

Unit Packet: A New Government

Vocabulary Terms

Create two columns. In the left column, define each vocabulary term. In the right column, describe the historical significance of each term.

People and Groups

- George Washington
- Alexander Hamilton
- James Madison
- Thomas Jefferson
- Democratic Republicans
- Federalists
- John Adams

Events

- Judiciary Act
- Whiskey Rebellion
- French Revolution
- Jay's Treaty
- XYZ Affair
- Alien and Sedition Acts
- Election of 1800

Short Answer Questions

Answer each of the following questions in 3-5 complete sentences.

1. How did the issue of national debt lead to controversy? How was this controversy resolved?
2. What did the national bank do to help the economy? Why might anti-Federalists be concerned about the creation of a national bank?
3. What were Americans divided in their response to the French Revolution?
4. What issues did Washington raise in his farewell address?
5. Describe the different view that Hamilton and Jefferson had on four issues of the day.
6. How did newspapers play a role in the growth of political parties?
7. How might the Kentucky and Virginia resolutions pose a threat to the newly formed United States government?

Performance Tasks

Choose one of the following tasks to complete to show your understanding of the historical era.

- Task #1 – Write a newspaper article for publication in the *Gazette of the United States* or the *National Gazette* responding to the Alien and Sedition Acts.
- Task #2 – Create two political cartoons, one from the Republican point of view and one from the Federalist point of view, about a controversial issue of the day.
- Task #3 – Perform a commercial supporting either Jefferson or Adams for President in the election of 1800.

Supplementary Reading: Poems on History

FATHER TO A COUNTRY

And with new plans in hand, they started from zero
With all eyes turning to a national hero.
Sure hands were needed, and 'twas plainly evident:
One man fit the bill to set the *precedent*.

Yes, known all throughout as brave and magnanimous,
Old George was picked --- the vote was *unanimous*.
As every move to be made on his shoulders would fall
To carve out a groove to be followed by all.

So Washington stepped forth to the land's highest station,
President elect of our fledgling nation.
The crowds gathered and cheered as he swept by on his
horse,
With faith to a man that he'd steer a fine course,

There was no doubt this high office all would respect
With the honor and stature this man did reflect.
But to mold a new future was to handle fresh clay,
And sage counsel was called for, to help chart the way.

So George called on his friends to have a part in it
(A group we now call a president's *cabinet*),
And argue all sides over which roads to take
And what sort of country their efforts should make.

But one thing was certain: these states were united,
With no going back to when things were divided.
As Pops to a nation, George set a strong tone,
With purpose and poise and with mighty backbone.

And when riots broke out in the backcountry woods,
The moment had come to show how things stood.
As farmers and brewers and some local rapsCALLION
Stirred trouble and strife in *The Whiskey Rebellion*.

But George's will was firm, there was no backing down,
And people soon knew: there was a new boss in town!
Troops were dispatched; the message quite clear:
These lands would see order, and law would persevere...

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION & AMERICAN NEUTRALITY

Now, when we salute our national flag,
Of those star and those stripes we often do brag
Of the model they set for the world to see:
The twin hopes of *freedom* and *democracy*.

And in 1789 over in France
Word passed all around to now seize the chance!
To take arms and to stage a revolt of their own
-- Europe's future had come, and it glimmered and shone!

And Tom Jefferson, who was *Secretary of State*,
Sought out support for the French in their Fate,
As *les gens* took to the streets, to demand a new way:
Of *liberte, egalite, et fraternite*.

And recalling those days when France came to our aid,
Some thought that a debt could now be repaid.
But as event in Paris turned bloody and brutal,
Many other advised to stay even and neutral.

As French nobles were first, followed by King and by
Queen
To have their head chopped off by the *guillotine*!
While the friendship we owed to the French *nation-state*,
We owed to *King Louis* --- alas, now missing one pate.

And with Europe in throes half the world away
It seemed good advice to keep out of the fray.
For this tender young land had its own scars to heal,
And a part in more violence had but little appeal.

So Washington proclaimed, and he struck a deep chord,
In the wars of the world, we should not raise a sword.
And unless forced to fight, we ought keep as our plan:
To stay friends with all nations... as much as we can.

And to not be entangled in foreign relations,
But to prosper and grow in calm *isolation*,
Was the last bit of wisdom he took time to express,
When after eight years, George gave his *Farewell
Address*.

Supplementary Reading: Poems on History

THE EMERGENCE OF POLITICAL PARTIES

Now, Old George was wary of all *parties* and *cliques*,
With their bitter sharp tongues and their acrid conflicts.
As he bid *adieu*, he had this thought to impart:
Don't let petty squabbling tear our nation apart!

Ah, but rivalry most pitched was soon to exist
Between *Democrat-Republicans* and *Federalists*.
Which came as no shock; yes, 'twas mostly foreseen,
What with such strong-minded people, rambunctious and keen.

And all toting ideas for our government's role:
How much to let happen, and how much to control.
And where Federalists sought to give government sway,
The Republicans did aim to keep it squarely at bay.

'Tis a profound debate, it may well last forever
-- Though not soon again by minds quite as clever,
As along with John Adams, and his lawyerly bent,
The Federalists had Hamilton camped in their tent.

And as good friend to merchants and to business, of course,
Was the notion of nation these gents did endorse.
(And for the thought to begin a *national bank*,
We've that man on the ten-note to acknowledge and thank).

