

Lesson 12

A Peaceful Transfer of Power

OVERVIEW

As you have learned, George Washington's presence and Alexander Hamilton's economic plan provided some stability to the new nation in the early 1790s. Hamilton's critics may have questioned his approach, and the whiskey rebels may have disagreed with federal policy, but the rule of law prevailed. Resolution of other conflicts during the remainder of the 1790s continued to shape the United States by establishing precedents and moving the country toward a peaceful transfer of power.

Conflicts between settlers and American Indians were not new in the 1790s. What did happen was that the area of conflict moved west and precedent-setting treaties were now part of the supreme law of the land. That constitutional provision did not help Indians much in the short term, but ultimately treaties did give them a way to protect their rights or to seek compensation in more recent times.

Conflicts over foreign policy decisions relating to England and France presented another set of challenges to the new nation. While most national leaders agreed that neutrality was the wisest course to follow, sharp disagreements arose when that neutrality was violated. Attempts by those in power to censor their critics during an undeclared war with France brought about strong rebukes from Thomas Jefferson and James Madison.

Out of all the differences of opinion in the 1790s emerged the formation of the nation's first two distinct political parties. While sometimes unsettling, the functioning of political parties sharpened the debates on political issues and established political practices that affected the nation for generations. One of those practices, a peaceful transfer of power, remains a key to the stability of the nation.

As the last segment of the video illustrates, this lesson prompts some reflection on the revolutionary era. America looked quite different in 1801 than it had in 1760. Thirteen separate colonies had become a nation with generous boundaries and an emerging identity. Idealistic principles espousing freedom and equality were becoming part of a national creed. While American Indians were being separated from the rest of the nation, women and African Americans had some hope that they might be included on a more equal basis. Indeed, America did gain a future during the revolutionary era, and America's destiny would continue to be shaped by those who inherited the revolution.

LESSON ASSIGNMENTS

Text: Roark, et al., *The American Promise*, Chapter 8, “The New Nation Takes Form,” pp. 269–285 and Chapter 9, “Republican Ascendancy,” pp. 289–290.

Video: “A Peaceful Transfer of Power” from the series *Shaping America*.

Documents:

“The Crisis of 1798: Sedition,” found on pp. 278–280 of the text.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This lesson examines how and why the precedents established in the 1790s helped shaped America. Upon completing this lesson, you should be able to:

1. Explain the origins and results of the conflicts with American Indians in the 1790s.
2. Analyze the foreign policy of the United States in the 1790s.
3. Explain the emergence of the Federalist and Republican political parties of the 1790s, their differing political philosophies, and their effect upon the political traditions of the nation.
4. Analyze the presidential election of 1800 and the importance of its outcome.
5. Analyze the significance of the revolutionary era in the shaping of America.

LESSON FOCUS POINTS

The following questions are designed to help you get the most benefit from the sources selected for this lesson. For reference purposes, the titles for the video segments are: (1) Introduction, (2) “The Treaty of Greenville,” (3) Short-take: “The Supreme Law of the Land,” (4) “The Quasi War,” (5) “The Election of 1800,” (6) Short-take: “The Election of 2000,” and (7) Unit Summary: “All Men are Created Equal?”

1. Examine Map 8.2 on page 270 of the text. Answer the questions posed in the text. (textbook, p. 270)
2. What happened to General Arthur St. Clair and his military forces in the Ohio Valley region in the fall of 1791? What were the effects of this episode? (textbook, p. 271; video segment 2)
3. What happened at the Battle of Fallen Timbers? (textbook, p. 271; video segment 2)
4. What is the significance of the Treaty of Greenville? (textbook, p. 271; video segment 2)

