



Election of 1828: Andrew Jackson and an Expanded Electorate TEACHER GUIDE

Lesson Overview

This lesson uses primary source analysis and exploration to examine how the election of 1828 was a critical moment in U.S. history, demonstrating the difference that an expanded electorate and political party campaigning can make in election outcomes. It is designed for students currently studying U.S. history or government in the classroom and scaled to the 11th grade TEKS. Lessons can also be used with younger students with some modifications.

The lesson is designed to be completed in a single 45- to 60-minute class period.



Essential Question

How accurate is the characterization of this period in U.S. history as the era of the “common man”?

Objectives

- Students will engage with primary sources to help them understand early steps in expanding American democracy and their impact on the early republic.
- Students will use multimodal engagement strategies to develop their historical thinking skills.
- Students will analyze, organize, and use information from a variety of primary sources and communicate that analysis through writing and discussion.

Key Vocabulary

Students will need to have an understanding of the following terms to effectively complete the lesson:

- Freeholder/freehold
- Broadside
- Electorate



TEKS

113.41.19.B; 113.41.22.A,C
113.44.1.F; 113.44.7.A–C,E–H; 113.44.9.A,B; 113.44.14.A–C

Lesson Procedure

Warm-Up

There are two possible components for the lesson warm-up: an election snapshot and a primary source document for the class to analyze together. Depending on your classroom needs, you may choose to complete one or both components. The content for both the snapshot and the warm-up document analysis are available as PDF documents and a teacher slide deck.

1. Using the election snapshot, briefly review the main ideas, issues, and players of the election of 1828.
 - a. Be sure to remind students that while the election was important for many reasons, the main thing that you'll be focusing on today is what the election teaches us about a slowly expanding electorate and the impact that expansion had on the early American republic.
2. Using the sample primary source, review with your students how to thoroughly analyze and explore primary sources.
 - a. This lesson uses a simplified version of the [National Archives and Records Administration's Document Analysis](#) strategies.
 - b. As a group, use the warm-up exercise to review "Resolution No. 5, 1825." Remind students that it is important to use close reading skills and apply historical context that they have already learned.
 - c. After analyzing the source as a whole, answer the "Checking for Understanding" questions to ensure student comprehension.

Exploring Primary Sources

The purpose of this section is to have students explore primary sources that describe some of the structural changes that took place in the election system in the 1820s, how those changes led to Andrew Jackson's victory in the 1828 election, and how they helped shape perceptions about the nature of American democracy.

There are many ways that you can choose to engage with the primary sources with your students. Depending on interest, student level, and classroom goals, you may choose to engage with any or all of the provided primary sources.

Three possible engagement models are suggested here:

Write

Using the worksheets provided, have your students work individually to read and examine the documents and then write their answers to the comprehension questions.

The most important takeaway for this engagement model is determining WHO is writing/speaking and WHAT each primary source is about.

Speak

Divide students into groups and provide one primary source to each group. After reading the source on their own, students should consider the author of the source and the author's perspective.

The most important takeaway for this engagement model is determining HOW the author is communicating and WHY they are saying what they are saying.

Draw

Have students, working individually or in pairs, design a creative, visual representation of the main argument of one primary source. They may choose to create a Venn diagram, a flow chart, or an identity map.

The most important takeaway for this engagement model is determining WHO is writing/speaking and HOW they are getting their point across.

Discussing Primary Sources

In this section, students will discuss their observations, analysis, and conclusions gleaned from analyzing primary sources about the central issues of the election of 1828.

Lead a discussion of the issues at hand. Students will use the key ideas learned during the warm-up and their analyses of primary sources to answer questions.

1. How did changes in state constitutions affect voter eligibility?
2. Which played a bigger role in the election outcome: sectionalism or differences over specific issues?
3. How did Andrew Jackson's popularity contribute to the outcome of the election? How much did the candidates' personas and personal rivalries affect the outcome? Explain your answer.
4. Name two ways that the election of 1828 reflected a more democratic political system.
5. Name two ways that American democracy remained limited.

