

The Experiment

Washington, Adams, the First Parties and a Young Republic in a World at War, 1789–1800

Unit 3 3.10 Shaping a New Republic

“... the preservation of the sacred fire of liberty, and the destiny of the Republican model of Government, are justly considered as deeply, perhaps as finally staked, on the experiment entrusted to the hands of the American people.”

George Washington
First Inaugural Address, April 30, 1789

What the exam expects

What controversy prompted Washington's warnings against foreign influence and permanent alliances in his Farewell Address?

The fight over revolutionary France prompted them. After the **French Revolution** brought war between France and Britain in 1793, Federalists favored Britain and Republicans France, and Washington's **Proclamation of Neutrality** kept the country out of the war. The **Farewell Address** urged trade with no political ties, advice that senators later used to reject the League of Nations.

Why did Jefferson oppose Hamilton's economic plan, and what did their quarrel produce?

Jefferson feared the plan would serve merchants and creditors at farmers' expense. Under his **strict construction** of the Constitution, Congress had no power to charter the **First Bank of the United States**, but Hamilton defended it with implied powers. Their quarrel produced the first parties, Hamilton's **Federalist Party** and Jefferson and Madison's **Democratic-Republican Party**.

What were the Alien and Sedition Acts designed to do, and how did Republicans respond?

Federalists passed the **Alien and Sedition Acts** in the war fever after the **XYZ Affair** to silence Republican critics, and they jailed editors and even a congressman for attacking Adams. Jefferson and Madison answered with the **Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions**, and after the **election of 1800** Jefferson promised to tolerate "error of opinion."

Evaluate the extent to which settler expansion influenced North America from 1754 to 1800.

Settlers crossing the Appalachians forced Native nations, Spain, Britain, and the federal government to fight and bargain over the West. The **Treaty of Greenville** took most of Ohio, **Pinckney's Treaty** opened the Mississippi, and western farmers rose against federal taxes in the **Whiskey Rebellion**. Far to the west, Spain built **California missions** on forced Native labor.

Don't mix these up

- ✗ "Washington's Farewell Address called for limiting presidents to two terms." Washington began the two-term custom only by retiring, and the Constitution set no limit until the Twenty-second Amendment in 1951.
- ✗ "The Federalists and Anti-Federalists of 1787 became the two parties of the 1790s." The 1790s parties grew from new fights over Hamilton's program and France, and Madison, who had championed the Constitution in 1787, led the Republicans with Jefferson.
- ✗ "Jay's Treaty opened the Mississippi River and New Orleans to American trade." Pinckney's Treaty with Spain did that in 1795, while Jay's Treaty with Britain got British troops out of their Northwest forts.

Study list

	What it was	Why it matters
Spanish missions in California 1769	A chain of Catholic missions that Junípero Serra and other Spanish friars founded along the California coast. Friars and soldiers forced baptized Native people to stay and work there.	Spain pushed north partly to block Russia and Britain, and its soldiers there, many of mixed ancestry, could gain rank and land.
French Revolution 1789–1799	The revolution in which France overthrew its monarchy and executed Louis XVI in January 1793. Eleven days later the new republic declared war on Britain.	Its war pitted the 1778 French alliance against trade with Britain, and Americans split over which to put first.
Cabinet 1789	The president's council of top advisers, a body the Constitution never names. Washington chose Jefferson for State, Hamilton for the Treasury, Knox for War, and Randolph as attorney general.	Hamilton and Jefferson gave Washington opposite advice on the bank and on France, and their cabinet feud grew into the first parties.
Hamilton's financial plan 1790–1791	Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton's program to fix the nation's credit by paying the war debt at face value, taking over the states' debts, taxing whiskey and imports, and chartering a national bank.	Paying debts in full won the United States good credit and gave wealthy bondholders a stake in the new government's success.
Strict and loose construction strict and loose interpretation 1791	Two ways of reading the Constitution. Jefferson's strict construction allowed Congress only its listed powers, while Hamilton's loose construction read the Necessary and Proper Clause to allow implied powers.	The bank fight made this the line between the parties, and it returned in later fights over roads, canals, and tariffs.
First Bank of the United States Bank of the United States 1791	Hamilton's national bank, which Congress chartered for 20 years. Private investors owned four-fifths of it, and it held the government's money, made loans, and issued paper notes.	Washington accepted Hamilton's case for implied powers, and in 1819 the Supreme Court upheld a national bank on the same grounds.
Federalist Party Federalists 1790s	The party of Hamilton and Adams, which wanted a strong national government, Hamilton's bank and tariffs, and close ties with Britain. Merchants, creditors, and New Englanders formed its base.	Federalists feared disorder, so they backed the march against the whiskey rebels and the Sedition Act's prosecutions of Republican critics.
Democratic-Republican Party Republicans 1790s	Jefferson and Madison's party, which stood for strict construction, states' rights, farmers' interests, and friendship with France. Its strength lay in the South and West.	Republicans believed Hamilton's program served speculators at farmers' expense, and Jefferson's 1800 victory gave them the presidency for 24 years.