5. Why did treaties between the United States and Indian peoples have long-term significance? (video segments 2 and 3)
 6. Why did the United States declare neutrality regarding conflicts between Britain and France in the 1790s? (textbook, pp. 272–273; video segment 4)
 7. What was the Jay Treaty? Why was it so controversial? (textbook, p. 273; video segment 4)
 8. What was the Haitian Revolution? What effects did it have in the United States? (textbook, p. 274)
 9. Why did the results of the 1796 presidential election create a politically awkward situation? (textbook, pp. 275–276)
 10. What was the XYZ affair? What effects did it have in the United States? Why did the United States have a “Quasi War” with France? What were the effects of this undeclared war? (textbook, pp. 276–277; video segment 4)
 11. What were the Alien and Sedition Acts? What were they intended to accomplish? What effects did they have? (textbook, pp. 277–281; video segment 4)
 12. Read the documents concerning “The Crisis of 1798: Sedition” found on pages 278–280 of the text. Answer the questions posed in the text. (textbook, pp. 278–280)
 13. Why did Madison and Jefferson write the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions? What key idea was put forward in these documents? What were the short- and long-term effects of the Resolutions? (textbook, pp. 279–281; video segment 4)
 14. Why did President John Adams ultimately pursue peace with France? How did this affect his reelection chances? What does this say about Adams? (textbook, pp. 280–281; video segment 4)
 15. What were the long-term effects of President Washington’s approach to neutrality and President Adams’ pursuit of peace in the 1790s? (video segment 4)
 16. How and why were political parties operating in the presidential election of 1800? What were the major differences between the Federalists and Republicans? (textbook, pp. 281–282, 289; video segment 5)
 17. Why did Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr end up with the same number of votes in the electoral college in 1800? What change did this bring about in the electoral voting? (textbook, pp. 289–290; video segment 5)
 18. What is the short-term and long-term significance of the election of 1800 and the peaceful transfer of power which followed? (video segment 5)
 19. What parallels exist between the elections of 1800 and 2000? (video segment 6)
 20. In general, how did the revolutionary era (1760–1801) shape America? (video segment 7)
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HISTORICAL EXPERTS INTERVIEWED

Joyce Appleby, Professor of History, University of California at Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA

Colin Calloway, Professor, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH

Gerald Danzer, Professor of History, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL

R. David Edmunds, Watson Professor of American History, University of Texas at Dallas,
Richardson, TX

Joseph J. Ellis, Professor of History, Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, MA

Eric Foner, Professor of History, Columbia University, New York City, NY

James Oliver Horton, Benjamin Banneker Professor of American Civilization and History, The
George Washington University, Washington, DC

Marilyn John, Bear Clan Mother, Oneida Indian Nation, Vernon, NY

Linda Kerber, May Brodbeck Professor in the Liberal Arts and Professor of History, University
of Iowa, Iowa City, IA

Richard White, Margaret Byrne Professor of American History, Stanford University, Stanford,
CA

Tony Wonderly, Nation Historian, Oneida Indian Nation, Oneida, NY

PRACTICE TEST

The following items will help you evaluate your understanding of this lesson. Use the Answer Key at the end of the lesson to check your answers or to locate material related to each question.

Multiple choice: Choose the BEST answer.

1. When the U.S. government's early policy toward the Indians in the Northwest Territory did not reap the anticipated results, _____.
 - A. the troops that had been stationed there were withdrawn
 - B. an expansion of military forces led to the total defeat of General St. Clair's army
 - C. expanded military efforts by General St. Clair's army pushed the Indians back and made way for new settlement
 - D. President Washington told all settlers to refrain from crossing the Ohio River to settle
2. As a result of the Treaty of Greenville (1795), _____.
 - A. the British evacuated their forts in the Old Northwest
 - B. U.S. military forces withdrew from Ohio
 - C. American Indians lost their struggle to preserve the Ohio River as a boundary to white settlement
 - D. The United States agreed to respect Indian tribal customs

