

Name_____ Date_____ Period_____

War of 1812 Document Analysis

Historical Context:

In 1812, only 29 years after the American Revolution, the United States again found itself at war with Great Britain. The threat of war had been brewing for some time, and this War of 1812 was not unexpected. Since the 1790's, America's leaders had tried to avoid being drawn into a series of wars between France and Britain. In 1793, President Washington issued a proclamation of neutrality asking his countrymen to be impartial toward both Britain and France. Both President Adams and President Jefferson also steered clear of war with France and Britain. However, when both countries violated American trading rights, with Britain often stopping American ships, seizing cargoes, and impressment (kidnapping of sailors), Jefferson called for a total embargo (ban) on American trading. Unfortunately, this "Embargo of 1807" failed to force European powers to respect our rights, and severely harmed our own economy, throwing thousands of merchants, shippers, and sailors out of work. When James Madison became president in 1809, he found himself facing the same problem: How could we force Britain and France to respect our rights on the high seas without being forced to war? Finally, after three years of failed diplomatic efforts, Madison asked Congress to declare war on Great Britain. The War of 1812 is one of the forgotten wars of the United States. The war lasted for over two years and ended in stalemate. It did however, once and for all, confirm American Independence. The offensive actions of the United States failed to capture Canada. On the other hand, the British army was successfully stopped when it attempted to capture Baltimore and New Orleans. There were a number of American naval victories in which American vessels proved themselves superior to similarly sized British vessels.

Discussion Question: Explain the causes and events of the War of 1812.

Document 1

The United States declared War on Great Britain on June 12, 1812. The war was declared as a result of long simmering disputes with Great Britain. The central disagreement surrounded the impressment of American soldiers by the British. The British had previously attacked the USS Chesapeake and nearly caused a war two year earlier. In addition, disputes continued with Great Britain over the Northwest Territories and the border with Canada. Native American groups were being armed by the British to fight American settlers in these areas. Finally, the attempts of Great Britain to impose a blockade on France during the Napoleonic Wars was a constant source of conflict with the United States.



We behold our seafaring citizens still the daily victims of lawless violence... We behold our vessels... wrested (taken) from their lawful destinations...and their unfortunate crews dispersed and lost, or forced...into British fleets...We behold on the side of Great Britain a state of war against the United States...

President James Madison's War Message to Congress, June 1, 1812.

Name 3 reasons why America went to war with Great Britain.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Why do you think President Madison focused on these reasons?

Document 2



In this cartoon the British Soldier is ordering the Native Americans to scalp (cut off the top of one's head) the dead American soldier that they most likely killed. The Native Americans were most likely supplied by the British. The British soldier is standing there watching as the Natives scalped the American. By this, you can tell the British were most likely manipulating the Natives into fighting the war against America since the British were low on manpower.

What would have angered you more and made you want to join the fight against the British, impressment, or the British assisting Native Americans in their attacks against Americans on the frontier?

Document 3



What economic effect did the War of 1812 have on America?

Document 4

Francis Scott Key *Star-Spangled Banner*, 1814 - Francis Scott Key wrote the *Star-Spangled Banner* after witnessing the British attack on Fort McHenry in Baltimore, Maryland.

*Oh, say, can you see, by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hail'd at the twilight's last gleaming?
Whose broad stripes and bright stars, thro' the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watch'd, were so gallantly streaming?
And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof thro' the night that our flag was still there.
O say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?*

What symbol is Francis Scott Key referring to in the song?

Why do you think he wrote the song?

Document 5

The British Army occupied Washington, D.C. and set fire to many public buildings following the American defeat at the Battle of Bladensburg. The facilities of the U.S. government, including the White House and U.S. Capitol, were largely destroyed. This has been the only time since the Revolutionary War that a foreign power has captured and occupied the United States capital.

What is the significance of burning of Washington DC?

How do you think the destruction of government buildings effected Americans?



Document 6

Article I

There shall be a firm and universal peace between His Britannic Majesty and the United States...All hostilities, both by sea and land, shall cease as soon as this treaty shall have been ratified by both parties...All territory, places, and possessions whatsoever, taken by either party from the other during the war...shall be restored without delay, and without causing any destruction or carrying away any of the artillery or other public property originally captured in the said forts or places, and which shall remain therein upon the exchange of the ratifications of this treaty, or any slaves or other private property.

Treaty of Ghent – ended the War of 1812.

According to the treaty who gained territory as a result of the war?

Did either side win the war?

The War of 1812: Causes and Effects

- The War of 1812 was the second war between the British and Americans in North America. It ranged from Canada in the north to Louisiana in the south.
- In the final battle, Americans won a decisive victory when General Andrew Jackson led American troops against a large British force in New Orleans.
- Unfortunately, while Jackson fought at New Orleans, a peace treaty had already been signed. Slow communications prevented Jackson from receiving the message.

Causes

- British impressment of American sailors
- International conflicts over commerce
- British military aid to Native Americans on the Northwest Territory frontier

Effects

- Foreign respect for the U.S.
- National pride
- Increase in American manufacturing
- Less Native American resistance



*TROUBLE SPOTS LEADING TO
THE WAR OF 1812*



Make a prediction...

How do you think the United States government will address ALL the issues that contributed to the War of 1812 so we don't find ourselves in the same situation again?

[illegible]