



The War of 1812

Objectives

1. Explain why the United States declared war on Britain.
2. Describe what happened in the early days of the war.
3. Discuss the American invasion of Canada and the fighting in the South.
4. Identify the events leading to the end of the War of 1812.

Prepare to Read

Reading Skill

Explain How Events Are Related in Time Events can be related in time in many ways. One event may directly cause another or events may unfold over time. As you read this section, try to relate the many events to one another in time. Use the skills you practiced in Sections 1–3 as tools. Also, use sequence verbs as a tool. These verbs describe how events progress over time.

Vocabulary Builder

High-Use Words

reinforce, p. 328

critic, p. 331

Key Terms and People

nationalism, p. 327

war hawk, p. 327

blockade, p. 328

Oliver Hazard Perry, p. 329

Andrew Jackson, p. 330

secede, p. 331

★ **Background Knowledge** In previous sections, you have learned how the first three U.S. Presidents worked hard to avoid war with Britain and France. In this section, you will learn why, despite these efforts, the United States finally went to war.

The Move Toward War

Tension with Britain was high when James Madison took office in 1809. Americans were angry at Britain for arming Native Americans in the Northwest. Americans also resented the continued impressment of American sailors by the British.

To most Americans, the country's honor was at stake. They felt a new sense of American **nationalism**—pride in one's country. In 1810, two strong nationalists, Henry Clay of Kentucky and John C. Calhoun of South Carolina, became leaders in the House of Representatives.

Clay, Calhoun, and their supporters were called **war hawks**—those who were eager for war with Britain. Opposition to war was strongest in New England. Many New Englanders believed war with Britain would harm American trade.

Relations with Britain worsened steadily in the early months of 1812. In the spring, the British told the United States they would continue impressing sailors. Meanwhile, Native Americans in the Northwest began new attacks on frontier settlements. In June, Congress declared war on Britain.

✓ **Checkpoint** In what regions of the United States was the support for war with Britain the strongest?

Main Idea

Led by the war hawks, Congress declared war on Britain in June 1812.



Andrew Jackson, a young war hawk

Main Idea

During the first year of war, the United States struggled to rebuild American military strength weakened by Jefferson's spending cuts.

Vocabulary Builder

reinforce (ree ihn FORS) v. to strengthen with additional troops

Early Days of the War

The war did not come at a good time for the British, who were still at war in Europe. However, Britain was not willing to meet American demands to avoid war. Providing Native Americans with support was one way of protecting Canada against an American invasion.

When the war began, Americans were confident that they would win. It soon became apparent that the United States was not prepared for war. Jefferson's spending cuts had weakened American military strength. The navy had only 16 warships ready for action. The army also was small, with fewer than 7,000 men.

In the first days of the war, the British set up a blockade of the American coast. A **blockade** is the action of shutting a port or road to prevent people or supplies from coming into an area or leaving it. By 1814, the British navy had 135 warships blockading American ports. After **reinforcing** their troops, the British were able to close off all American ports by war's end.

A major sea battle was fought at the beginning of the war. In August 1812, the USS *Constitution* defeated the British warship *Guerrière* (gai ree AIR) in a fierce battle. According to tradition, American sailors nicknamed the *Constitution* "Old Ironsides" because British artillery fire bounced off the ship's thick wooden hull. To the Americans, it seemed as if the *Constitution* were made of iron.

Checkpoint Why was the United States unprepared for war?

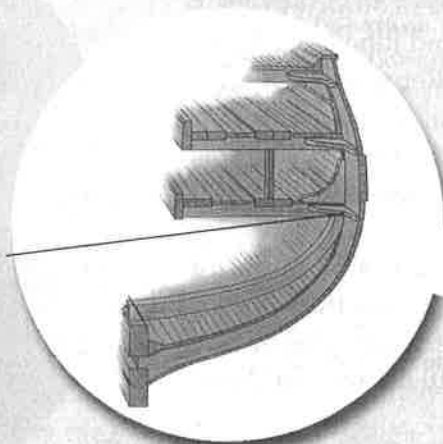
"Old Ironsides"

In the most famous sea battle of the War of 1812, the USS *Constitution* engaged the British frigate *Guerrière* in the North Atlantic Ocean.

For nearly an hour, the two ships closed in on each other. Then, the *Constitution* fired a barrage that tore off both of the *Guerrière* masts. Meanwhile, British cannonballs bounced harmlessly off the reinforced hull of the *Constitution*. **Critical Thinking: Identify Benefits** How were ships like the *Constitution* helpful to the American naval effort?

