

Causes of the War of 1812
Lesson #1 of the War of 1812 Module

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

What are some of the reasons the United States went to war in 1812?

OVERVIEW

The War of 1812 brought the United States onto the world's stage in a conflict that ranged throughout the American Northeast, Midwest, and Southeast, into Canada, and onto the high seas and Great Lakes. When the United States went to war against Great Britain, the British were already waging a global war against France. Restrictions on international trade, embargoes, and impressment were high tension points. Native American alliances and interests also created conflict that sometimes tied into the War of 1812. The United States entered the war seeking to secure commercial rights and uphold national honor.

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this lesson, the students will be able to:

1. Knowledge
 - Explain reasons for the War of 1812.
 - Discuss the political and international challenges the United States faced in the early 19th Century.
2. Comprehension/Application/Analysis
 - Read and research through primary source documents exploring different reasons and perspectives on the causes of the War of 1812.
3. Evaluation
 - Evaluate the causes of the War of 1812 and defend a personal opinion about the causes.

ACTIVITIES

1. Use the [Lesson's PowerPoint](#) to explore the context and history; the PowerPoint introduces Essential Questions and lays foundational knowledge about the conflict – highlighting both the United States conflict with Britain and Native American conflicts which had ties and alliances in the causes of the War of 1812.
2. Watch the [“What Caused the War of 1812?”](#) Video
3. Students will examine the primary sources and decide if they would have supported the War of 1812 if they lived in the United States at that time.
4. Distribute the [primary source worksheet](#) and have the students select primary sources for this lesson. Students may work on their own or as a group.
 - a. 7 selected primary sources are available under [the “Primary Source” section of this lesson plan page](#). There is a selection of pro-war, anti-war, and Native American perspectives in the selected sources.

5. Students may present their short argument verbally or written.

STANDARDS

Please visit the [Lesson Plan Page](#) and select the “Common Core and NCSS Standards for Social Studies” to view the details.

RESOURCES

[Visit the Lesson Plan Page](#) to find all resources in one convenient place. You’ll find everything mentioned or linked in this Lesson Plan along with additional videos, articles, primary sources, and biographies.

Quick Links

- [PowerPoint](#)
- [Primary Source Summary Worksheet](#)
- [“What Caused the War of 1812?” Video](#)

OPTIONAL HOMEWORK/ASSESSMENT/ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:

Option 1: War of 1812 Era Timeline

Using the 9 Articles featured in [this lesson plan](#), students will research and create a list timeline of events that happened in the United States and internationally in the era, leading to the declaration of war in 1812. (This timeline may also be helpful: [War of 1812 Timeline](#)) Have the students highlight domestic or foreign events and discuss how they may or may not be connected and leading to the War of 1812.

Option 2: Biography and Letter

Have students select a person from the War of 1812 era. (There are biographies featured on [the lesson plan page](#) and additional War of 1812 biographies [here on the American Battlefield Trust website](#).) The students will note if this historical figure supported or opposed the War of 1812 and then write a letter as though this historical figure is explaining his or her view about the conflict.

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