Closure

If desired, use the final few minutes of the lesson to write or discuss, or assign as homework, the following prompt, which encourages students to compare the issues in the election of 1828 to contemporary election cycles:

What were the impacts of other large-scale changes to the electorate over the course of U.S. history? What changes or updates would you still like to see made?



Election of 1828: Andrew Jackson and an Expanded Electorate Election Snapshot

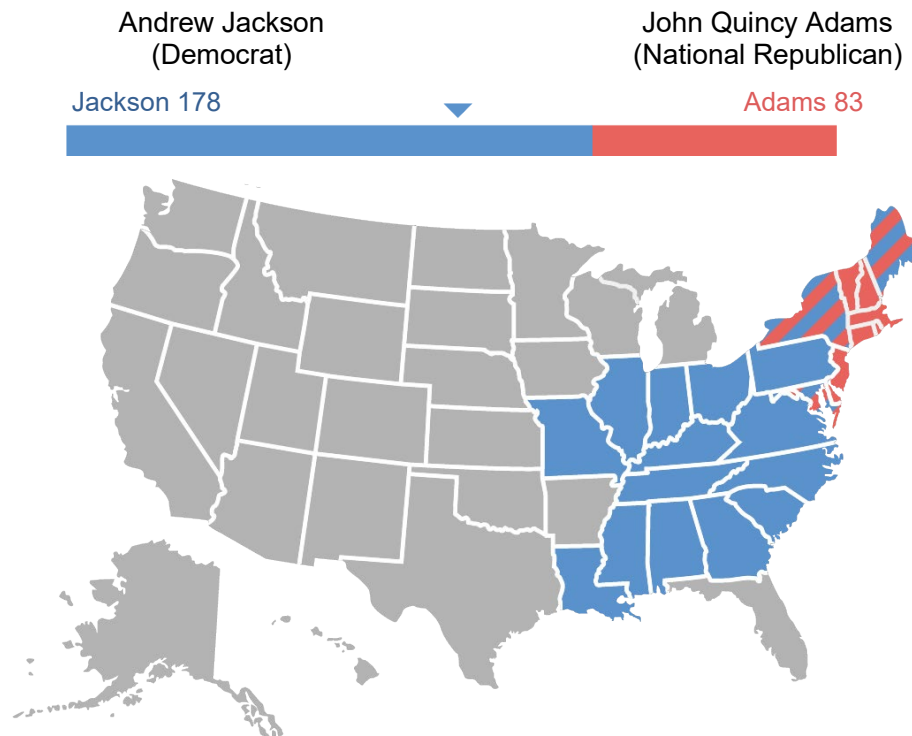
Essential Question

How accurate is the characterization of this period in U.S. history as the era of the “common man”?

Key Ideas

- Results from the previous presidential election in 1824, in which Andrew Jackson won the popular vote but did not win the presidency, left many people upset that a corrupt elite had, allegedly, rigged the outcome. This led to calls to change the way voting worked in the United States.
- Changes on several levels saw more people able to participate in elections:
 - The end of property requirements to vote meant that more *men* were eligible to vote.
 - The increase in the number of states choosing presidential electors by popular votes rather than by votes of the state legislators contributed to the increasingly democratic nature of elections.
- Changes in campaign styles made political contests public events that involved spectacle and debates, manipulation of candidates’ images to appeal to voters, and broadened use of the press.
- The 1828 campaign was particularly personal. Character attacks were as common as policy-based campaigning. Some described the campaign as pitting a “president who writes” against a “president who fights.” Others, on both sides, warned of the danger of emerging tyranny.

