**Nationalism**

**Opinion Poll:** Answer yes or no.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ The type of government in the United States – a democracy – is the best form of

government because it permits citizens to elect their own leaders.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ I would rather live in the United States than in some other country.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Playing the national anthem before baseball games and other professional sports

events is a good idea.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ I take pride in the fact that America, despite its problems, is the most advanced

country in the world.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ People of our country are of different races and religions, but are united by the fact

that we are all Americans.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ It is appropriate to name holidays, schools, roadways, buildings, and towns in memory of

national heroes.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ I would be willing to fight for my country if it were at war.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ I would rather read about famous people from American history than about famous

people from world history.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Spies and traitors whose actions threaten the security of the United States should be

severely punished.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ If I were watching the Olympic Games, I would hope that American athletes would win.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ The Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution are documents of

which to be proud.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ I would say I am a patriotic American.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ I would enjoy visiting famous historical sites and monuments honoring America’s past.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ I am glad that many people around the world think of the United States as a “land of

opportunity.”

1. \_\_\_\_\_ It is important to have a strong national defense.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ It is nice to know what the United States, and no the Soviet Union, was the first country

to send astronauts to the moon.

Count up the number of “yes” answers in the above opinion poll. The more “yes” answers you have, the greater your feeling of nationalism towards the United States. “Nationalism” is a strong feeling of pride in one’s country or nationality. Nationalism or “patriotism” (a deep love for your country) have similar meanings.

**Nationalism and School Spirit**

Nationalism can perhaps be better understood by comparing it to school spirit. Citizens who are proud of their country are no different than students who are proud of their school. Armies on the battlefield win territory and prestige for their country in much the same way as boys’ and girls’ sports teams win victories and fame and respect for their school. Armies have generals and teams have coaches. Both use uniforms to distinguish themselves from the opposition. Both have heroes and give awards for outstanding achievement. A country has its national anthem and a school its alma mater. While a strong believer in nationalism thinks his country is the best, a student with school spirit believes their school is better than any other.

Modern nationalism began with the French Revolution. When kings of European countries sent armies to end the revolution and return a monarch to the French throne, citizens of France united in a spirit of nationalism to defend their homeland. Years later, after Napoleon had risen to power and threatened the security of Europe, feelings of nationalism aroused Great Britain, Russia, Austria, Prussia, and Spain to defeat Napoleon and protect their territory and rest of the Europe.

Nationalism remained a strong force through the rest of the 19th century and into the 20th century. Nationalism showed itself in different ways. In some countries, citizens united in an effort to gain a voice in their government, human rights, and even independence. On other occasions, nationalism led countries to compete for colonies and control of the world trade routes. At its best, nationalism was a healthy form of patriotism, but at its worst, it led to warfare and to the persecution of certain national groups by foreign countries that governed them.

**Nationalism in the 1800s**

Pretend that you are living in the 1800s and that you have just become the leader of a country in Europe. Your nation has suffered through years of poor government, hard economic times, and disastrous wars. You have decided to use nationalism to rally your discouraged people and raise the country to a level of respect, power, and leadership in world affairs.

This goal can only be reached by getting people to be proud of their country, and by convincing them that they should put their country ahead of their own self-interests. You have a number of ideas in mind to achieve your objective. There are also many important decisions that you must make regarding your nation’s government, armed forces, foreign trade, system of taxation, etc.

1. To create the impression of a “new beginning” for your country, you have decided to change the country’s name. What will the new name be?
2. List & explain 5 strategies which you would enact in order to build nationalism in your country. Be specific – explain how exactly you would enact the strategy & how it would help build nationalism. (Do about 2 sentences per strategy. Be creative!)