The Age of Jackson

Objectives

- Discuss the conflict between Andrew Jackson and John Quincy Adams over the election of 1824.
- Explain how the right to vote expanded in the United States.
- Describe Andrew Jackson’s victory in the election of 1828.

Why It Matters The Constitution had established a system based on representative government. But not all citizens could fully participate in the early American republic. During the Age of Jackson, however, the democratic spirit grew and more Americans played an active role in government.

Section Focus Question: How did the people gain more power during the Age of Jackson?

Adams and Jackson in Conflict

Andrew Jackson served two terms as President, from 1829 to 1837. His presidency marked the opening of a new and more democratic era in American political life. So great was his influence that the twenty-year period after he became President is often called the Age of Jackson.

Andrew Jackson was a wealthy man by the time he became President. However, he began life with very little. Born in a log cabin on the border of North and South Carolina, he was an orphan by the age of 14. Jackson was ambitious, brave, and tough. He survived smallpox as a child and severe gunshot wounds as an adult.

During a difficult march with his troops in 1812, one soldier described him as “tough as hickory.” Hickory trees are extremely strong, and their wood is very hard. The description fit Jackson so well that it stuck as a nickname.

Jackson became known as Old Hickory.

Jackson stood for the idea that ordinary people should participate in American political life. As a general and later as President, Andrew Jackson was deeply loved by millions of ordinary Americans. They loved him for his humble beginnings and his firm leadership.

Vocabulary Builder

Use the information below to teach students this section’s high-use words.

High-Use Word Definition and Sample Sentence

- react, p. 350 v. to act in response to another action; to respond
  King George III reacted with anger when he heard of the colonists’ demands.

- participate, p. 351 v. to take part in
  The delegates to the Constitutional Convention participated in a historical debate over the nature of government.
Teach

Adams and Jackson in Conflict
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Instruction

- **Vocabulary Builder** Before teaching this section, preteach the High-Use Words react and participate, using the strategy on TE p. T21.
- **Key Terms** Have students continue to fill in the See It–Remember It chart for the key terms in this chapter.
- **Read Adams and Jackson in Conflict** with students, using the Choral Reading strategy (TE, p. T22).
- **Ask:** What did Andrew Jackson want to see in American political life? (the participation of ordinary people)
- **Ask:** Why did the election of 1824 seem to be taken out of the hands of the people? (Because even though Jackson had more of the popular vote, he did not have a majority of the electoral votes. The House of Representatives had to decide the election.)
- **Display The Election of 1824 transparency.** Work through the map and key together with students. Call on students to answer the questions.

Color Transparencies, The Election of 1824

Independent Practice

- Interactive Reading and Notetaking Study Guide, Chapter 10, Section 3 (Adapted Version also available.)

Monitor Progress

As students fill in the Notetaking Study Guide, circulate and make sure individuals understand the election process. Provide assistance as needed.

Answer

**Draw Conclusions** With their new right to vote, people would work on a political campaign so their candidate would win.

**The Election of 1824**

Jackson first ran for President in 1824. His opponents were John Quincy Adams, Henry Clay, and William H. Crawford of Georgia. Jackson received the most electoral votes, but not a majority. According to the Constitution, the House of Representatives would have to decide the election.

The choice was between Jackson and Adams, the two who had received the most votes. As Speaker of the House, Clay had great influence. He told his supporters to vote for Adams. The House then elected Adams on the first ballot.

Jackson reacted with fury. He had won the most popular votes and the most electoral votes, but still had lost the election. When Adams appointed Clay secretary of state, Jackson’s supporters claimed the two men had made a “corrupt bargain.”

**The Presidency of John Quincy Adams**

Adams was burdened by the charges of a secret deal. He accomplished little, even though he had ambitious plans for the nation. He supported Clay’s American System and wanted the federal government to play a larger role in supporting the American economy.

Adams proposed a national program to build roads and canals and a high tariff to protect industry. He also planned to set up a national university and an observatory for astronomers in Washington, D.C. However, he lacked the political skill to push his programs through Congress. Adams never won the trust of the American people. As a result, he served only one term.