Candidates and Outcome





Election of 1828: Andrew Jackson and an Expanded Electorate Primary Sources and Questions

Warm-Up

Resolution No. 5, 1825

Acts Passed at the Regular Session of the Sixteenth General Assembly of the State of Tennessee

[Tennessee State Library](#)

Primary Sources

New York State Constitutions [excerpts], 1777/1821

New York State Legislature

In the early nineteenth century, many states, including New York, began to adjust requirements for voting in a way that allowed a far greater number of people to vote.

[New York State Constitution Online](#)

Letter, Martin Van Buren to Thomas Ritchie [excerpt], 1827

Martin Van Buren

Martin Van Buren, a northerner, writes to Thomas Ritchie, a leading southern newspaper editor, about strategies to transform U.S. politics and build a national political party. No such cohesive party existed at the time. Factions, which were unified by beliefs or geography, had yet to become the type of political party seen today. Van Buren hoped to use the ideals of a small central government, favored by those who previously supported Thomas Jefferson, to build his party. This, he said, could unite supporters in the North and the South and prevent sectional differences and the issue of slavery from dominating national politics.

[Van Buren Papers](#)

“Jackson Forever!” [visual source], 1828

Creator Unknown

Andrew Jackson’s image as a war hero was a critical part of his appeal as a candidate in the campaign for the election of 1828.

[New-York Historical Society](#)

“Monumental Inscriptions!” [visual source], 1828

John Binns

John Binns, a journalist and publisher who opposed Jackson's presidential candidacy, produced this so-called coffin broadside. The broadside, based on an incident from Jackson's wartime service involving his oversight of troops, was intended to undercut Jackson’s reputation as a military hero.

[Historic New Orleans Collection](#)

Letter from Robert Y. Hayne to Andrew Jackson [excerpt], 1828

Robert Y. Hayne

Robert Y. Hayne was a senator from South Carolina who wrote to Andrew Jackson prior to the election of 1828 to express his concerns about the federal tariff and the rights of states versus those of the federal government.

[Library of Congress](#)



Warm-Up: Resolution No. 5
Acts Passed at the Regular Session of the
Sixteenth General Assembly of the State of Tennessee
October 7, 1825

No. 5
RESOLUTION, relative to the reception of general Jackson.

Resolved, as an evidence of the respect and attachment entertained by this Legislature, in common with our fellow-citizens, towards general ANDREW JACKSON, for his high personal qualifications, and numerous and important services rendered to his country, that the two branches of this General Assembly will receive him on the day next after his arrival at the seat of government, at 12 o'clock, in the representative hall.

Resolved, That one or both of the speakers, on behalf of the two houses, shall deliver, at such time, to general Jackson, an address expressive of their high personal regard, and the great satisfaction they feel in relation to the course he pursued, during the pending of the late presidential election.

Resolved, That a joint select committee be appointed to wait upon general Jackson, on his arrival at the seat of government, to inform him of the foregoing resolution, and conduct him within the bar of the house of representatives.

WM. BRADY,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Speaker of the Senate.
J. P. ERWIN,
Clerk, of the H. Rep.

Clerk of the Senate.
Adopted October 7, 1825.

Student Name:

Class Period:

Date:

Warm-Up Exercise: Understanding Perspective Resolution No. 5

Analyzing a Source: Use the chart below (which is based on the National Archives and Records Administration analysis model) to examine the primary source. Remember that every document is created by a person with a specific point of view that is based on their background, beliefs, and experiences. These questions help you to understand that point of view, or perspective.

Meet the document. What type of source is it? What do you notice first? How would you describe it to someone who hasn't read it?	
Observe its parts. Who created it? Who is the intended audience? When was it created? Where was it created?	
Try to make sense of it. What is it talking about? Why did the maker create it? What was happening at the time in history this source was created?	
Use it as historical evidence. What did you find out that you might not learn anywhere else? What evidence does the creator present that you should "fact check"? What questions do you have that this source doesn't answer?	

