

LONG MAY IT WAVE:



Fort MCHenry and the War of 1812

A National Curriculum for Grades 4 through 8



Developed by the Friends of Fort MCHenry in collaboration with Fort MCHenry National Monument & Historic Shrine and the Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail

Funding provided by the National Park Service, Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network

LESSON TITLE: Should America Have Gone to War in 1812?

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LESSON EDITOR: Jennifer Frieman
DATE: May 2011

COURSE/GRADE: Social Studies, Grade 8

UNIT: The New Nation
TIME NEEDED: Two 45-minute class periods

LESSON OVERVIEW:

The War of 1812 had many supporters as well as those opposed to going to war. Given the different economic, political and geographic priorities in the United States, should America have gone to war in 1812?

OUTCOMES: At the end of this lesson, students will be able to explain the arguments for and against going to war in 1812 and evaluate America's best option.

OBJECTIVES:

Focus Question for the Lesson: Should the United States have gone to war in 1812?

Historical Thinking Skill Targeted:

Historical Comprehension:

- Reconstruct the literal meaning of a historical passage.
- Evidence historical perspectives.

Historical Analysis and Interpretation:

- Compare and contrast differing sets of ideas.
- Consider multiple perspectives.

Historical Research Capabilities:

- Interrogate historical data.

Historical Issue Analysis and Decision Making:

- Evaluate alternative courses of action.
- Formulate a position or course of action on an issue.

Maryland State Curriculum Content Objectives:

5.C.2 Analyze the emerging foreign policy of the United States.

5.C.2.a. Explain why the United States adopted a policy of neutrality prior to the War of 1812

5.C.2. b. Explain how the continuing conflict between Great Britain and France influenced the domestic and foreign policy of the United States

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Maryland State Curriculum Skills and Processes Objectives:

- 6.A.2.a Set a purpose for reading
- 6.A.2.e Make connections to the text using prior knowledge and experiences
- 6.A.3.c Use a graphic organizer or another note-taking technique to record important ideas or information
- 6.A.4.i. Draw conclusions and make generalizations based on the text, multiple texts, and/or prior knowledge.
- 6.A.3. Use formal writing, such as multi-paragraph essays, historical investigations, editorials and letters to persuade.
- 6.A.3.b. State a clear opinion or position
- 6.F.3. Synthesize information from a variety of sources.
- 6.F.3.b Reconstruct the arguments of issues or events.

Common Core State Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies (Grades 6-8):

- RH.6-8.1. Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- RH.6-8.2. Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.
- RH.6-8.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.
- RH.6-8.8. Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.
- RH.6-8.10. By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

MATERIALS:

1. Class set of Primary Source Analysis worksheet
2. Class set of War in 1812 Decision-making worksheet
3. Copies of the primary sources for each group.
4. Class set of War of 1812 Memo to the President writing prompt.

PRIMARY SOURCES:

Address of the Minority to their Constituents. [1812]. Annals of Congress, 12th Congress, 1st Session (1812), II, 2219-2221. Online Posting. American Memory Website. Library of Congress. Retrieved June 1, 2011 from <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage>

Clay, Henry. [February 22, 1810]. Annals of Congress, 11th Congress, 1st Session (1810), 580. Online Posting. American Memory Website. Library of Congress. Retrieved June 1, 2011 from <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage>

Grundy, Felix. [December 9, 1811]. Annals of congress, 12th Congress, 1st Session (1811), I, 424. Online Posting. American Memory Website. Library of Congress. Retrieved June 1, 2011 from <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage>

Grundy, Felix. [December 9, 1811]. Annals of congress, 12th Congress, 1st Session (1811), I, 426. Online Posting. American Memory Website. Library of Congress. Retrieved June 1, 2011 from <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage>

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Madison, James. Journal of the House of Representatives of the United States, 1811-1813. MONDAY JUNE 1, 1812. Online Posting. American Memory Website. Library of Congress. June 20, 2011. [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/hlaw:@field%20\(DOCID+@lit\(hj008201\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/hlaw:@field%20(DOCID+@lit(hj008201)))

Randolph, John. [December 9, 1811]. Annals of Congress, 12th Congress, 1st Session (1811), I, 446. Online Posting. American Memory Website. Library of Congress. Retrieved June 1, 2011 from <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage>

Randolph, John. [December 9, 1811]. Annals of Congress, 12th Congress, 1st Session (1811), I, 533. Online Posting. American Memory Website. Library of Congress. Retrieved June 1, 2011 from <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage>

SECONDARY SOURCES:

Feder, Bernard. Viewpoints: USA. (1972). Philippines: Litton Educational Publishing, 1972.