**Vocabulary Builder**

- react (ree AKT) v. to act in response to another action

**INFOGRAPHIC**

**Voter Participation in Presidential Elections, 1824–1840**

- The Age of Jackson saw the first stirrings of democracy in action in the United States. More men could and did vote, and many more people joined political parties and participated in election campaigns.
- It would be many years until women and African Americans also gained the right to vote. However, the kinds of political contests that are familiar to Americans today had their beginnings in the presidential elections of the 1820s and 1830s. Critical Thinking: Why would people become more actively involved in political campaigns as the right to vote was extended to new groups?
A New Era in Politics

The election of 1824 disappointed Andrew Jackson and his followers. Still, that election began a new era in American politics. Back in the 1790s, states had begun extending suffrage—the right to vote. Many states dropped the requirement that men had to own property to be able to participate in voting. Voting requirements varied slightly from state to state. However, almost all adult white males now could vote and hold office.

Vocabulary Builder

participate (pahr IHTS ah payt) v. to take part in; to share in an activity

Rights of Women

In addition to the right to vote, other rights were denied to women in the early 1800s. They were not admitted to colleges, and married women could not make contracts, own property, or control their own earnings. As the 1800s progressed, coeducational colleges and colleges just for women opened, and women were allowed to control their own property after marriage. The Nineteenth Amendment granted suffrage at the national level in 1920.

Answer

Checkpoint

Henry Clay threw his support to John Quincy Adams. Then, as President, Adams appointed Clay as his secretary of state.
Jackson Becomes President
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Instruction
- Have students read Jackson Becomes President. Remind students to look for answers to the reading Checkpoint question.
- Discuss with students why Jackson’s victory in 1828 was described as being a victory for the “common man.” (Jackson won support from ordinary Americans.)
- Ask: Why was Jackson able to explain his use of the “spoils system” as being a way to further democracy? (He was putting new people into government jobs.)
- Display the transparency The Election of 1828 and call on students to answer the questions. Then ask students to compare the elections of 1828 and 1824. (Jackson won the later election decisively against only one candidate—President John Quincy Adams.)

Color Transparencies, The Election of 1828

Answers
- Biography Quest Possible answer: As a self-made success, he seemed to be one of the average people. He opposed special privilege for the wealthy and encouraged ordinary people to hold public office.
- Reading Skill More people were involved in the nominating process.
- Checkpoint all women, all enslaved African American men, most free African American men

Differentiated Instruction
- Advanced Readers Researching Political Parties Have students research the political parties in the election of 1832, the Democrats and the National Republicans. Have groups of students develop a campaign to enlist members in each party, using text and graphics appropriate to the period. Have them share their work with the class.
- Gifted and Talented Democracy in the Age of Jackson Extending the right to vote was part of a larger spread of democratic ideas. Supporters of Andrew Jackson believed that ordinary people should vote in elections, hold public office, and do anything else they had the ability to do. Jackson’s supporters strongly opposed special privileges for those of high social status.

Wealthy observers were sometimes dismayed by this spirit of equality. One visitor complained, “the rich and the poor, the educated and the ignorant, the polite and the vulgar, all . . . feed at the same table.”

Jackson and his supporters did not trust government. They believed it often favored the rich and powerful. The Jacksonians also were suspicious of banks, which they believed favored the rich.

New Political Parties The Age of Jackson brought back the two-party system that had briefly ended during the Era of Good Feelings. During the 1824 election, the Republican Party split. Supporters of Adams called themselves National Republicans. Jackson’s supporters used the name Democrats.

In 1831, the National Republicans nominated Henry Clay to run against Jackson. Jackson won easily, with strength in all parts of the country. However, by 1836, the anti-Jackson forces had formed a new party, the Whigs. From then until 1852, the Democrats and the Whigs were the country’s two major political parties.

The new parties adopted a new way of choosing their presidential candidates. Previously, a party’s members of Congress held a caucus—a meeting of members of a political party. These caucuses involved only a small group of people. Beginning in 1831, political parties started holding national nominating conventions—large meetings of party delegates to choose candidates for office. National conventions opened the nominating process to many more people and made it more democratic.
Jackson Becomes President

Three times as many people voted in the election of 1828 as had voted in 1824. Most of these new voters supported Jackson, who easily defeated Adams.

The election revealed growing sectional and class divisions among American voters. Jackson did best in the West and the South, where planters and small farmers supported him. He also did well among small business people, artisans, and workers in cities and towns nationwide. Adams was most popular in his home region of New England.