Checking for Understanding:

- For what reason is the Tennessee legislature honoring Andrew Jackson? Summarize the main idea in one sentence.
- Andrew Jackson lost the election of 1824 in a very contested race that was ultimately decided in the House of Representatives. What portion of this resolution hints at that outcome?
- Looking ahead, what hypothesis can you draw about the legislature's view of the 1828 election?



Excerpts from New York State Constitutions

Context: In the early nineteenth century, many states, including New York, began to adjust requirements for voting in a way that allowed a far greater number of people to vote.



New York

Constitution of 1777, Article VII

VII. That every male inhabitant of full age, who shall have personally resided within one of the counties of this State for six months immediately preceding the day of election, shall. . . be entitled to vote for representatives. . . ; if, during the time aforesaid, he shall have been a freeholder, possessing a freehold of the value of twenty pounds, within the said county, or have rented a tenement therein of the yearly value of forty shillings, and been rated and actually paid taxes to this State. . . shall be entitled to vote. . .

Constitution of 1821, Article II

Section 1. [Qualifications of voters.]—Every male citizen of the age of twenty-one years, who shall have been an inhabitant of this state one year preceding any election, and for the last six months a resident of the town or county where he may offer his vote; and shall have, within the next year preceding the election, paid a tax to the state or county, assessed upon his real or personal property; or shall by law be exempted from taxation; or. . . shall have performed, within that year, military duty. . . ; and also, every male citizen of the age of twenty-one years, who shall have been, for three years. . . an inhabitant of this state. . . shall be entitled to vote in the town or ward where he actually resides. . . but no man of colour (color), unless he shall have been for three years a citizen of this state, and for one year next preceding any election, shall be. . . possessed of a freehold estate of the value of two hundred and fifty dollars. . . shall be entitled to vote at any such election. And no person of colour shall be subject to direct taxation unless he shall be. . . possessed of such real estate as aforesaid.

New York State Legislature. "The First New York State Constitution," 1777. From Historical Society of New York Courts, courtesy of New York State Library. https://www.nycourts.gov/history/legal-history-new-york/documents/Publications_1777-NY-Constitution.pdf.

New York State Legislature. "The Second New York State Constitution," 1821. From Historical Society of New York Courts, courtesy of New York State Library. https://www.nycourts.gov/history/legal-history-new-york/documents/Publications_1821-NY-Constitution.pdf.

Student Name:

Class Period:

Date:

Questions for Excerpts from New York State Constitutions

1. According to the New York State Constitution passed in 1777, what were the requirements for voting in New York?
2. According to the amendment added to the New York State Constitution in 1821, what were the requirements for a white male to be able to vote in New York? What were the requirements for a “man of colour” to be able to vote in New York?
3. Despite the expanding electorate, not everyone in New York could vote in 1821. Which groups of New York citizens were not allowed to vote in 1777 or 1821?
4. How might limits or restrictions on voter eligibility influence or change the results of an election?

ANSWER KEY

Questions for Excerpts from New York State Constitutions

1. According to the New York State Constitution passed in 1777, what were the requirements for voting in New York?

A person had to be an adult, white male who had lived in New York for at least six months prior to the election; owned at least twenty pounds of property or rented a property worth forty shillings; and paid taxes.

2. According to the amendment added to the New York State Constitution in 1821, what were the requirements for a white male to be able to vote in New York? What were the requirements for a “man of colour” to be able to vote in New York?

A white male had to be at least 21 years old and a citizen; he had to have lived in the state for one year prior to the election and in the specific town or county for six months prior; and he had to have either paid taxes, been declared exempt from taxation, or performed military service.

A “man of colour” had to have been a citizen for three years and had to own property worth at least \$250.

3. Despite the expanding electorate, not everyone in New York could vote in 1821. Which groups of New York citizens were not allowed to vote in 1777 or 1821?

Black men who did not own property and women of any race were still not allowed to vote.

4. How might limits or restrictions on voter eligibility influence or change the results of an election?

Student must state a claim and support it with evidence.