SELECTED VOCABULARY:

Maritime
Interposition
Impressment
Commerce
Embargo
Agrarian

PROCEDURE:

1) Motivation (Think-Pair-Share)

- Ask students to respond in writing to the following warm-up question:
 - o Think about any of the wars or military conflicts in which the United States has been involved in the past (from the students' own experience or from history.) What were some of the reasons people use to justify going to war?
- After students have responded in writing, ask them to share with a neighbor or partner.
- Call on students using equitable response techniques (calling cards, random number generator, numbered heads, etc.) or volunteers.
- List these reasons on the Interactive White Board (IWB), overhead, board, or chart paper.
- Some answers might include: direct threat from other country, retaliation, national security, economic gain, promote democratic ideals, recover land lost, acquire territories, establish colonies, etc.
- Now ask students what are/were some reasons people might be opposed to their country going to war?

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2) Guided Practice (Primary Source Analysis)

- Transition: Tell students that many of the reasons they gave for and against going to war were true for the War of 1812.
- Background Knowledge: Ask: Not everyone was in favor of going to war with Britain for a second time. Why not? (Use this question to see what the students may already know about the War of 1812 and to lay the foundation for the purpose of the lesson)
- Teachers may want to have already assigned a secondary text reading on the causes of the war of 1812 prior to this lesson.
- Tell students that today they will play the role of foreign policy advisor to the president and give him advice on whether or not we should go to war against Britain.
- First students must analyze the different arguments.
- Introduce or review with students the vocabulary they may come across in their documents. These words include: Maritime, Interposition, Impressment, Commerce, Embargo, Agrarian.
- Define these words as necessary with students or have them create pictures to help remember what they mean. You may want to preview the sources as well to locate other vocabulary your students may need to review ahead of time.
- Model for students how to complete the Primary Source Analysis worksheet with one of the primary sources. Model for the students a “Think-out-loud” strategy for reading the primary source. Point out key words and phrases that show the point of view of the source as well as convincing arguments for or against war.
- Decide how much direct instruction students need with this skill and either go through the entire source and document or highlight the different steps they will go through with their group. (Differentiation)
- Divide students into 5-8 groups, depending on how many primary sources you choose to use.
 - o (Differentiation: Sources B and E are more straightforward in their rhetoric for war and may be slightly easier for students to interpret.)
- Assign each group one of the primary sources.

3) Independent Practice

- Give students time in groups to work on their primary source and complete the primary source analysis worksheet.
- Circulate to check on students’ progress.
- Documents A, B, C, and F should show pro-war arguments. Documents D, E, and G should have anti-war sentiments.
- Encourage students to work collaboratively with one another to interpret their document.
- Re-number the students in groups and have them share their arguments from their original document with their new groups. OR Have each group share their document with the whole class as everyone else takes notes on their own charts. (Determine the best option for the class given the class size and ability levels, etc.) (Differentiation)

4a) Assessment

- Students draft a memo to President Madison advising him on whether we should go to war.
- This writing prompt is scaffolded to allow students to develop a thesis statement and list their supporting evidence before writing the brief memo to the president.

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4b) Performance Assessment Option

- Choose one President and have the rest of the class form groups of pro- and anti-war supporters.
- After students have individually drafted their memos, have them collaborate in their groups to decide on the three (or more) best arguments for their position.
- Have each team choose three or more “advisors” and stage a Presidential Briefing.
- Another option is to have several groups of students (3, 5, 7, etc) conduct mini-role-plays allowing every student to actively defend or render a decision on whether to go to war. (Differentiation)

5) Closure (Discussion)

- Bring closure to the lesson by conducting a final poll on whether the United States should go to war.
- Conduct a class discussion on the strongest/weakest arguments.
- Next, have students read a secondary source about the actual war and its outcome.
- Once students learn about the outcome, Discuss:
 - o Have students go back to the arguments they analyzed. Ask what they think the true motivation for war was?
 - o What would the Federalists say about the result of the war?
 - o Knowing what they know now, would they still be in favor or against going to war in 1812?
 - o Imagine we had never gone to war in 1812. What would America be like today?

