you have any connections to the song?

Here Comes the Sun – Instructions for Teachers, grades 9-12

Essential Question: What does the sun on the Speaker’s Chair mean to you today?

1. Provide students with the Journal Activity sheet and explain that they will be thinking about the symbolism of a sun in this activity. Play one or both of the “Here Comes the Sun” song versions (Beatles or Nina Simone).
2. Ask students to read the lyrics to “Here Comes the Sun” and respond in writing to the questions at the bottom of the Journal Activity sheet. Teachers may wish to have students share out with each other in pairs or in small groups.
3. Briefly review the Constitution and the Constitutional Convention with students. Make sure the students understand the difference between the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution.
4. Show images of the Rising Sun chair and share (verbally or using the written text that accompanies this activity) Franklin’s observations about the symbolism on the chair. Teachers may wish to have the students write down how they think Franklin interpreted the sun before telling them that he believed it to be a rising sun.

Background Information about the Constitutional Convention

The Constitutional Convention, also known as the Federal Convention, took place inside Independence Hall in Philadelphia from May 25 to September 17, 1787. It was convened to address the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation, which had governed the newly independent United States since the Revolutionary War.

Delegates from 12 of the 13 states attended the Convention (Rhode Island abstained). Prominent figures such as George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, and James Madison were among the delegates. The Convention quickly shifted from merely amending the Articles of Confederation to drafting an entirely new constitution due to the scale of the required changes.

Debates and compromises centered on crucial issues, such as representation in the legislature, the division of powers between the federal and state governments, the balance of power among different branches of the federal government, slavery, and commerce. After months of deliberation and negotiation, the delegates established a federal system of government with separation of powers among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. The delegates signed the document inside Independence Hall on September 17, 1787. The Constitution's ratification process required approval from at least nine of the thirteen states.

The Constitution continues to provide a framework for the federal government's functioning and the protection of some individual rights through its amendments, notably the Bill of Rights.

The Rising Sun Chair

In the front of the Assembly Room (where the Declaration and Constitution were signed) sits the chair known today as the Rising Sun chair. It's not until the mid 1900s that the chair became known by this name, but its connection to the idea of a rising sun goes back to September 17, 1787 - the day the delegates signed the U.S. Constitution. That day, Benjamin Franklin remarked that as the men had argued that summer, he looked upon the sun carved into the chair used by the presiding officer of the Convention. He wondered if that was a rising or a setting sun. As Franklin said, "I have often ... in the course of the session ... looked at that sun behind the President without being able to tell whether it was rising or setting. But now at length I have the happiness to know it is a rising and not a setting sun." For Franklin, that sun - in his estimation a rising one - symbolized hope for the new nation.

John Folwell made this chair for the Speaker of the Pennsylvania legislature in 1779. It remains a mystery as to who selected the symbols carved on the chair, including the sun and liberty cap and pole that appear on the chair's crest rail. The liberty cap and liberty pole are ancient symbols for the quest for freedom from tyranny. The cornucopias and wheat sheaves on the chair's back speak to Pennsylvania's agricultural bounty. Made of mahogany, a wood typically harvested in the Caribbean by enslaved people, this chair achieved lasting fame as the seat for George Washington as the President of the Constitutional Convention.

When the Pennsylvania legislature moved on to the new state capitals - Lancaster in 1799 and Harrisburg in 1812 - they took the chair with them. The legislature returned the chair to the City of Philadelphia for display in the Assembly Room on George Washington's birthday in 1867.



