**Patriotism Synthesis Question**

(Suggested time 40 minutes)

**Directions:** The following prompt is based on the accompanying six sources.

This question requires you to synthesize a variety of sources into a coherent, well-written essay. Synthesis refers to combing the sources and your position to form a cohesive, supported argument and accurately citing sources. Your argument should be central; the sources should support this argument. Avoid merely summarizing sources.

Remember to attribute both direct and indirect citations.

**Introduction**

Many Americans express a concern about the decline of patriotism in our national culture. Politics, foreign affairs, and the state of the national economy are often attributed to negatively influencing patriotic feeling. In light of our current involvement in international conflict, other Americans express a high level of patriotism especially in support of our military.

**Assignment**

Read the following sources (including the introductory information) carefully. **Then write an essay in which you develop a position on the importance of patriotism in American culture. Synthesize at least three of the sources for support.**

You may refer to the sources by their titles (Source A, Source B, etc.) or by the description in parentheses.

Source A (Mark Twain)

Source B (Younger Americans)

Source C (John McCain)

Source D (Pew Graph)

Source E (Robbins)

Source F (Kennedy)

**Source A---Quotes on Patriotism from Mark Twain**

In the beginning of a change the patriot is a scarce man, and brave, and hated and scorned. When his cause succeeds, the timid join him, for then it costs nothing to be a patriot.  
- Notebook, 1904

Man is the only Patriot. He sets himself apart in his own country, under his own flag, and sneers at the other nations, and keeps multitudinous uniformed assassins on hand at heavy expense to grab slices of other people's countries, and keep them from grabbing slices of his. And in the intervals between campaigns he washes the blood of his hands and works for "the universal brotherhood of man"- with his mouth.  
- "The Lowest Animal"

The soul and substance of what customarily ranks as patriotism is moral cowardice -- and always has been.  
- *Mark Twain's Notebook*  
  
[Patriotism] ...is a word which always commemorates a robbery. There isn't a foot of land in the world which doesn't represent the ousting and re-ousting of a long line of successive "owners" who each in turn, as "patriots" with proud swelling hearts defended it against the next gang of "robbers" who came to steal it and did -- and became swelling-hearted patriots in their turn.  
- *Mark Twain's Notebook*

We have a bastard Patriotism, a sarcasm, a burlesque; but we have no such thing as a public conscience. Politically we are just a joke.  
- marginalia written in Clemens's copy of *The Future in America; A Search After Realities* byH. G. Wells

...the true patriotism, the only rational patriotism, is loyalty to the Nation ALL the time, loyalty to the Government when it deserves it.  
- "The Czar's Soliloquy"

**Source B----A Survey Says** © 2014 The New York Times Company JULY 4, 2014

**Younger Americans Are Less Patriotic. At Least, in Some Ways. Written by** Lynn Vavreck

Americans are a patriotic bunch. Compared with people in most other countries, [Americans express more pride](http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSOnline.jsp) in their nationality, and most say that being an American is an important part of their identity.

Even so, patriotism in America is on the decline.

But the decline seems to have more to do with reactions to the symbols of American democracy than its values. Older Americans remain remarkably high in their devotion to symbols like the flag, while young citizens are cooler toward Old Glory but express higher support for classic American ideals like equality and opportunity.

The patterns suggest the shifts are generational and not driven by stages in the life cycle. Past generations have declined only marginally in their nationalism over time – they start out high and mainly remain so. But today’s youngest generation begins adulthood with much lower levels of fondness for the symbols of America, and if the past is a guide, there is no reason to expect increases as they age.

Measures of American patriotism over the last several decades are found in the [American National Election Study](http://electionstudies.org) (A.N.E.S.), the nation’s longest-running data collection on political attitudes and behavior. Started in 1948, the A.N.E.S. is funded by the [National Science Foundation,](http://www.nsf.gov) and the interviews are done in person every four years, in the homes of nearly 2,000

…a question asking how people “feel about this country.” More than 95 percent of Americans either love or like their country, with 70 percent saying “love it” and only one-third of one percent saying “hate it.” Sixty-one percent say that being an American is “extremely important” on a personal level. Only 1.5 percent say it is “not at all important.”