	What it was	Why it matters
Proclamation of Neutrality Neutrality Proclamation 1793	Washington's announcement that the United States would be "friendly and impartial" toward Britain, France, and the other warring powers, despite the 1778 French alliance.	Washington judged the country too weak for a European war, and by acting alone he widened the president's power over foreign policy.
Impressment 1793–1812	Britain's practice of forcing sailors into the Royal Navy. From 1793, British captains stopped American merchant ships and seized sailors they claimed as British, many of them American citizens.	In 1796 Congress began giving American sailors papers that showed their citizenship, but British captains often ignored them.
Whiskey Rebellion 1794	An uprising of western Pennsylvania farmers against Hamilton's 1791 whiskey tax, which they had to pay in scarce cash. Rebels burned the house of the federal tax inspector, John Neville.	The rebels scattered when Washington called out about 13,000 militia, a force the Confederation could never raise against Shays's Rebellion.
Jay's Treaty Jay Treaty 1794	Chief Justice John Jay's treaty with Britain. Britain agreed to leave its forts in the Northwest by 1796 but said nothing about impressment, and the Senate approved it by exactly two-thirds.	Peace with Britain held and the western forts emptied, but Republicans denounced the treaty as a betrayal of France.
Treaty of Greenville 1795	The treaty in which 12 Native nations gave up most of present-day Ohio for \$20,000 in goods and yearly payments. They also agreed to sell other land only to the United States.	Military defeat forced a huge land cession, and Tecumseh, who rejected the treaty, later organized Native resistance to such deals.
Pinckney's Treaty 1795	Thomas Pinckney's treaty with Spain, which opened the Mississippi to American shipping, granted a three-year right of deposit (duty-free storage) at New Orleans, and set Florida's northern border at the 31st parallel.	Spain gave way partly because Jay's Treaty made it fear closer ties between Britain and the United States.
Washington's Farewell Address 1796	The public letter in which Washington, with Hamilton's help, announced he would not seek a third term. It warned against political parties, sectional splits, and permanent foreign alliances.	Washington wrote it as the parties fought over France, and its warning against permanent alliances guided foreign policy until World War II.
XYZ Affair 1797–1798	A scandal in which agents of Talleyrand, the French foreign minister, demanded a bribe and a loan as the price of talks with three American envoys.	When Adams released the envoys' reports in 1798, the outrage brought on the Quasi-War and the Alien and Sedition Acts.

	What it was	Why it matters
Quasi-War 1798–1800	An undeclared naval war between the United States and France, mostly in the Caribbean. Congress created a Navy Department in 1798, but Adams never asked for a declaration of war.	Adams defied Federalists who wanted a full war, and the Convention of 1800 ended the fighting and eventually the 1778 alliance.
Alien and Sedition Acts 1798	Four Federalist laws that raised the wait for citizenship to 14 years, let the president deport noncitizens, and punished “false, scandalous and malicious” writing against the government, Congress, or the president.	Federalists aimed them at immigrants, who mostly voted Republican, and at Republican editors, who said the Sedition Act broke the First Amendment.
Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions 1798–1799	Resolutions that Jefferson and Madison wrote in secret for the Kentucky and Virginia legislatures. They called the Constitution a compact among the states and declared the Alien and Sedition Acts unconstitutional.	Because the Supreme Court had not yet claimed the power to strike down laws, Republicans turned to state legislatures to resist.
Election of 1800 Revolution of 1800 1800	The election in which Jefferson and his fellow Republican Aaron Burr tied with 73 electoral votes each, ahead of Adams’s 65. The House of Representatives chose Jefferson on the 36th ballot.	A peaceful handover between rival parties proved the Constitution could survive party conflict, and the tie led to the Twelfth Amendment.

Also in the film

Judiciary Act of 1789 1789	Congress’s law that set up federal district and circuit courts under a Supreme Court of six justices.
Compromise of 1790 1790	By Jefferson’s account, a dinner deal that traded a Potomac capital for southern votes to take over state debts.
Trade and Intercourse Act 1790	A law that voided Native land sales without a federal treaty, so states that ignored it later faced Native lawsuits.
Treaty of New York 1790	Alexander McGillivray and other Creek leaders traded land for a federal guarantee of the rest, which Georgia settlers ignored.
Citizen Genêt 1793	France’s minister who commissioned privateers in American ports and tried to rally Americans against Washington’s neutrality.
Democratic-Republican societies 1793–1794	Political clubs that cheered revolutionary France and criticized Washington, who blamed them for the Whiskey Rebellion.

Short-answer practice

“Consequently the Treaties between the U S. and France, were not treaties between the U S. & Louis Capet, but between the two nations of America & France, and the nations remaining in existance, tho’ both of them have since changed their forms of government, the treaties are not annulled by these changes.”

Thomas Jefferson, Opinion on the French Treaties, April 28, 1793

- (a) Briefly describe ONE argument Jefferson makes in the excerpt about the treaties between the United States and France.

