

The Presidency of Andrew Jackson

Option A

Lexile: 1020
Word Count: 648

Vocabulary

- | | | | |
|-------------------|-------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| ▶ embodied | ▶ electoral | ▶ elites | ▶ unconstitutional |
| ▶ executive order | ▶ vetoed | ▶ re-elect | ▶ re-charter |
| ▶ self-proclaim | ▶ demagogue | ▶ undemocratic | ▶ suffrage |
| ▶ veto | ▶ executive | ▶ unconstitutional | ▶ deposit |

Andrew Jackson served as the seventh president of the United States. He was a unique president for his time in many ways. Jackson embodied the “frontier spirit” of the young country. He grew up in a poor family, and as a young man he moved to the frontier in Tennessee to be a lawyer. Jackson soon became involved in politics and also demonstrated courage as a general during the War of 1812. He gained attention for his defense of New Orleans against the British and later became a candidate for president in 1824.



Vanderlyn, John. General Andrew Jackson. c. 1824. White House Collection.

General Andrew Jackson by John Vanderlyn, c. 1824, portrays Jackson in military uniform, emphasizing his national fame following the Battle of New Orleans.

Elections of 1824 and 1828

In that election, four candidates ran, all as Democratic-Republicans. John Quincy Adams was Jackson’s biggest competitor. Jackson won the most in both the electoral and popular votes, and Adams had the second most in both categories. However, Jackson did not win a majority. Under the Constitution, if no one wins a majority in a presidential election, the House of Representatives picks the president. The Speaker of the House, Henry Clay, liked Adams, and he helped get enough representatives to vote for Adams. Adams then chose Clay to be his secretary of state. Jackson and his supporters were angered by this result, calling it the “Corrupt Bargain.” They believed the election should have gone to Jackson as he received more votes than Adams. Jackson formed the Democratic Party afterwards to challenge Adams in 1828. Claiming corruption had won the election in 1824, Jackson’s supporters turned out in large numbers to elect him as president in 1828.

The National Bank

Jackson believed that democracy and the will of the people had won out. He generally did not like wealthy and the elites of the country, and thought they did not have the interests of the average American in mind. Jackson worked during his presidency to fight against his perceptions of corruption, most notably against the national bank. The First National Bank of the United States was created under Washington, even though some strongly opposed it and said Congress did not have the power to make such an institution.

The Second National Bank was created in 1816 after the first one's charter expired. This one was set to expire in 1836. Jackson believed the bank was serving the interests of the wealthy and was also unconstitutional. After Jackson was re-elected in 1832, he worked to undermine the bank. He issued an executive order to have the government stop depositing money into the bank. He also moved federal deposits to private banks who were supportive of his administration, which some interpreted as a sign of corruption. Jackson's opponents in Congress passed a bill to re-charter the Second National Bank in 1832. He vetoed the bill. In his veto message, he explained that the president had the responsibility to interpret the Constitution and act accordingly. His critics said he was using too much power and began calling him "King Andrew."

Democracy During the Jackson Era

As a self-proclaimed "man of the people" Jackson supported expanding suffrage to all white males. Previously, men needed to own a certain amount of property to vote. Jackson and his supporters argued this was undemocratic, prevented poorer Americans from expressing their opinions, and ensured the interests of only the wealthy would be protected. Throughout his presidency, states changed their laws to remove these property requirements. While this expanded the vote for many, it did not expand for women or Blacks. Additionally, Jackson carried out the extremely controversial Indian Removal Act, which resulted in thousands of Native Americans in the southeast being removed from their homes. Jackson defended it as being in the interests of American settlers, but it resulted in immense suffering for those forced to leave. Jackson remains controversial to this day, with some arguing he helped stand up for the average American and upheld democracy while others argue he overused power and weakened democracy.



The Presidency of Andrew Jackson

Option B

Lexile: 890
Word Count: 417

Vocabulary

- ▶ southeastern ▶ bargain ▶ corrupt ▶ rival ▶ suspicious
- ▶ unfair ▶ seventh ▶ brave ▶ promise ▶ democracy

Andrew Jackson was the seventh president of the United States. He was different from other presidents of his time. Jackson grew up in a poor family and later moved to Tennessee to become a lawyer. He joined politics and became a brave general in the War of 1812. He became famous for fighting against the British in New Orleans and ran for president in 1824.



Vanderlyn, John. General Andrew Jackson. c. 1824. White House Collection.

General Andrew Jackson by John Vanderlyn, c. 1824, portrays Jackson in military uniform, emphasizing his national fame following the Battle of New Orleans.

Elections of 1824 and 1828

In the 1824 election, four people ran for president. John Quincy Adams was Jackson's main rival. Jackson got more votes than anyone else, but he didn't get enough to win. When this happens, the House of Representatives chooses the president. Henry Clay, who was in charge of the House, helped Adams win. Adams then made Clay his Secretary of State. Jackson and his friends were very angry and called this the "Corrupt Bargain". They thought Jackson should have won because he got more votes. Jackson then started a new group called the Democratic Party to run against Adams in 1828. Many people who thought the 1824 election wasn't fair voted for Jackson in 1828, and he won.

The National Bank

Jackson was suspicious of rich people and thought they didn't care about regular Americans. He worked hard to stop what he thought was unfair, especially the national bank. The Second National Bank was started in 1816 and would end in 1836. Jackson thought this bank only helped rich people and wasn't allowed by

law. After winning again in 1832, he told the government to stop putting money in the bank. When Congress tried to keep the bank going, Jackson said no. He said the president could decide what the law meant. His enemies said he was using too much power and called him "King Andrew."

Democracy During the Jackson Era

Jackson called himself a "man of the people" and wanted all white men to be able to vote. Before this, men had to own land to vote. Jackson said this wasn't fair and stopped poor people from having a say. During his time as president, states changed their rules so more people could vote. However, women and Black people still couldn't vote. Jackson also made Native Americans in the southeastern United States leave their homes, which hurt many people. Today, some people think Jackson helped regular Americans, while others say he used too much power and tried to get people to follow him by making promises he couldn't keep.