There are small differences in levels of patriotism across political parties, between men and women, and among racial groups, but these patterns pale in comparison to the differences across generations, with overt patriotism shifting down with age. Here’s a striking example: 81 percent of the Silent Generation (those who are 69 to 86 years old in 2014) love America while only 58 percent of millennials (18 to 33 years old) feel the same. Born between 1928 and 1945, the Silent Generation fought both the wars in Korea and Vietnam. Thirty-one percent of them report that they personally served on active duty in the United States Armed Forces. Only 4 percent of millennials have done so.

Seventy-eight percent of the older generation consider their American identity to be extremely important. That drops to 70 percent for baby boomers (50 to 68 years), 60 percent of Generation X’ers (34 to 49 years), and only 45 percent of young adults define themselves this way. And while 94 percent of the Silent Generation say that seeing the U.S. flag flying makes them feel extremely or very good, only 67 percent of millennials muster the same affection.

Source C----The Virtues of the Quiet Hero

John McCain - Washington, District of Columbia

As heard on NPR’s *All Things Considered*, October 17, 2005

I believe in honor, faith, and service — to one’s country and to mankind. It’s a lesson I learned from my family, from the men with whom I served in Vietnam and from my fellow Americans.

Take William B. Ravnel. He was in Patton’s tank corps that went across Europe. I knew him, though, as an English teacher and football coach in my school. He could make Shakespeare come alive and he had incredible leadership talents that made me idolize him. What he taught me more than anything else was to strictly adhere to our school’s honor code. If we stuck to those standards of integrity and honor then we could be proud of ourselves. We could serve causes greater than our own self-interest.

Years later, I saw an example of honor in the most surprising of places. As a scared American prisoner of war in Vietnam, I was tied in torture ropes by my tormentors and left alone in an empty room to suffer through the night. Later in the evening, a guard I had never spoken to entered the room and silently loosened the ropes to relieve my suffering. Just before morning, that same guard came back and re-tightened the ropes before his less humanitarian comrades returned. He never said a word to me.

Some months later on a Christmas morning, as I stood alone in the prison courtyard, that same guard walked up to me and stood next to me for a few moments. Then with his sandal, the guard drew a cross in the dirt. We stood wordlessly there for a minute or two, venerating the cross, until the guard rubbed it out and walked away.

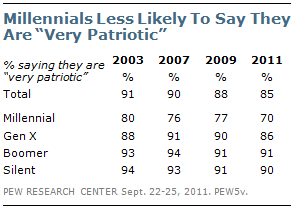
To me, that was faith: a faith that unites and never divides, a faith that bridges unbridgeable gaps in humanity. It is the faith that we are all equal and endowed by our Creator with inalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. It is the faith I would die to defend.

My determination to act with honor and integrity impels me to work in service to my country. I have believed that the means to real happiness and the true worth of a person is measured by how faithfully we serve a cause greater than our self-interest. In America, we celebrate the virtues of the quiet hero — the modest man who does his duty without complaint or expectation of praise; the man who listens closely for the call of his country, and when she calls, he answers without reservation, not for fame or reward, but for love.

I have been an imperfect servant of my country and my mistakes rightly humble me. I have tried to live by these principles of honor, faith and service because I want my children to live by them as well. I hope to be a good example to them so that when their generation takes our place, they will make better decisions and continue to pave the path towards righteousness and freedom.

*John McCain is the son and grandson of Navy admirals. After graduating from Annapolis as a naval aviator, McCain was shot down over North Vietnam and spent five years as a prisoner of war. He has been a U.S. Senator from Arizona since 1986 and ran for President in 2000 and 2008.*

**Source D**



**Source E----**Patriotism not thoughtless nationalism: Column (excerpt)

James S. Robbins 4:53 p.m. EDT July 2, 2013---*USA TODAY*

This Fourth of July, Americans should focus on what we have in common and reflect on our future. Public confidence in national institutions is at a historic low. For some, the word patriot has become a rallying cry. For others, it is a dirty word. Patriotism is not a thoughtless glorification of all things American, whether good or ill.

America's [237th birthday](http://www.army.mil/birthday/237/) arrives with the country deeply divided. Whether over politics, policies or lifestyles, Americans seem to be gravitating into distinct and irreconcilable camps. In Washington, partisanship in the halls of Congress has grown to levels not seen since the decades following the Civil War. Public confidence in national institutions such as the government, the news media, big business and big labor is at a historic low. Common ground is vanishing. Civility is in short supply. The country is hanging together, but who knows for how long.