Excerpt from Letter, Martin Van Buren to Thomas Ritchie
Martin Van Buren
1827

Context: Martin Van Buren, a northerner, writes to Thomas Ritchie, a leading southern newspaper editor, about strategies to transform U.S. politics and build a national political party. No such cohesive party existed at the time. Factions, which were unified by beliefs or geography, had yet to become the type of political party seen today. Van Buren hoped to use the ideals of a small central government, favored by those who previously supported Thomas Jefferson, to build his party. This, he said, could unite supporters in the North and the South and prevent sectional differences and the issue of slavery from dominating national politics.



Washington
Jany 13th 1827
Dear Sir,

You will have observed an article in the Argus upon the subject of a national convention.

...

I have long been satisfied that we can only. . . restore a better state of things, by combining Genl. Jackson's personal popularity with the portion of old party feeling yet remaining. This sentiment is spreading, and wou'd of itself be sufficient to nominate him at the Convention. . . . Its effects would be highly salutary on your section of the union by the revival of old party distinctions. We must always have party distinctions and the old ones are the best. . . . Political combinations between the inhabitants of the different states are unavoidable and the most natural and beneficial to the country is that between the planters of the South and the plain Republicans of the North. The country has once flourished under a party thus constituted and may again. It would take longer than our lives (even if it were practicable) to create new party feelings to keep those masses together. If the old ones are suppressed, geographical divisions founded on local interests, or what is worse prejudices between free and slaveholding states will inevitably take their place. Party attachment in former times furnished a complete antidote for sectional prejudices by producing counteracting feelings.

...

Student Name:
Class Period:
Date:

Questions for Letter, Martin Van Buren to Thomas Ritchie

1. What political innovation proposed by Ritchie was Van Buren writing to support?
2. What qualities made Andrew Jackson an attractive presidential candidate?
3. What did Van Buren mean when he said, “the revival of old party distinctions”? Why did he see these distinctions as positive for his plan?
4. In Van Buren’s opinion, how would a revival of these old party distinctions benefit the nation?

ANSWER KEY

Questions for Letter, Martin Van Buren to Thomas Ritchie

1. What political innovation proposed by Ritchie was Van Buren writing to support?

Van Buren was supporting the idea of a national nominating convention

2. What qualities made Andrew Jackson an attractive presidential candidate?

Jackson's personal popularity, combined with his views on a small central government, made him an attractive choice.

3. What does Van Buren mean when he said, "the revival of old party distinctions"? Why did he see these distinctions as positive for his plan?

Van Buren was referring to the split between Federalists and Democratic-Republicans. Therefore, when he said, "plain Republicans of the North," he was referring to the Democratic-Republicans that supported Jefferson. He believed that by uniting two factions that oppose a larger federal government, he would more quickly create a unified national party.

4. In Van Buren's opinion, how would a revival of these old party distinctions benefit the nation?

These party distinctions would overcome sectional differences and avoid "prejudices between free and slaveholding states."



**“Jackson Forever!”
Creator Unknown
1828**

Context: Andrew Jackson’s image as a war hero was a critical part of his appeal as a candidate in the campaign for the election of 1828.

Jackson Forever!
The Hero of Two Wars and of Orleans!
The Man of the People!
HE WHO COULD NOT BARTER NOR BARGAIN FOR THE
PRESIDENCY!

Who, although “*A Military Chieftain,*” valued the purity of Elections and of the Electors, **MORE** than the Office of **PRESIDENT** itself! Although the greatest in the gift of his countrymen, and the highest in point of dignity of any in the world,

BECAUSE
It should be derived from the
PEOPLE!

No Gag Laws! No Black Cockades! No Reign of Terror! No Standing Army or Navy Officers, when under the pay of Government, to browbeat, or

KNOCK DOWN
Old Revolutionary Characters, or our Representatives while in the discharge of their duty. To the Polls then, and vote for those who will support

OLD HICKORY
AND THE ELECTORAL LAW.