- (b) Briefly explain ONE policy George Washington adopted in 1793 toward the war between France and Great Britain.

- (c) Briefly explain how ONE group in the United States challenged Washington’s policy toward Great Britain from 1794 to 1796.

Spanish missions in California

1769

The Experiment

French Revolution

1789–1799

The Experiment

Cabinet

1789

The Experiment

Hamilton's financial plan

1790–1791

The Experiment

Strict and loose construction

strict and loose interpretation

1791

The Experiment

First Bank of the United States

Bank of the United States

1791

The Experiment

Federalist Party

Federalists

1790s

The Experiment

Democratic- Republican Party

Republicans

1790s

The Experiment

Proclamation of Neutrality

Neutrality Proclamation

1793

The Experiment

Impressment

1793–1812

The Experiment

The 1789 revolution that turned France into a republic and led to war with Britain in 1793.

Federalists leaned toward Britain and Republicans toward France.

Hamilton's plan to pay the war debts in full, take over state debts, and charter a national bank.

The fight over it gave rise to the first two parties.

Hamilton's national bank, which Congress chartered in 1791 to hold federal money and make loans.

Hamilton justified it with the Necessary and Proper Clause.

Jefferson and Madison's party, which favored strict construction, states' rights, farmers, and France.

They saw the Farewell Address as an attack on their party.

Britain's practice of seizing sailors, many of them Americans, from American ships for the Royal Navy.

It became a leading cause of the War of 1812.

Catholic missions Spain built along the California coast from 1769, where friars forced Native people to work.

Catholic and Native ways blended in the mission settlements.

The president's council of top advisers, a body Washington created though the Constitution never names it.

Every president since Washington has kept one.

Jefferson read the Constitution to allow only listed powers, and Hamilton read it to allow implied powers too.

Jefferson bent his own strict reading to buy Louisiana in 1803.

Hamilton's party, which wanted a strong national government, a national bank, and friendship with Britain.

After losing in 1800, it never won the presidency again.

Washington's 1793 declaration that the United States would take neither side in the war between Britain and France.

It kept the young nation out of Europe's war.

Whiskey Rebellion 1794 The Experiment	Jay's Treaty Jay Treaty 1794 The Experiment
Treaty of Greenville 1795 The Experiment	Pinckney's Treaty 1795 The Experiment
Washington's Farewell Address 1796 The Experiment	XYZ Affair 1797–1798 The Experiment
Quasi-War 1798–1800 The Experiment	Alien and Sedition Acts 1798 The Experiment
Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions 1798–1799 The Experiment	Election of 1800 Revolution of 1800 1800 The Experiment

John Jay's 1794 treaty in which Britain agreed to leave its western forts but not to stop impressment.

The uproar over it hardened the split between the two parties.

Thomas Pinckney's 1795 treaty with Spain that opened the Mississippi and New Orleans to American trade.

Western farmers could now ship their crops out through New Orleans.

French agents' 1797 demand for a bribe before France would negotiate with American envoys.

War fever swept the country and strengthened the Federalists.

Federalist laws of 1798 that targeted immigrants and made false attacks on the government a crime.

Jefferson and Madison answered with the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions.

Jefferson's victory over Adams, the first time one party peacefully handed the presidency to another.

Jefferson later called it the Revolution of 1800.

A 1794 revolt by western Pennsylvania farmers against the federal whiskey tax.

Many angry western farmers then turned to Jefferson's party.

The 1795 treaty in which 12 defeated Native nations gave up most of present-day Ohio.

American settlers poured into the Ohio country afterward.

Washington's 1796 farewell, which warned against political parties and permanent alliances with foreign nations.

Senators used its warning in 1919 to reject the League of Nations.

The undeclared war at sea that the United States and France fought from 1798 to 1800.

Adams's peace with France split the Federalists before the election of 1800.

Jefferson's and Madison's 1798 claim that states could judge the Alien and Sedition Acts unconstitutional.

South Carolina revived their states'-rights argument to nullify a tariff in 1832.

Model answers

- (a) Briefly describe ONE argument Jefferson makes in the excerpt about the treaties between the United States and France.

Jefferson argued that the 1778 treaties bound the two nations, America and France, rather than Louis Capet, the former king. A change of government in either nation, he wrote, did not annul them.

- (b) Briefly explain ONE policy George Washington adopted in 1793 toward the war between France and Great Britain.

On April 22, 1793, Washington proclaimed that the United States would be “friendly and impartial” toward the warring powers and warned citizens not to join the fighting. He kept the young nation out of war despite the 1778 alliance with France.

- (c) Briefly explain how ONE group in the United States challenged Washington’s policy toward Great Britain from 1794 to 1796.

Jefferson and Madison’s Democratic-Republicans attacked Jay’s Treaty as a surrender to Britain because it did not stop the impressment of American sailors. In 1796 House Republicans demanded the treaty papers, and Washington refused to hand them over.