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACCOMMODATIONS:

- For students with IEPs and 504s –See differentiation notes throughout lessons.
- Also for smaller or lower-skilled classes, choose two documents, one on each side of the argument and analyze them together as whole class. You can model the first one, then begin the second one, allow some independent practice as students work in pairs, then review the arguments again as a whole class. Next have the students form groups to decide which arguments are the strongest for and against war.

LESSON EXTENSIONS:

- Primary Source Options: Two other primary sources showing support and opposition to the war can be found at the URL’s below. These letters are much longer in length and may provide students with a more challenging document to read and analyze.

Letter in Support of the War of 1812, Henry Clay, 1812 <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=485>

“The War Hawks” Petition, J.C. Jones, 1812
http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/documents/documents_p2.cfm?doc=368

- Have students complete a map showing the different geographic areas referenced by the Congressmen and President in their speeches.

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Primary Sources

A. Henry Clay- Kentucky. Feb. 22, 1810

It is said ... that no object is attainable by war with Great Britain. In its fortunes, we are to estimate not only benefit to be derived to ourselves, but the injury to be done the enemy. The Conquest of Canada is in your power. I trust I shall not be deemed presumptuous when I state that I verily believe that the militia of Kentucky is alone competent to place Montreal and Upper Canada at your feet. Is it nothing to the British nation; is it nothing to the pride of her Monarch, to have the last of the immense North American possessions held by him in the commencement of his reign wrested from dominion? Is it nothing to us to extinguish the torch that lights up savage warfare? Is it nothing to acquire the entire fur trade connected with that country and to destroy the temptation and the opportunity of violating your revenue and other laws?

Annals of congress, 11th congress, 1st Session (1810). 580

B. Congressman Felix Grundy –Tennessee. Dec. 9, 1811

The true question in controversy... involves the interest of the whole nation. It is the right of exporting the production of our own soil and industry to foreign markets. Sir, our vessels are now captured... and condemned by the British courts of admiralty, without even the pretext of having on board contraband of war...

...The United States are already the second commercial nation in the world. The rapid growth of our commercial importance has not awakened the jealousy of the commercial interest of Great Britain, but her statesmen, no doubt, anticipate with deep concern (our) maritime greatness...

What, Mr. speaker, are we now called on to decide? It is whether we will resist by force the attempt... to subject our maritime rights to the arbitrary and capricious rule of her will. For my part I am not prepared to say this country shall submit to have the commerce interdicted or regulated, by any foreign nation. Sir, I prefer war to submission.

Over and above these unjust pretensions of the British Government, for many years past they have been in the practice of impressing our seamen, from merchant vessels; this unjust and lawless invasion of personal liberty, calls loudly for the interposition of this government.

Annals of Congress, 12th Congress, 1st Session (1811), I, 424



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C. Congressman Felix Grundy –Tennessee. Dec. 9, 1811

...It cannot be believed by any man who will reflect, that the savage tribes, uninfluenced by other Powers, would think of making war on the United States... They have already felt the weight of our arms; they know they hold the very soil on which they live as tenants... How, then, sir, are we to account for their late conduct? In one way only; some powerful nation must have intrigued with them, and turned their peaceful disposition towards us into hostilities. Great Britain alone has intercourse with those Northern tribes... British gold... baubles and trinkets, and the promise of support and a place of refuge if necessary, have had their effect...

This war, if carried on successfully, will have its advantages. We shall drive the British from our Continent- they will no longer have an opportunity of intriguing with our Indian neighbors, and setting on the ruthless savage to tomahawk our women and children...

Annals of Congress, 12th Congress, 1st Session (1811), I, 426

D. Congressman John Randolph -Virginia Dec. 9, 1811

An insinuation had fallen from the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. Grundy) that the late massacre of our brethren on the Wabash had been instigated by the British Government. Has the President given any such information? Has the gentleman received any such, even informal, from any officer of this Government? Is it so believed by the Administration?... this insinuation was of the grossest kind... he was ready to march to Canada...

Advantage had been taken of the spirit of the Indians, broken by the war which ended in the Treaty of Greenville... It was our own thirst for territory, our own want of moderation, that had driven these sons of nature to desperation, of which we felt the effects...

Annals of Congress, 12th Congress, 1st Session (1811), I, 446.