Student Name:

Class Period:

Date:

Questions for “Jackson Forever!”

1. Political broadsides like this use different fonts and text sizes to emphasize their most important points. Why do you think the creator chose to emphasize the words that they did?
2. What evidence did the broadside use to support its claim that Jackson was a “man of the people”?
3. When considering the outcome of the election of 1828, what change in how elections were conducted might support the claim that Jackson was a “man of the people”?
4. Why do you think the broadside made several references to Andrew Jackson’s military career?

ANSWER KEY

Questions for “Jackson Forever!”

1. Political broadsides like this use different fonts and text sizes to emphasize their most important points. Why do you think the creator chose to emphasize the words that they did?

Student must state a claim and support their answer with evidence from the broadside. Answers should point toward the relationship between the words and Jackson’s image as the people’s president.

2. What evidence did the broadside use to support its claim that Jackson was a “man of the people”?

The broadside referred to the deal that decided the election of 1824 as well as Jackson’s opposition to several other U.S. and European laws and events that did not favor the will of the people.

3. When considering the outcome of the election of 1828, what change in how elections were conducted might support the claim that Jackson was a “man of the people?”

Many states removed the property requirement for voting so that more non-propertied, average citizens could vote.

4. Why do you think the broadside made several references to Andrew Jackson’s military career?

Student must state a claim and support their answer with evidence.

Transcript of Top Section of “Monumental Inscriptions!”

These Inscriptions, compiled from authentic sources, but principally from OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS, communicated by the Department of War to Congress, on the 25th of January, 1828, are, in this form, submitted to the serious consideration of the AMERICAN PEOPLE, under the firm conviction, that the facts embodied in them, ought to, and will, produce a cool and deliberate examination of the qualifications, from Nature and Education, of General ANDREW JACKSON, for the high Civil Station to which he aspires, and to attain which he electioneers with a boldness and pertinacity, unexampled in this Republic. If he shall be found guilty of having ILLEGALLY AND WANTONLY SHED THE BLOOD OF HIS COUNTRYMEN AND FELLOW SOLDIERS, ENTRUST NOT THE LIBERTY AND HAPPINESS OF THIS MOST FREE AND MOST HAPPY COUNTRY TO HIS KEEPING.

Student Name:

Class Period:

Date:

Questions for “Monumental Inscriptions!”

1. The election of 1828 saw a very nasty campaign with lots of personal attacks. What element of Andrew Jackson’s record was being attacked in this broadside?
2. Often known as the “coffin handbill,” this broadside was the first in a series. Why do you think the creator chose to use this imagery?
3. The creator of this broadside used all capital letters in the top portion of the text for emphasis. What did he choose to emphasize, and why do you think he might have made those choices?
4. Compare this broadside to “Jackson Forever!”, which carried a very different message. Which design elements are similar? Which are different? Do you think the design of each broadside supports its meaning?

ANSWER KEY

Questions for “Monumental Inscriptions!”

1. The election of 1828 saw a very nasty campaign with lots of personal attacks. What element of Andrew Jackson’s record was being attacked in this broadside?

This broadside is attacking Jackson’s military service record by questioning a decision he made to execute several soldiers who had deserted.

2. Often known as the “coffin handbill,” this broadside was the first in a series. Why do you think the creator chose to use this imagery?

Student must state a claim and support it with evidence from the broadside. Answers should point toward coffins being a universally recognizable symbol.

3. The creator of this broadside uses all capital letters in the top portion of text for emphasis. What did he choose to emphasize, and why do you think he might have made those choices?

The creator capitalized three things: 1) Jackson’s name, 2) references to spilled blood, and 3) the liberty and happiness of the country.

Student should make a claim and support it with evidence from the text. Answers should point toward the juxtaposition of violence and happiness.

4. Compare this broadside to “Jackson Forever!”, which carries a very different message. Which design elements are similar? Which are different? Do you think the design of each supports its meaning?