But not all were pleased with this new use of power
-- Tom Jefferson, for one, thought it tasted quite sour.
As already he feared that the U.S. of A.
Had let government grown in an unsavory way.

So Republicans rallied to Tom's stirring clear voice
When he called for the states to be granted more choice.
-- Not the view, to be sure, of keen Mister Hamilton,
But it found strong support, including James Madison...

While in matters of money, he was wont to declare:
Let it fend for itself, what we call "*laissez-faire*".
And athwart tides of power, Tom claimed it was best
For farmers and plainfolk to decide their interests.

THE ELECTION OF 1800

Now, John Adams raised taxes and was viciously mocked.
Taxes aren't much liked --- or aren't you shocked?
And when the mean words reached a frightful condition,
New laws were set forth to ban such *sedition*.

Which is the stir of trouble with a whiff of treason
-- Though 'twas often mis-used for political reason,
To scare all the writers with their harsh views to express,
By those hopping-mad from all the bad press.

And the Republicans balked: free speech is protected
By Amendment the First, and it can't be rejected.
So Jefferson spoke out with some sharps words to convey:
Of laws so *despotic*... the states need not obey!

'Twas alarming, indeed, with grave ramification
To propose a state's right to *nullification*.
Hence the pot was aboil for the next election
As Adams and Jefferson both stood for selection...

Now plenty did think Mister Adams quite rotten.
He raised taxes, of course --- or had you forgotten?
But the tally of votes brought the strangest of spins:
A tie; yes, a tie... between Republicans!

As four names were put forth, but nowhere quite evident,
Who ran to be Vice and who ran to be President.
And how Jefferson fumed, how his teeth did gnaw:
The man picked as his second refused to withdraw!

Aaron Burr was the name at the point of deadlock,
The House tried 35 votes --- but got the same shock!
A strange bird, this Burr, who was meant to be V.P.,
And who, in Hamilton's eyes, was a creature most creepy.

While in spite of their tussles and no matter what,
Every inch of old T.J. was a true *patriot*.
So Alex talked to a friend, to vote Jefferson in,
-- An odd way, to be sure, for bright Thomas to win.

Supplementary Reading: National Bank

Background

Alexander Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury under President George Washington, wanted to create a national bank. The bank would be controlled jointly by the federal government and individuals. The bank would hold the government's money and also provide the paper currency for the United States. Some people protested that this bank would favor rich businessmen in the Northeast. Others did not feel that the government should have the power to create such a bank. But other Americans did support the bank. The Bank of the United States was approved by Congress in 1791. Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson wrote a formal opinion to President Washington expressing his view of the national bank. The following is an excerpt from that letter.

Thomas Jefferson's View of the National Bank:

I consider the foundation of the Constitution as laid on this ground -- that all powers not delegated to the United States, by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states, or to the people (Tenth Amendment). To take a single step beyond the boundaries thus specially drawn around the powers of Congress, is to take possession of a boundless field of power, no longer susceptible of any definition. The incorporation of a bank, and the powers assumed by this bill, have not, in my opinion, been delegated to the United States by the Constitution.

Supplementary Reading: Whiskey Rebellion

Background

The federal government began to tax whiskey in 1791. Many protested the tax, especially farmers in western Pennsylvania. These farmers profited from making whiskey out of grain. This tax hurt them directly and they did not pay it. Some farmers used violence against the tax collectors and local police. The federal government was forced to respond.

George Washington's Response to the Whiskey Rebellion:

[B]y a law of the United States entitled 'An act to provide for calling forth the militia to execute the laws of the Union, suppress insurrections, and repel invasions,' it is enacted 'that whenever the laws of the United States shall be opposed or the execution thereof obstructed in any State by combinations too powerful to be suppressed by the ordinary course of judicial proceedings...it shall be lawful for the President of the United States to call forth the militia of such State to suppress such combinations and to cause the laws to be duly executed. And if the militia of the State where such combinations may happen shall refuse or be insufficient to suppress the same, it shall be lawful for the President, if the Legislature of the United States shall not be in session, to call forth and employ such numbers of the militia of any other State or States most convenient thereto as may be necessary;...'

Supplementary Reading: Response to the Alien and Sedition Acts

Background

As a young nation, the United States feared being drawn into wars between England and France. In 1798, after a diplomatic incident in which French officials insulted the American officials by demanding a bribe, Congress passed, and President John Adams signed into law, the Alien and Sedition Acts. The Alien Act controlled immigration from Europe and made it harder for an immigrant to become an American citizen. The Sedition Act made it illegal for anyone to say, write, or publish criticism of the government or of the President. People who violated the Alien Act would be thrown out of the country; people who violated the Sedition Act would be fined and jailed. Virginia and Kentucky denounced the Alien and Sedition Acts as unconstitutional, but the other state governments refused to listen. James Madison wrote the Virginia Resolutions, Thomas Jefferson wrote the Kentucky Resolutions.

Virginia's Response to the Alien and Sedition Acts:

That the General Assembly doth particularly PROTEST against the palpable and alarming infractions of the Constitution in the two late cases of the 'Alien and Sedition Acts,' passed at the last session of Congress; the first of which exercises a power nowhere delegated to the Federal Government... and the other of which acts exercises, in like manner, a power not delegated by the Constitution, but, on the contrary, expressly and positively forbidden by one of the amendments thereto, --a power which, more than any other, ought to produce universal alarm, because it is leveled against the right of freely examining public characters and measures, and of free communication among the people thereon, which has ever been justly deemed the only effectual guardian of every other right.