Chapter 22

**Echo: National Anthems and National Identity**

This activity corresponds to “National Anthems and National Identity” feature in your textbook. The following questions are designed to help you to re-evaluate the significance of national anthems. Once you have answered the questions in the Comprehension section, submit your answers and move on to the questions in the Analysis and Outside Sources sections. Each section is designed to build upon the one before it, taking you deeper into the subject you are studying. After you have answered all of the questions, you will have the option of emailing your responses to your instructor.

**Introduction**

The national anthem of a nation can be a powerful experience, filled with memories, emotions, pain, and joy. It can also provoke defiance, outrage, and even embarrassment, depending on the circumstances. One only has to remember the storm of criticism that broke out after a famous American comedian gave her raucous and, to many, outrageous rendition of the American National Anthem at a well-publicized baseball game. However, for most people, the national anthem in a particular nation is filled with the national history of that nation. The *Hatikvah*, Israel’s national anthem, was written seventy-five years before the nation even existed. In some nations, such as post-Soviet Russia, the conversation over a revision of the national anthem could easily become a debate over what an anthem should represent. Canada and Australia’s decisions to replace their national anthems provoked lively and often amusing debates over why there was such a fuss to change.

**Comprehension**

1. Why do nations have national anthems? What purpose does a national anthem serve for a people or a nation?

2. How does the history of the German national anthem, *Deutschland, über alles*, reflect the uneasiness over the nation’s past?

3. How was the French national anthem, *La Marseillaise*, an expression of the events during the time it was adopted? How was it also a problem for the nation after the radicalism of the French Revolution had been superseded by the more conservative forces of the Napoleonic and Second Empires, as well as by succeeding French Bourbon kings?

**Analysis**

1. What does a national anthem say about the national identity of its people?
2. Why do nations decide to change their national anthems?

3. If you were choosing a new national anthem for your nation, what would your criteria be for your new anthem? Which anthem would you choose?

Outside Sources

1. The website at http://www.national-symbol.com/ gives comprehensive access to national anthems, seals, flags, and other pertinent information about the world’s nations. Choose three nations and compare their national anthems.

2. Another website, http://www.national-anthems.net/, gives downloadable versions of the world’s national anthems. Listen to several national anthems and discuss how the tune of the anthem affects its meaning.