Similar: use of capitalization, font size, bolded wording, etc., for emphasis

Different: “Jackson Forever!” has far less wording overall, no visual imagery

Student should make a claim and support it with evidence from the text.



Excerpt from Letter, Robert Y. Hayne to Andrew Jackson
Robert Y. Hayne
September 3, 1828

Context: Robert Y. Hayne was a senator from South Carolina who wrote to Andrew Jackson prior to the election of 1828 to express his concerns about the federal tariff and the rights of states versus those of the federal government.



Confidential

Charleston, S. C. , September 3, 1828.

My Dear Sir. Knowing the numerous demands made on your time and attention, I have avoided writing to you of late for fear that I might give you the additional trouble of answering my letters. I beg however that you will not put yourself to the inconvenience of doing so now, as my only object in writing at this time is to keep you well advised of the actual state of things in this quarter of the union.

. . .

We have believed that while you are favorable to the protection of all the great interests of the Country, you are not disposed to advance any one of them at the expence of the rest, and, that though you are desirous of securing the manufacture in the country of all the articles deemed essential to national defence, yet you would not be willing to adopt the prohibitory policy, nor to push the system of protection beyond the point of creating a fair competition between foreign and domestic goods; but above all we feel assured that you would never consent to make this a mere party question, by connecting it with the Presidential election. . . .

You are supported by the great body of the people not on account of your opinions on the Tariff, (which are known to be opposed to their own,) but because they have entire confidence in your wisdom, and integrity; and it is believed that the men now in power have obtained, and are endeavouring to retain their places by “bargain management and intrigue”, and in direct violation of the will of the people. Should Mr Adams be re-elected and should his administration continue to act on the policy of wholly disregarding the feelings and interests of the Southern States; should they push the manufacturing system, to the point of annihilating our foreign commerce, and above all, should they meddle with our Slave institutions, I would not be answerable for the consequences. . . .

Possessing as you do the confidence and attachment of the Southern people, and feeling as we know you will, a sincere desire, to do justice to all parties, we fondly indulge the hope that the various portions of the union will once more be bound together in the bonds of friendship and affection. . . .

Such my dear Sir, is *the true state of things* in this part of the country...In this respect we are only sharing your own fate; the fate indeed of all, who have dared to stand up for the rights and liberties of the people and the Constitution in its purity. . . .

Student Name:

Class Period:

Date:

Questions for Excerpt from Letter, Robert Y. Hayne to Andrew Jackson

1. How did Hayne open his letter? What did he want to provide to Jackson?
2. Hayne did not agree with everything that Jackson thought. What is one example of a disagreement? Why do you think he supported Jackson anyway?
3. How did Hayne portray John Quincy Adams in this letter?
4. Hayne discussed sectional conflict, particularly as it related to slavery, writing, "should they meddle with our Slave institutions, I would not be answerable for the consequences." What consequences do you think he was suggesting?

ANSWER KEY

Questions for Excerpt from Letter, Robert Y. Hayne to Andrew Jackson

1. How did Hayne open his letter? What did he want to provide to Jackson?

Hayne declared that he did not wish for a response from Jackson, but only wished to inform him of the “actual state of things” where he was.

2. Hayne did not agree with everything that Jackson thought. What is one example of a disagreement? Why do you think he supported Jackson anyway?

Hayne disagreed with Jackson on whether there should be a federal tariff but said he supported him anyway because of his “wisdom and integrity.”

3. How did Hayne portray John Quincy Adams in this letter?

Hayne indicated that John Quincy Adams did not care about the needs of the southern states and acted in “direct violation of the will of the people.”

4. Hayne discusses sectional conflict, particularly as it relates to slavery, writing, “should they meddle with our Slave institutions, I would not be answerable for the consequences.” What consequences do you think he was suggesting?

Student should make a claim and support it with evidence from the text. Answer should relate to ongoing sectional differences that were leading to conflict and potential violence.