3. One long-term benefit for Indians of treaties between the United States and Indian peoples is that _____.
 - A. Indian lifestyles showed marked improvement in the nineteenth century
 - B. liquor was specifically banned as a part of the goods shipped to Indians
 - C. states could assert legal authority on reservations
 - D. treaties became the basis of Indian rights within the United States
4. What was President Washington's reaction to the war between England and France when it began in 1793?
 - A. He supported the French.
 - B. He supported the English.
 - C. He tried to negotiate peace between the two countries.
 - D. He issued a Neutrality Proclamation.
5. "X, Y, and Z" was the code name for _____.
 - A. three American diplomats sent to France to avert war
 - B. unnamed French agents sent by Talleyrand to meet with American representatives
 - C. secret agents sent to France to avert war
 - D. English spies located in France to gather intelligence
6. In the video, Professor Joseph Ellis observes that the Alien and Sedition Acts were counterproductive for the Federalists because _____.
 - A. they helped Jefferson win the election of 1800
 - B. most new immigrants actually tended to support the Federalists
 - C. pro-Federalist newspapers were shut down
 - D. they could not reveal details of the XYZ affair
7. Issues under the Federalists that divided the country in the late 1790s included _____.
 - A. Indian policy
 - B. the election of Adams in 1796
 - C. the Jay Treaty and the Quasi War
 - D. Adams' dismissal of Hamilton as secretary of the treasury
8. When the electoral vote in the 1800 presidential election ended in a tie and the House of Representatives had to choose a winner, _____.
 - A. Alexander Hamilton helped Thomas Jefferson prevail
 - B. John Adams took his case to the Supreme Court
 - C. Aaron Burr challenged Alexander Hamilton to a duel
 - D. Thomas Jefferson persuaded Aaron Burr to withdraw before a vote had to be taken
9. In the video, Professor Eric Foner observes that during the revolutionary era, the idea of freedom _____.
 - A. narrowed in definition after 1776
 - B. was contradicted by Indian removal
 - C. applied only to particular groups of people
 - D. became universalized and democratized

Short Answer: Your answers should be one or two paragraphs long and specifically address the points indicated.

10. In your opinion, was the Sedition Act of 1798 constitutional? Why or why not?
11. What were the differences between Federalists and Republicans in 1800?
12. Cite three precedents established in the 1790s. What were the long-term effects?

Essay Questions: Your answers should be several paragraphs long and express a clear understanding of the points indicated.

13. Analyze the presidential election of 1800 in respect to the candidates, issues, campaign, and results. Why was a peaceful transfer of power significant in American history?
14. Describe and explain how the revolutionary era (1760–1801) shaped America. In your answer, consider the major changes that took place, particularly relating to American identity and the concepts of freedom and equality. How does that era continue to affect us today?

ANSWER KEY

	Learning Answer Objectives	Focus Points	References
1.	B..... LO 1.....	FP 2.....	p. 271; video segment 2
2.	C..... LO 1.....	FP 4.....	p. 271; video segment 2
3.	D..... LO 1.....	FP 5.....	video segments 2, 3
4.	D..... LO 2.....	FP 6.....	pp. 272–273; video segment 4
5.	B..... LO 2.....	FP 10.....	pp. 276–277; video segment 4
6.	A..... LO 2, 4.....	FP 11.....	pp. 277–281; video segment 4
7.	C..... LO 3.....	FP 16.....	pp. 281–282, 289; video segment 5
8.	A..... LO 4.....	FP 17.....	pp. 289–290; video segment 5
9.	D..... LO 5.....	FP 20.....	video segment 7
10.	 LO 2, 3.....	FP 11, 12, 13.....	pp. 277–281; video segment 4
	• What did the Sedition Act say? • What part of the Constitution did it seem to contradict? • To what extent can the government restrict expression during times of crisis?		
11.	 LO 3.....	FP 16.....	pp. 281–282, 289; video segment 5
	• Consider the issues of the use of the central government versus states' rights, the Bank of the United States, excise taxes, Alien and Sedition Acts, foreign policy disagreements, etc. • Who supported each group? Who led each group?		