

New Internationalist

The people, the ideas, the action in the fight for global justice

Kneeling



New Internationalist Easier English

Ready Intermediate Lesson

This lesson:

- **Vocabulary**
- **Reading**
- **Grammar**
- **Speaking**



Protests



Make a list of the different ways people can protest and the reasons why people protest.

How?	Why?

Do you know what these words mean?

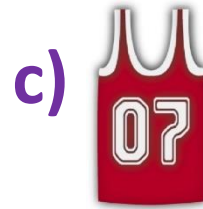
Discuss or look them up:

- **a national anthem**
- **racism**
- **brutality**
- **patriotic**
- **a jersey**
- **a critic**
- **to criticise**
- **a fist**

Match:

- 1) a national anthem
- 2) racism
- 3) brutality
- 4) patriotic
- 5) a critic
- 6) to criticise
- 7) a jersey
- 8) a fist
- 9) patriotism

a) the belief that a group of people, eg white people, are better than others



d) a country's song

e) cruel or violent action

f) someone who says they do not like something

g) say you do not like something

h) showing love for your country

i) the feeling of love for your country



What do you think?

- 1) What is his job?
- 2) Where is he from?
- 3) Why is he kneeling?

Now read and check.

Now read and check your answers:

The San Francisco 49ers is an American football team. On 26 August 2016, just before a game against the Green Bay Packers, one of their team, Colin Kaepernick made a famous decision. He did not stand during the singing of the national anthem. He knelt.

Kaepernick explained that it was a protest against racism and police brutality against African Americans. He said, 'To me, this is bigger than football and it would be wrong for me to look the other way, There are bodies in the street and people are getting away with murder.'

What do you think the answers are to these questions?

- 1) Everyone agreed with Colin Kaepernick. Yes/no?**
- 2) The US government wants people to sing the national anthem. Yes/no?**
- 3) Colin Kaepernick only knelt before one football game. Yes/no?**

Now read and check your answers:

But some people thought Kaepernick was unpatriotic. Since 9/11, the national anthem before a game is now an act of patriotism. The Department of Defence has given millions of dollars to professional sports teams to support this.

Of course there are always a lot of critics who say people are protesting in the wrong way. Some liberals said Kaepernick was not showing respect.

But Kaepernick knelt before other games and the positive points were clear. A reporter in the New York Times wrote, 'Show a photo of Kaepernick's protest to someone who has never seen a football game or heard the national anthem or has no idea about race relations in this country, and they will understand it.'

What do you think happened next?

- 1) Another football player in Colin's team knelt during the national anthem. Yes/no?
- 2) Football players from other teams knelt during the national anthem. Yes/no?
- 3) Players from different sports knelt. Yes/no?
- 4) School children knelt. Yes/no?
- 5) Fans knelt. Yes/no?
- 6) A lot of people are buying Colin's football jersey. Yes/no?

Now read and check:

When it seemed that Kaepernick was possibly one of the most hated sports people in America, something interesting happened. Eric Reed, another player for the San Francisco 49ers did the same thing. 'I wanted him to know that he's not the only person who feels what he feels,' Reed said.

Other American footballers did the same thing. Arian Foster from the Miami Dolphins asked many of his team to protest. And Marcus Peters from the Kansas City Chiefs raised his fist during the anthem like the Black Power salute at the 1968 Olympics.

By the middle of September, there were many, many protests in different sports. Women's soccer star Megan Rapinoe, who is white, knelt to protest. She said, 'Everyone needs to protest about problems in our country, not only people of colour.' In women's basketball, all of Indiana Fever team knelt before a game. High-school sports teams did the same. In Oakland, members of the school band knelt together as they played the anthem. A singer knelt before a Sacramento Kings basketball game. Even fans have knelt.

The New York Times wrote that after two months hundreds of Kaepernicks are kneeling everywhere. A lot of conservative football fans do not agree with Kaepernick but Kaepernick's #7 jersey is selling fast. In social movements, there are always discussions about the best way to protest. The protesters have every right to talk about which kinds of protest help and which do not help

Tell the story:

26 August 2016/Colin Kaepernick/decision.
He/not stand/the national anthem.

He/  .

It/a protest/racism.

Kaepernick/  /before other games.

Other American footballers/the same thing.

After 2 months/hundreds.

How about you?



**Is there something you
would like to protest about?
How would you protest?**