

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Madison's War Message to Congress, June 1, 1812

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, I communicate to Congress on the subject of our affairs with Great Britain.

The conduct of Great Britain's Government presents a series of acts hostile to the United States as an independent and neutral nation. British cruisers have been in the continued practice of violating the American flag on the great highway of nations, and of seizing and carrying off persons sailing under it... British jurisdiction is thus extended to neutral vessels in a situation where no laws can operate but the law of nations and the laws of the country to which the vessels belong....

British cruisers have been in the practice also of violating the rights and the peace of our coasts. They hover over and harass our entering and departing commerce...and have wantonly spilt American blood...our commerce has been plundered in every sea, the great staples of our country have been cut off from their legitimate markets, and a destructive blow aimed at our agricultural and maritime interests....

In reviewing the conduct of Great Britain toward the United States our attention is drawn to the warfare just renewed by the Native Americans on one of our extensive frontiers - a warfare which is known to be peculiarly shocking to humanity. It is difficult to account for...their hostility...without remembering the examples of such British intrigues with them...

Whether the United States shall continue to be passive...or, opposing force to force in defense of their national rights...is a solemn question which the Constitution wisely confides to the legislative department of the Government. In recommending it to their early deliberations I am happy in the assurance that the decision will be worthy of the free, and a powerful nation.

...the communications last made to Congress on the subject of our relations with France will have shown that since the revocation of her decrees, as they violated the neutral rights of the United States, her Government has authorized illegal captures by its privateers and public ships, and that other outrages have been practiced on our vessels and our citizens.... I abstain (refrain) at this time from recommending to the consideration of Congress definitive measures with respect to that nation (France), in the expectation that the result of ...discussions between our minister...at Paris and the French Government will speedily enable Congress to decide with greater advantage on the course due to the rights, the interests, and the honor of our country.

Questions:

1. What specific actions did Great Britain take that aggravated the United States?
2. Why is Madison concerned about the Native Americans?
3. Whose responsibility is declaration of war?
4. How has France treated the US since agreeing to be friendly trading partners?

NAME: _____

US11 Per: ____

DATE: _____

War of 1812 Music

These words were written by a lawyer on his way to bail his friend who was jailed for public drunkenness. As a battle erupted around them, they were detained through the night for their own safety. Key, so moved by the events he witnessed, wrote and published a poem to commemorate the occasion. It soon gained popularity and was sung to the tune of a song called "To Anacreon in Heaven", ironically a popular British drinking song of the day. Though not officially adopted as the national anthem of the US until 1931, it had long been the unofficial anthem adopted by the army and navy.

The Star-Spangled Banner by Francis Scott Key

O 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?

1. How might this song have influenced Americans during the War of 1812? Does it have the same impact today?

The Battle of New Orleans by Johnny Horton

In 1814 we took a little trip
Along with Colonel Jackson down the mighty Mississipp'
We took a little bacon and we took a little beans
And we caught the bloody British in the town of New Orleans

We fired our guns and the British kept a coming
There wasn't nigh as many as there was a while ago
We fired once more and they began to running
Down the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico

We looked down the river and we seen the British come
And there must have been a hundred of them beating on the drums
They stepped so high and they made their bugles ring
We stood behind our cotton bales and didn't say a thing

Old Hickory said we could take 'em by suprise
If we didn't fire a musket 'til we looked 'em in the eyes
We held our fire 'til we seen their faces well
We opened up our squirrel guns and really gave 'em...

Well they ran through the briars and they ran through the brambles
And they ran through the bushes where the rabbits couldn't go
They ran so fast the hounds couldn't catch 'em
On down the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico

We fired our cannon 'til the barrel melted down
Then we grabbed an alligator and we fought another round
We filled his head with cannonballs and powdered his behind
And when we touched the powder off the gator lost his mind

2. From whose perspective is this song written?

3. How did the Americans beat the British?

4. Who was "Old Hickory"?

5. Why would songs be written about this?

6. Do you think this battle was significant to the progress of the War of 1812? Explain.