

The Federalist Era

Lesson #4 of the 1783-1812 Module

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

What were some of the challenges and successes in the first decade of governing under the Constitution of the United States?

OVERVIEW

After the passage and ratification of the Constitution and subsequent Bill of Rights, the Legislative Branch began to resemble what it is today. While organized political parties were nonexistent during the presidency of George Washington, informal factions formed between congressmen that were either 'Pro-Administration' or 'Anti-Administration'. After George Washington stepped down as President, the informal coalitions in Congress became officially organized, transforming the 'Pro-Administration' faction into the Federalist Party and the 'Anti-Administration' faction into the Jeffersonian Party (Also known as the Democratic-Republicans or Anti-Federalists).

The Federalist Party was formed by Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison who all authored many of the Federalist Papers. Hamilton was a key ideological figure for this political party, influencing other party members with his previous experience as the Secretary of the Treasury under Washington. Thus, the party advocated for a stronger national government centered around the Executive Branch among other federal entities. The main base of support for this party came from the urban cities as well as the New England area. The supporters were of the mind that the national government was superior to the state government, thus establishing a governmental hierarchy.

The Federalist Party had many successes throughout the late 1700s in the Legislative Branch. In the Executive Branch, the second President of the United States, John Adams, was a member of the Federalist Party and was to be the only Federalist president in US history. Once the early 1800s arrived, the Federalists began to lose support among the American voters, allowing the rival Jeffersonian Party to garner support. However, Supreme Court Chief Justice, and moderate Federalist, John Marshall continued the party's legacy of federal supremacy long after the party's dissolution.

OBJECTIVES

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

1. Knowledge
 - Recognize some of the key events and leaders of the Federalist Era.
2. Comprehension/Application/Analysis
 - Examine a primary source and note the triumphs or difficulties of the Federalist Era.

3. Evaluation

- Evaluate the different perspectives on government that the Federalists and Anti-Federalists/Democratic Republicans offered and how a difference of opinion could be beneficial at times.

ACTIVITIES

1. Use the [Lesson's PowerPoint](#) to explore the context and history; the PowerPoint introduces an Essential Question and lays foundational knowledge about the Federalist Era.
2. Let students choose a primary source. The primary sources are available on the [Lesson Plan Page](#), under the category "Primary Sources."
3. Distribute the [primary source worksheet](#).
4. Students will read their selected primary source and fill out or discuss the questions.
5. Encourage a class discussion around the findings and reflections, particularly from Section 5 of the worksheet.

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 Worksheet](#)

OPTIONAL HOMEWORK/ASSESSMENT/ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:

Option 1: A Federalist Timeline

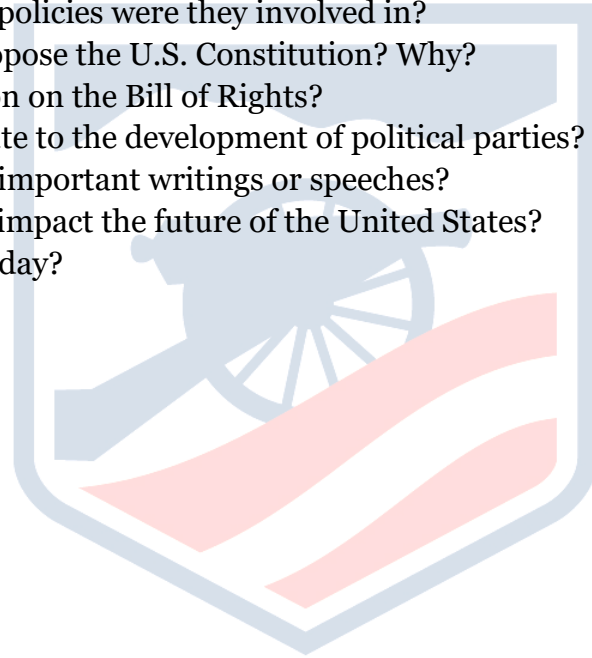
Using the Articles and the Primary Sources on the Lesson Plan Page, students create a timeline of key events during the Federalist Era (focusing on the years of Washington and Adams' administrations). Students can create a paper timeline or a digital timeline and share about their favorite event on the timeline with the group.

Option 2: Profile of a Federalist

Students select the biography of a historical figure from the Federalist Era. (There are 6 biographies ready on the Lesson Plan Page, or students can do further research on their own for other figures.)

As short written answers or verbal answers, students can analyze and summary this historical person's life:

1. Who was this person?
2. What role did they play in the Federalist Era?
3. What were their views on government?
4. What major events or policies were they involved in?
5. Did they support or oppose the U.S. Constitution? Why?
6. What was their position on the Bill of Rights?
7. How did they contribute to the development of political parties?
8. What were their most important writings or speeches?
9. How did their actions impact the future of the United States?
10. What is their legacy today?



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