A cutaway of the *Constitution's* hull.

The ship's hull, which was more than two feet thick at the waterline, was made up of three layers of extremely tough and durable oak wood.



History Interactive

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The War of 1812

MAP MASTER®

Skills Activity

The United States declared war on Britain in June 1812. As the map shows, the war was fought on several fronts.

- Read a Map** What areas were affected by the British blockade?
- Analyze Cause and Effect** How did the blockade affect the economy of the United States?

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KEY

- ← American forces
- ← British forces
- ★ American victories
- ★ British victories

0 km 300
0 miles 300
Albers Conic Equal-Area Projection

The War in the West and South

In the West, the Americans and British fought for control of the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River. Both sides had Native American allies.

Invasion of Canada Even before the war began, war hawks were demanding an invasion of Canada. They expected Canadians to welcome the chance to throw off British rule.

In July 1812, American troops under General William Hull invaded Canada from Detroit. Hull was unsure of himself. Fearing he did not have enough soldiers, he soon retreated.

The British commander, General Isaac Brock, took advantage of Hull's confusion. His army of British soldiers and Native American warriors quickly surrounded Hull's army and forced it to surrender. The British captured more than 2,000 American soldiers. It was a serious defeat for the United States.

American forces had better luck on Lake Erie. Both sides were aware of the importance of controlling the lake. A key three-hour battle took place at Put-In-Bay, in the western part of the lake, in 1813.

During the battle, the American flagship was badly damaged. The American commander, Oliver Hazard Perry, switched to another ship and continued the fight until it was won. Perry announced his victory with a dramatic message: "We have met the enemy and they are ours." With Americans in control of the lake, the British were forced to leave Detroit and retreat back into Canada.

Main Idea

Native Americans suffered severe setbacks during fighting in the West and South during 1814.



Explain How Events Are Related in Time

Did the Battle of the Thames take place before or after the Battle of Lake Erie?

As the British and their Native American allies retreated, the Americans under General William Henry Harrison pursued them. They followed the British into Canada, defeating them in the Battle of the Thames. Tecumseh was among those killed in the battle.

Conflict in the South Native Americans also suffered defeat in the South. In the summer of 1813, Creek warriors attacked several southern American settlements. Andrew Jackson took command of American forces in Georgia. In March 1814, Jackson defeated the Creeks at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend. The treaty that ended the fighting forced the Creeks to give up millions of acres of land.

Checkpoin What is the connection between the Battle of Lake Erie and the Battle of the Thames?

Main Idea

Although the War of 1812 had no clear victor, Americans gained new confidence after its end.

Final Battles

In 1814, the British finally defeated Napoleon. This allowed Britain to send many more troops across the Atlantic to fight against the United States.

The British Attack Washington and Baltimore

The new British strategy was to attack the nation's capital, Washington, D.C. In August 1814, a British force marched into the city. Dolley Madison, the President's wife, gathered up the President's important papers and fled the White House. The British set fire to several government buildings, including the White House. Americans were shocked to learn that their army could not defend Washington.

The British now moved on to Baltimore. Their first objective was Fort McHenry, which defended the city's harbor. British warships bombarded the fort throughout the night of September 13, 1814. Francis Scott Key, a young American, watched the attack. At dawn, Key saw the American flag still flying over the fort. The Americans had beaten off the attack.

On the back of an old envelope, Key wrote a poem that he called "The Star-Spangled Banner." It told the story of his night's watch. The poem became popular and was set to music. In 1931, Congress made it the national anthem of the United States.

The War Ends By 1814, Britain had tired of war. Peace talks began in Ghent (gehnt), Belgium. On Christmas Eve 1814, the two sides signed the Treaty of Ghent, which ended the war. The treaty returned things to the way they had been before the war.

Biography Quest



Tecumseh
1768-1813

The Shawnee war chief Tecumseh challenged the tide of white settlement. Tecumseh visited Native Americans from the Great Lakes to Florida, urging them to unite. He was away recruiting when General Harrison defeated the Shawnee at Tippecanoe. After the battle, Tecumseh allied his forces with the British, hoping that a British victory would mean the return of Native American lands. His death at the Battle of the Thames dealt a blow to Native American resistance.

Biography Quest Online

Why did Tecumseh issue an angry challenge to his allies, the British?