E. Congressman John Randolph -Virginia Dec. 9, 1811

Sir, if you go to war it will not be for the protection of, or defense of your maritime rights. Gentlemen from the North have been taken up to some high mountain and shown all the kingdoms of the earth; and Canada seems tempting in their sight. That rich vein of Genesee land, which is said to be even better on the other side of the lake than on this.

Agrarian cupidity [greed], not maritime right, urges the war. Ever since the report of the Committee on Foreign Relations came into the House, we have heard but one work- like the whip-poor-will, but one eternal monotonous tone- Canada! Candida! Canada! Not a syllable about Halifax, which unquestionably should be our great object in a war for maritime security.

It is to acquire a preponderating Northern influence that you are to launch into war. For purposes of maritime safety, the barren rocks of Bermuda were worth more to us than all the deserts [of Canada]...

Annals of Congress, 12th Congress, 1st Session (1811), I, 533.

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F. Excerpt from President James Madison's Message to Congress June 1, 1812

British cruisers have been in the continued practice of violating the American flag on the great highway of nations, and of seizing and carrying off persona sailing under it...

The practice... is so far from affecting British subjects alone that, under the pretext of searching for these, thousands of American citizens, under the safeguard of public law and of their national flag, have been torn from their country and from everything dear to the; have been dragged on board ships of war of a foreign nation and exposed, under the severities of their discipline, to be exiled to the most distant and deadly climes, to risk their lives in the battles of their oppressors, and to be the melancholy instruments of taking away those of their own brethren.

British cruisers have been in the practice also violating the rights and the peace of our coasts. They hover over and harass our entering and departing commerce... Under pretended blockades... our commerce has been plundered in every sea, the great staples of our country have been cut off from their legitimate markets, and a destructive blow aimed at our agricultural and maritime interests...

In reviewing the conduct of Great Britain toward the United States, our attention is necessarily drawn to the warfare just renewed by the savages on one of our extensive frontiers- a warfare which is known to spare neither age nor sex... It is difficult to account for the activity and combinations which have for some time been developing themselves among tribes in constant intercourse with British traders and garrisons, without connecting their hostility with that influence, and without recollecting the authenticated examples of such interposition [meddling] heretofore furnished by the officers and agents of that government... We behold on the side of Great Britain a state of war against the United States, and on the side of the United States a state of peace toward Great Britain.

Madison, James. Journal of the House of Representatives of the United States, 1811-1813. MONDAY JUNE 1, 1812. Online Posting. American Memory Website. Library of Congress. June 20, 2011. [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/hlaw:@field%20\(DOCID+@lit\(hj008201\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/hlaw:@field%20(DOCID+@lit(hj008201)))



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G. Excerpt from a Statement Signed by 34 Federalist Congressmen.

...How will war upon the land protect commerce upon the ocean? What balm has Canada for wounded honor? How are our mariners benefited by a war which exposes those who are free, without promising release to those who are impressed?

But it is said that war is demanded by honor... If honor demands a war with England, what opiate lulls that honor to sleep over the wrongs done us by France? On land, robberies, seizures, imprisonments, by French authority; at sea, pillage, sinkings, burning, under French orders. These are notorious. Are they unfelt because they are French?... With full knowledge of the wrongs inflicted by the French, ought the government of this country to aid the French cause by engaging in war against the enemy of France?...

The undersigned cannot refrain from asking, what are the United States to gain by this war? Will the gratification of some privateersmen compensate the nation for that seep of our legitimate commerce by the extended marine of our enemy which this desperate act invites? Will Canada compensate the Middle states for New York; or the Western states for New Orleans?...

Signed by thirty-four congressmen.

Annals of Congress, 12th Congress, 1st Session (1812), II, 2219-2221



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Primary Source Analysis

My Document _____

Source

Date:

Format:

Author:

Purpose:

Viewpoint on going to war:

	Supported	Opposed
Evidence from text		
Summary of main arguments for or against war		

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War of 1812 Memo to the President

MSDE Indicator: Analyze the emerging foreign policy of the United States.

Read the question below and **write** a clear thesis statement to answer the question.

Using the arguments you and your classmates analyzed from the primary sources of the time, should the United States go to war with Britain?

List the evidence you would use to support your thesis statement.

Now, in a well-constructed paragraph, **write** a memo to President Madison as one of his advisors giving your opinion as to whether the United States should go to war with Britain in 1812.



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