

Lesson Plan: Cast Your Vote-1812!

Topic:

Causes of the War of 1812

Historic Question:

Based on the regional perspectives, should America declare war on the British in the summer of 1812?

Overview:

This lesson plan examines the arguments for and against declaring war on the British in the summer of 1812. Using an online simulation/game, students will examine numerous regional perspectives from across the country to identify the reasons given to declare and not declare war on the British. Students assess the various reasons in order to cast their vote if the United States Congress should declare war. After completing the simulations, the students will complete a written response regarding the complexity of the causes of the War of 1812 and assessing the reasons the nation was divided on the war.

Objectives:

- **Students will identify the arguments for and against the declaration of war against the British.**
- **Students will be able to predict whether or not America will declare war on the British.**
- **Students will be able to assess the reasons for America's declaration of war.**

Procedure:

1. Display the following terms: Rights/Freedoms, Honor/Reputation, Money/Wealth. Rank the three sets of terms in order of importance to being an American today by asking: "What do Americans value the most?"
Then, ask: "Are any of these terms worth fighting for? If so, which?"

TIME REQUIRED

90 Minutes

GRADE RANGE

Grades 6-9

STANDARD

National Social Studies Standard – U.S. History
12.4 Expansion and Reform (1801-1861)

Understands United States territorial expansion between 1801 and 1861, and how it affected relations with external powers and Native Americans

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MATERIALS USED

Computers
(30 Minutes of Use)
Headphones
Resource Sheet:
Should the U.S. Declare War on the British?
Video Clips

Procedure: (continued)

- 2.** Explain that today the class will determine if America should declare war on the British in 1812. The class will identify the reasons proposed by different regions and social classes to determine if a war against the British was necessary. On the interactive website, President Madison will invite the students to investigate the reasons to and not to declare war on the British..
- 3.** Watch each of the video clips by Francis Scott Key, Margaret Elliot, Henry Clay, Josette Dugas, John Bradford, George Roberts, James Madison, and John Randolph. Identify whether each character agrees or disagrees with the declaration of war by listing the reasons each character supplies for supporting or refuting the declaration of war by completing Resource Sheet: "Should the U.S. Declare War on the British?" On the resource sheet, students should circle "Pro-War" or "Anti-War" after viewing each character's video.
- 4.** After watching all eight video clips, the students may cast their own vote. Their votes will be recorded and students will be able to compare their response to how other students voted around the country.
- 5.** After completing the interactive, move into small groups. Construct a list of the top three reasons to go to war against the British and the top three reasons to avoid going to war against the British.
- 6.** As a class, ask:
 - *Why do some Americans want to declare war on the British? Can these reasons be classified as ideological (rights/freedoms), nationalistic (honor/reputation) or economic (money/wealth)?*
 - *Why do some Americans want to avoid war with the British? Can these reasons be classified as ideological (rights/freedoms), nationalistic (honor/reputation) or economic (money/wealth)?*
 - *What plays a greater role in the division between anti-war and pro-war supporters: social class, geographic region, or ideology?*
- 7.** Assign one side of the classroom as "pro-war" and another side as "anti-war". Ask the students to assess all of the evidence and answer: Do you think America should declare war on the British? Based on the answer to the question, the students will move to either side of the classroom. Moderate a debate allowing students to argue their point of view and rationale.

Procedure: (continued)

- 8.** To extend the debate, the teacher may ask these additional follow up questions:
- *Why did the simulation not contain a Native American perspective? What do think was the perspective of the Native Americans?*
 - *Do you think the British believed America would declare war on them? What do think was the perspective of the British on America reasons for declaring war?*

Assessment:

Display the following numbers: 62% & 59%. Explain the United States Congress approved the declaration of war by 62% and the United States Senate approved the declaration of war by 59%. Ask: Why did America declare the war on the British by such a small amount? In the answer the students will address:

- *The arguments presented by the anti-war movement*
- *The arguments presented by the pro-war movement*
- *Identify the ONE motive/argument that played the greatest role in the declaration of war*

Students will construct a written response in 6-8 sentences. The written response will reference specific information and examples from the video clips and class discussion. The written response will require the students to create a historical interpretation by stressing the most important reason, region, class, or argument that played the greatest role in causing the United States government to declare war.

Alternatives:

If the teacher desires to complete this simulation in the 45 minutes, the teacher may consider:

- Assigning the simulation for homework and then begin at Procedure #5 Completing the simulation in class and allowing the students to compare their opinion to national opinion. Stop at Procedure #4.

Resource Sheet:

Should the U.S. Declare War on the British?

Directions:

Complete the handout while watching the video clips. For each one:

1. Identify if the character is pro-war or anti-war by circling the corresponding term.
2. Identify the reasons stated by the character.

<p>Francis Scott Key <u>Maryland Lawyer</u></p> <p><i>Pro-War</i> or <i>Anti-War</i></p> <p>Rationale:</p>	<p>Josette Dugas <u>New Orleans Resident</u></p> <p><i>Pro-War</i> or <i>Anti-War</i></p> <p>Rationale:</p>	<p>George Roberts <u>U.S. Navy Sailor</u></p> <p><i>Pro-War</i> or <i>Anti-War</i></p> <p>Rationale:</p>
<p>Margaret Elliot <u>Frontier Resident</u></p> <p><i>Pro-War</i> or <i>Anti-War</i></p> <p>Rationale:</p>	<p>Your Vote <u></u></p> <p><i>Pro-War</i> or <i>Anti-War</i></p> <p>Rationale:</p>	<p>Pres. James Madison <u>U.S. President</u></p> <p><i>Pro-War</i> or <i>Anti-War</i></p> <p>Rationale:</p>
<p>Henry Clay <u>Kentucky Congressman</u></p> <p><i>Pro-War</i> or <i>Anti-War</i></p> <p>Rationale:</p>	<p>John Bradford <u>Boston Shipping Merchant</u></p> <p><i>Pro-War</i> or <i>Anti-War</i></p> <p>Rationale:</p>	<p>John Randolph <u>Virginia Senator</u></p> <p><i>Pro-War</i> or <i>Anti-War</i></p> <p>Rationale:</p>