

History Note 6(b) Trace, then write the sentence.

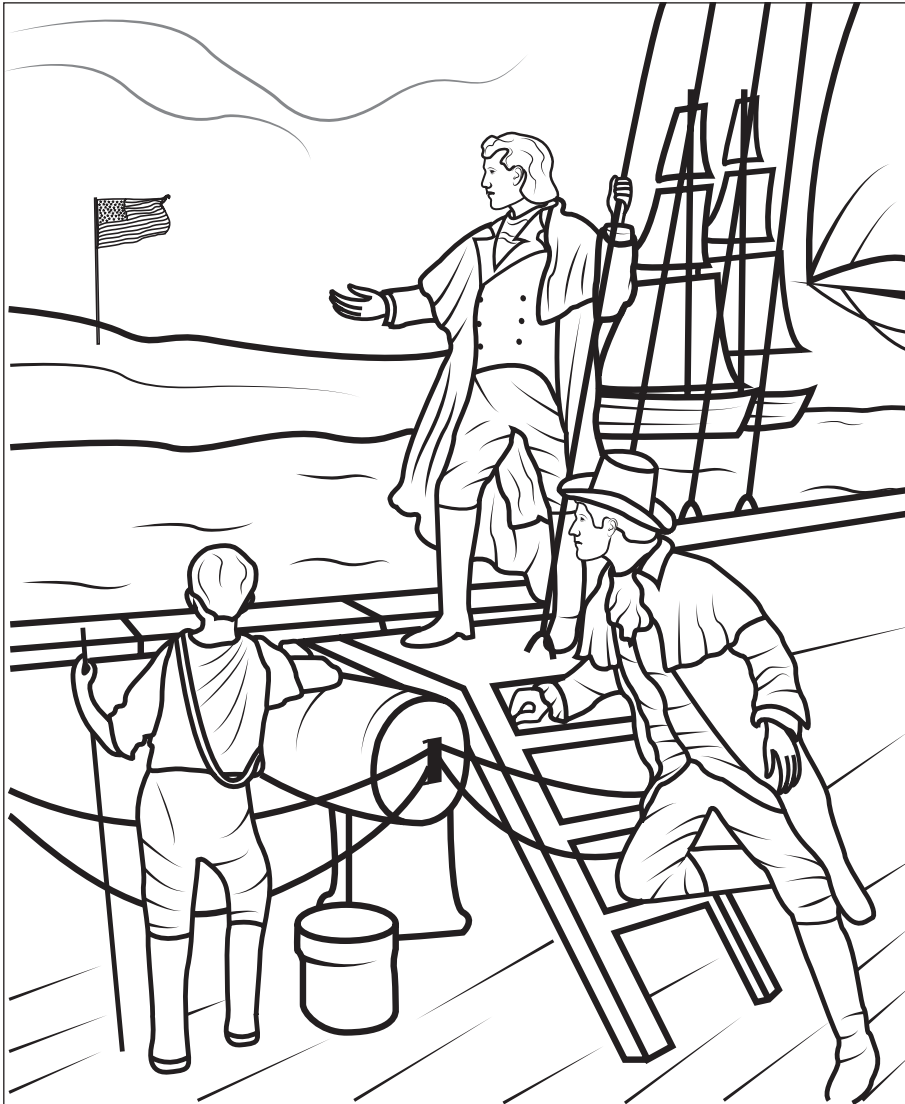
In 1803, the purchase of Louisiana from

France prompted westward exploration by

pioneers, such as Lewis and Clark and

Congressman Davy Crockett.

Focal Point



Francis Scott Key sees the U.S. flag, the “Star-Spangled Banner”

This composition captures the moment when Francis Scott Key composed a poem that was later given the title “The Star-Spangled Banner.” You may recognize the title because it is famous. It became the national anthem of the United States of America! Do you know the words to the song? It begins like this:

*Oh, say, can you see, by the dawn’s early light,
What so proudly we hail’d at the twilight’s last gleaming?*

What do you think they were hailing? The American flag, also known as the Star-Spangled Banner. Can you see it in this drawing? It is small, in the distance, and in the background.

In the original painting, you can see the sky’s morning light, filled with colors of pink and gray. The artist placed the flag in the distance and made its edges blurry so that it is a bit hard to see. Notice, however, that lots of lines in the composition point right to that flag! For starters, Francis Scott Key’s outstretched arm points directly at it. The horizon line also leads the viewer’s eye to it. And can you see all that open space around the flag? All these factors make the flag the **focal point** of this composition. That means it is the point where your eye is directed to go and where your gaze wants to linger.

Try drawing this composition. Make the people and the ship in the foreground dark, but make the flag and the island in the background much lighter. This will help give your composition depth and direct the observer’s eye to the focal point: the flag.

Your drawing: