

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Social Studies 7

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
A New Nation



## The War of 1812: "Mr. Madison's War"



Review: reasons for declaring war:

- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_

Use the word bank to help you fill in the blanks in the reading below.

deserted	Militia volunteers	underestimated
Native American	Thomas Jefferson	France

Even though America had declared war on Britain, the US was very poorly prepared to fight. Because of \_\_\_\_\_ reducing federal spending, the navy had only 16 ships to face the entire Royal British fleet. Soldiers were mainly \_\_\_\_\_ who enlisted on the promise of about 1-year's salary for their efforts, but had no real training for war. The regular army had fewer than 12,000 soldiers, 5,000 of whom were new recruits. They were ill equipped and knew very little about warfare. Many quickly \_\_\_\_\_, or abandoned their duties to the military. America \_\_\_\_\_, or misjudged, the strength of the British and their \_\_\_\_\_ allies. Still, Britain was already in a war with \_\_\_\_\_ - there were not many British soldiers to spare to fight in America. Already, the War of 1812 was off to a rocky start.

- **Think about it-** In what ways was the U.S. unprepared to fight a war with Britain?

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## The War Begins in the West

Americans were convinced that Canadians would welcome American rule- it would provide a way to get rid of the British. **General William Hull** led troops into Canada from Detroit, where he faced British General Isaac Brock along with Tecumseh and other Native American allies. Brock paraded his few Canadian troops in red coats to make it appear as if experienced British troops were helping the Canadians. Fearing a massacre by British and Native American troops, Hull retreated. Several other attempts to control Canada proved unsuccessful for the Americans, including one led by **General William Henry Harrison**. Ultimately, he decided that America would make no headway to gain Canada as long as the British controlled Lake Erie.

In 1813, the Americans, armed with guns and supplies they had seized at a victory in York (present-day Toronto), set out to win control of Lake Erie. Captain **Oliver Hazard Perry** designed and built his own ships and sailed his tiny fleet against the British.

During the **Battle of Lake Erie**, the British battered Perry's own ship and left it helpless. Perry rowed over to another American ship and continued to fight until the Americans won the battle. After losing control of Lake Erie, the British and Tecumseh retreated. General William Henry Harrison pursued them, winning an important victory at the Battle of the Thames (1813). Tecumseh died in the battle, and without his leadership, the Indian Confederation that he hoped for soon fell apart.

1. How did General Brock trick General Hull during the march on Canada?

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2. Why was Oliver Hazard Perry remembered as a hero in the Battle of Lake Erie?

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## The War on the High Seas



In July of 1812, the U.S. attempted three invasions of Canada. Each time, the U.S. was unsuccessful. This left the British in control of the Great Lakes region. The Americans had better luck on the high seas, though. On August 1, 1812, the British ship *Guerriere* fired on the *U.S.S. Constitution* off the coast of Nova Scotia. The shot seemed to bounce right off the American ship, nicknamed **Old Ironsides**. Twenty minutes later, a cannon blast from the *Constitution* damaged the *Guerriere* so badly that it was unable to be towed into port. This event marked the beginning of the United States as a naval power.

3. Why do you think the victory of Old Ironsides was surprising to the British?

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## The British Gain Strength

Before fighting broke out with the United States, the British had already been at war with the French. Fighting two wars was difficult. Britain had to send soldiers and ships to both France and the United States. In the spring of 1814, British luck began to improve because the war with Napoleon ended, so they were free to strengthen their forces against the U.S.

In August of 1814, the British sailed into Chesapeake Bay and launched an attack on Washington, D.C. British troops quickly overpowered the American militia on the outskirts of the city and then marched into the capital. “They proceeded, without a moment’s delay, to burn and destroy everything in the most distant degree connected with the government,” reported a British officer. Dolley Madison, the First Lady, gathered up important papers and a portrait of George Washington as she fled.

4. Why do you think the British focused their strength on Washington, D.C.?

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Among the buildings set on fire were the Capitol and the White House. Fortunately, a thunderstorm put the fires out before they could completely destroy everything. The British did not try to hold Washington, D.C. Instead, they headed north to Baltimore. They attacked that city in mid-September, but the people of Baltimore were ready. They key to Baltimore’s defense **was Fort McHenry** on Baltimore Harbor. From the evening of September 13 until dawn on September 14 during the **Battle of Baltimore**, the British bombarded the harbor.

When the early morning fog lifted, the “broad stripes and bright stars” of the American flag still waved over Fort McHenry. American forces had won the Battle of Baltimore. The British withdrew, and the threat to the nation’s capital had ended. **Francis Scott Key**, a young American lawyer who witnessed the battle, wrote a poem about it. Soon, his poem, “The Star-Spangled Banner,” was published and set to music. Today, it is the national anthem of the United States.

5. Why were the British unsuccessful in their attempt to capture Baltimore?

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6. How did Francis Scott Key’s poem about the Battle of Baltimore become an important symbol of patriotism in America?

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## Jackson Becomes a Hero in New Orleans

In late 1814, the British prepared to attack New Orleans. From there, they hoped to sail up the Mississippi River. However, **Andrew Jackson** was waiting. Jackson's forces included thousands of frontiersmen and Choctaw Indians. The Choctaw were longtime rivals of the native American allies working with the British. Many of Jackson's troops were expert riflemen. Citizens of New Orleans also joined the army to defend their city. Among the volunteers were hundreds of African Americans.

The soldiers dug **trenches**- holes in the ground- to defend themselves. On January 8, 1815, the British attacked. Again and again, British soldiers marched toward American trenches. More than 2,000 British died under fire. Only seven Americans died. Overnight, Jackson became a national hero. His fame did not dim even when Americans learned that the battle had taken place two weeks after the war technically ended. The U.S. and Britain had already signed a treaty in Europe, but the news took months to cross the Atlantic.

7. Why did the Battle of New Orleans instill Americans with a sense of national pride?

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## New Englanders Protest

Many New Englanders called the War of 1812 "Mr. Madison's War." They strongly opposed the it, mainly because the British blockade of America was severely hurting trade in New England. Also, New Englanders were concerned about the possibility that America would gain land in Spain and Canada. Carving new states out of these lands would make New England less influential.

In December of 1814, delegates (mostly Federalists), met in Hartford, Connecticut to protest Madison and the war. Some threatened to **nullify**, or cancel, the state of war in their states if the war continued. However, the protest was meaningless because the war had already ended. In fact, the threats of **secession** (to leave the union) further weakened the dying Federalist party.

8. Why would New Englanders **not** want America to gain more land in the south and west?

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## Indecisive Results of the War

A peace treaty was signed in the city of Ghent, in present-day Belgium, on December 24, 1814. John Quincy Adams, son of John Adams and one of the American delegates, summed up the **Treaty of Ghent** in one sentence: "Nothing was adjusted, nothing was settled." Essentially, the war was declared a tie.

Britain and the United States agreed to return to prewar conditions. The treaty said nothing about impressment or neutrality. These issues had faded because the wars in Europe that led to them were now over. Other issues were settled later. In 1818, for example, the two nations settled a dispute over the border between Canada and the United States.

Looking back, some Americans felt that the War of 1812 had been a mistake. Others argued that Europe would now treat the young republic with more respect. The victories of heroes like Oliver Hazard Perry, William Henry Harrison and Andrew Jackson gave Americans new pride in their country. As one Democratic Republican leader remarked, "The people are now more American. They feel and act more as a nation."

9. Describe the outcome of the War of 1812.

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