Jackson’s Inauguration Jackson’s supporters called the election a victory for the “common man.” His inauguration in March 1829 showed what they meant. Thousands of ordinary working people jammed into Washington for the event. After the inauguration at the Capitol, Jackson rode a horse to the White House. A journalist described the scene:

“As far as the eye could reach, the sidewalks of the Avenue were covered with people on foot . . . with . . . carriages and persons on horseback . . . For a full half hour, I stood waiting for the stream to run by; but like a never failing fountain people continued pouring forth.”

—Amos Kendall in the Argus of Western America, March 29, 1829

Instruction (continued)

- Have students complete the primary source worksheet Andrew Jackson and the Spoils System. Ask students if they think the spoils system was fair. (Answers will vary but may include it was unfair because it removed people who had a background in the job, or it was fair because it gave new people the opportunity to try to change things for the better.)

**Teaching Resources, Unit 3, Andrew Jackson and the Spoils System, p. 86**

Independent Practice

- Have students complete the study guide for this section.

**Interactive Reading and Notetaking Study Guide, Chapter 10, Section 3 (Adapted Version also available.)**

Monitor Progress

As students fill in the Notetaking Study Guide, circulate to make sure students understand the details of Jackson’s inauguration and term. Provide assistance as needed.

Tell students to fill in the last column of the Reading Readiness Guide. Ask them to consider whether what they learned was what they had expected to learn.

**Teaching Resources, Unit 3, Reading Readiness Guide, p. 82**

Answer

**Apply Information** They thought that mobs took over the White House.
Twenty thousand people crowded in and around the White House for a reception in Jackson’s honor. They did not all behave well. Some broke furniture, spilled drinks, trampled rugs, and broke several thousand dollars worth of glassware and dishes. Officials finally lured the unruly crowd outside by moving the punch bowl onto the White House lawn.

Jackson’s opponents were shocked. One member of the Supreme Court complained about the “reign of King Mob.” A Jackson supporter saw things more positively: “It was the People’s day, and the People’s President, and the People would rule.”

The Spoils of Victory Jackson began his term by replacing some government officials with his supporters. Previous Presidents had done the same thing. In fact, during his two terms Jackson replaced only about 20 percent of federal officeholders.

The difference was that Jackson openly defended what he was doing. He claimed putting new people into government jobs furthered democracy. One of his supporters put it more selfishly when he compared the process to a conquering army after a war, saying “to the victors belong the spoils [loot].” People quickly applied the term spoils system to the practice of rewarding government jobs to loyal supporters of the party that wins an election.

Looking Back and Ahead As President, Andrew Jackson supported the right of ordinary people to participate in government. Jackson’s belief in equality, however, left out many, including Native Americans. In the next section, you will read how government policies denied basic rights to Native Americans.

Comprehension and Critical Thinking
1. (a) Recall What was the “corrupt bargain”? (b) Evaluate Information Who benefited from accusations of a “corrupt bargain”?
2. (a) Recall How did the United States become more democratic between the 1790s and the 1830s? (b) Draw Conclusions How did these democratic changes contribute to Jackson’s election in 1828?
3. Identify Short-Term Effects What was the immediate effect when Henry Clay told his supporters to vote for Adams? Key Terms
4. By 1828, suffrage had been extended to white women and African Americans.
5. In 1824, a nominating convention chose John Quincy Adams to run for President.
6. Tens of thousands of ordinary citizens showed up for the celebration Jackson’s victory.

Using vivid, specific words will make your writing livelier and more accurate. Rewrite these sentences using more specific, colorful words. Sentences: Many people liked Andrew Jackson, and he was very popular. People liked Jackson better than John Quincy Adams. They felt Jackson was a man of the people and Adams was not a man of the people.

Section 3 Check Your Progress
1. (a) It is what appeared to be a secret deal between John Quincy Adams and Henry Clay. Clay told his supporters to vote for Adams, who later made Clay his secretary of state.
   (b) Andrew Jackson

2. (a) Suffrage was extended to more white males, and more voters could choose presidential electors.
   (b) Many more people voted in 1828 than previously, and Jackson drew support from these newer voters.

   3. Adams won the election.
   4. No, voting rights had not been extended to women and African Americans.
   5. No. Nominating conventions did not begin until 1831.
   6. No. They came for the inauguration.
   7. Students might use words and phrases such as beloved, disliked, corrupt.