However, divisiveness is not destiny. A core set of American values remains, rooted in freedom and the experience of generations of self-government. They encompass the American dream of a better life for our children. They are an expression of life and liberty of a free people. July 4 should be a time to join together and focus on the commonalities of life in this country. It is a day to celebrate freedom and reflect on the future of the American experiment.

[Independence Day](http://www.usa.gov/Topics/Independence-Day.shtml) is our patriotic holiday. For some, the word patriot has become a rallying cry. For others it is a dirty word, implying thoughtless nationalism. But most Americans believe it accurately describes them. The American values poll taken annually by the Pew Research Center for People and the Press shows that the percentage of people who agree with the statement "I am very patriotic" has been right around [90% in every poll](http://www.pewresearch.org/2007/06/27/who-flies-the-flag-not-always-who-you-might-think/) since the center began asking the question in 1987.

Granted, patriot can mean different things to different people, but that has always been the case. The word is far older than the United States. Today, we associate the word patriot with the American revolutionaries, but various parties in the British Parliament also referred to themselves as patriots. And King George III had long been known as "[the patriot king](http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/1894555?uid=3739936&uid=2&uid=4&uid=3739256&sid=21102402693241)," a title he inherited from his father. Thus, every side in the American Revolution claimed to be patriotic, except the [Hessian mercenaries](http://www.studymode.com/essays/Hessian-German-Soldiers-Mercenaries-Revolutionary-War-147601.html) hired by Britain.

In finding a way to unite around the patriotic feeling that is common across that 90% of Americans, it is tempting to look to political leaders, but they might be more the cause of division than its cure. Campaign pledges of post-partisanship and bridge-building have foundered on the hard rocks of power politics. This is a bipartisan problem and has grown more severe in the 21st century. [According to Gallup surveys](http://www.gallup.com/poll/160097/obama-fourth-year-office-ties-polarized-ever.aspx), nine of the 10 most polarized years took place during the presidencies of George W. Bush and Barack Obama, even as both men ran on the idea of uniting a divided nation.

…If that is to change, the people, not politicians, must be the ones to do the work. They can recapture the American spirit, consciously embrace the American identity and seek common ground. Accept a shared history and common vision for the future based on American principles. Tone down the disputes that ravage the body politic. Heat up the melting pot and stop drawing lines that divide people. End the fighting over the supposed moral high ground that has left it a burned over hill. Rediscover the positive virtues and harness the natural optimism of a free people.

Patriotism is not a thoughtless glorification of all things American, whether good or ill. It is the recognition of American ideals, and a belief in seeking the best for the country as a whole. It is a reaffirmation of the aspects of Americanism that speak to the best in everyone.

Patriotism is a commendable sentiment. It is only through nurturing this sense of goodness and recognizing it in each other, even those with whom we disagree, that the country can survive, if it is meant to. There is nothing wrong with the USA that couldn't be fixed if the country had more American patriots.

**Source F--- Inaugural Address by John F. Kennedy, January 20, 1961**

The text of this speech is in the public domain.

*This is part of the speech that John F. Kennedy gave when he became President of the United States.*

In your hands, my fellow citizens, more than in mine, will rest the final success or failure of our course. Since this country was founded, each generation of Americans has been summoned to give testimony to its national loyalty. The graves of young Americans who answered the call to service surround the globe.

Now the trumpet summons us again - not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need; not as a call to battle, though embattled we are - but a call to bear the burden of a long twilight struggle, year in and year out, "rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation" - a struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease, and war itself.

Can we forge against these enemies a grand and global alliance, North and South, East and West, that can assure a more fruitful life for all mankind? Will you join in that historic effort?

In the long history of the world, only a few generations have been granted the role of defending freedom in its hour of maximum danger. I do not shank from this responsibility – I welcome it. I do not believe that any of us would exchange places with any other people or any other generation. The energy, the faith, the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will light our country and all who serve it -- and the glow from that fire can truly light the world.

And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you -- ask what you can do for your country.

My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man.

Finally, whether you are citizens of America or citizens of the world, ask of us the same high standards of strength and sacrifice which we ask of you. With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God's work must truly be our own.