For: The answer to the question about Tecumseh

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News of the treaty took several weeks to reach the United States. In that time, the two sides fought one more battle. In January 1815, American forces under General Andrew Jackson won a stunning victory over the British at the Battle of New Orleans.

Protests and Peace From the start, there had been opposition to the War of 1812 within the United States. As the war dragged on, Federalist critics of President Madison spoke out more strongly, criticizing what they called “Mr. Madison’s War.” New Englanders in particular disliked the war, mainly because the blockade had badly damaged New England trade.

In December 1814, a group of Federalists met in Hartford, Connecticut. Some delegates to the Hartford Convention suggested that the New England states secede, or withdraw, from the United States. While the delegates debated, news of the peace treaty arrived. With the war over, the Hartford Convention quickly ended.

To some Americans, the War of 1812 was the “Second War of Independence.” Once and for all, the United States secured its independence from Britain. European nations would now have to treat the young republic with respect. Pride at this achievement brought the confidence of Americans to a new height.

Checkpoint What was the purpose of the Hartford Convention?

★ Looking Back and Ahead After the War of 1812, Americans entered a new era of confidence. Tensions between regions, which had been high during the war, cooled with the coming of peace. In the postwar period, Americans enjoyed a period of calm and unity. As you will read in the next chapter, this era paved the way for a major expansion of American democracy.

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Online

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Vocabulary Builder

critic (KRIHT ihk) *n.* someone who makes judgments on the value of actions

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Comprehension and Critical Thinking

- (a) Identify** Who were the war hawks? Why did they push for war with Britain?

(b) Draw Conclusions Were the war hawks overconfident? What did they overlook in their evaluation of British power?
- (a) Recall** How did the War of 1812 end?

(b) Analyze Cause and Effect What were some results of the war that were not expressly written in the treaty?

Reading Skill

- 3. Explain How Events Are Related in Time** What battle was taking place at about the same time that William Hull was invading Canada?

Vocabulary Builder

- Add a second sentence to each of the following sentences that clearly shows your understanding of the key term.
- 4.** The War of 1812 increased U.S. **nationalism**. _____
 - 5.** At the Hartford Convention, dissatisfied Federalists made plans

for the New England states to secede. _____

Writing

- 6.** Read the following notes about First Lady Dolley Madison and rearrange them in the best order for a biographical essay. **Notes:** Died in 1849; stylish woman; married James Madison in 1794; served as President Jefferson’s official hostess; saved many valuables from White House when British invaded in 1814; turned Washington from a “dull swamp” into lively social city.



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Chapter Summary

Section 1 Jefferson Takes Office

- The Twelfth Amendment was added to the Constitution to prevent the deadlock in government that occurred when Jefferson and Burr received the same number of electoral votes in the election of 1800.
- In *Marbury v. Madison*, Chief Justice John Marshall and the Supreme Court established judicial review.

Section 2 The Louisiana Purchase

- In 1803, the United States purchased the Louisiana Territory from France.
- The Louisiana Purchase gave the United States control of the Mississippi River.
- Jefferson sent Lewis and Clark on an expedition to explore the new territory.

Section 3 A Time of Conflict

- In an attempt to punish Britain and France, Jefferson proposed the Embargo Act. The embargo hurt the U.S. economy.
- Native Americans were defeated when they opposed U.S. settlement in the Northwest Territory.

Section 4 The War of 1812

- The war hawks blamed Britain for trouble with the Native Americans and decreased trade.
- The War of 1812 ended without a clear victor, but the United States achieved a new sense of nationalism.

Key Concepts

These notes will help you prepare for questions about key concepts.

Jefferson Charts New Directions

- Becomes President after disputed election of 1800
- Changes Federalist policies
- Attempts to limit federal government's power over states and citizens
- Reduces federal budget
- Cuts size of military

Exploring New Lands

- United States purchases Louisiana Territory from France

- Lewis and Clark explore the Northwest; find route to the Pacific
- Pike explores the Southwest

Foreign Entanglements

- Americans defeat Barbary States at Tripoli
- Jefferson establishes Embargo Act of 1807 against Britain and France
- Embargo hurts Americans more than it does Britain and France

War of 1812

- United States declares war on Britain in 1812
- Many Native Americans ally with Britain
- Treaty of Ghent establishes peace, but no territory is gained by either nation
- Jackson's victory at New Orleans follows peace treaty
- Nationalism rises in the United States