
Jacksonian Democracy High School, 11th Grade

Project READI Curriculum Module
Technical Report CM #21

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Project READI operated as a multi-institution collaboration among the Learning Sciences Research Institute, University of Illinois at Chicago; Northern Illinois University; Northwestern University; WestEd’s Strategic Literacy Initiative; and Inquirium, LLC. Project READI developed and researched interventions in collaboration with classroom teachers that were designed to improve reading comprehension through argumentation from multiple sources in literature, history, and the sciences appropriate for adolescent learners. Curriculum materials such as those in this module were developed based on enacted instruction and are intended as case examples of the READI approach to deep and meaningful disciplinary literacy and learning.

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[Teacher Comment: As an AP History teacher, content coverage and time constraints are always at the forefront of my planning and instruction. Not having the flexibility to do drop-in designed units of instruction, I found embedding the READI History Learning Goals (Appendix A) into my required content and threading the deepening of them throughout the year helped achieve multiple purposes. My students received the content they needed to be ready for the year-end AP History Test while at the same time were provided opportunities to be introduced to and increase their command of the literacy practices of history.]

Melding the two together (AP curriculum content and READI learning goals) came with its challenges. I needed at times to pull back and be more in a teacher content delivery mode while at other times give my students the time and freedom to do the intellectual work of historical inquiry themselves. Knowing when to step in for learning and when to step out of the way of learning became an ongoing balancing act. By the end of the year, my students learned history but they learned more than names, dates, and events. They ended with some idea of how to approach the reading, reasoning, and writing involved in historical argumentation.]

Jacksonian Democracy 1800 – 1848

Background: At this point in the year, students have had opportunities to engage in close reading of various genres of history and have discussed the characteristics of these genres as vehicles for the interpretation of the past. In addition, they are on their way to coming on board with the idea of **history as an interpretation** of the past rather than a collection of facts about it. They have had opportunities to source, contextualize, and corroborate documents, with the teacher supporting what they need in order to source and contextualize. The teacher has also provided guidance in what comparisons and contrasts students should be making as they read multiple texts. In this unit students expand on their understanding of genres by focusing on visual texts and engaging in thinking about how ages or eras become characterized by focusing on interpretive frameworks.

[Teacher comment: One useful tool for historians is the use of interpretive frameworks. These frameworks consist of societal structures and systems, patterns, and schools of thought. Historians use these to analyze the arguments made about the past and to develop their own arguments. For example, a historian may want to know what caused the Civil Rights movement to grow during the 1960's, finding that these causes involved social, economic, and political social structures. Or he or she may want to delve into only the economic precursors of the period. A historian might be of the school of thought that what drives history are great leaders, and so, would focus on Eisenhower, Kennedy, MLK, etc., A historian might want to compare this movement with other reforms, looking for patterns.]

Jacksonian Democracy (1800-1848) is the fourth major unit of the school year. Instructionally, this unit stretches over 13 days, with two additional days for assessment. In this curriculum module, the activities or lessons fall toward the end of the unit; not all 13 days are presented here.

Inquiry Focus for the unit: How was democracy expanded, restricted, and reorganized during the age of Jackson?

[Teacher Comment: This focus question emphasizes change over time. That is, students need a concept of democracy prior to the Jacksonian age to determine how it was expanded, restricted, and reorganized. We needed to review concepts of democracy of the founding fathers before launching into the unit.]

Essential Questions for Unit:

- Jacksonian Democrats viewed themselves as the guardians of the United States Constitution, political democracy, individual liberty, and equality of economic opportunity. In light of your knowledge of the 1820s and 1830s, to what extent do you agree with Jacksonians’ view of themselves?
- “Reform movements in the United States sought to expand democratic ideals.” Assess the validity of this statement with specific reference to the years 1825 - 1860.

Sub-questions:

- What were the general characteristics of Jacksonian Democracy?
- How did the market revolution influence cultural change?
- To what extent did the reform movements expand democracy?

[Teacher Comment: These questions allow students to dig into causality (e.g., How did the market revolution influence cultural change?), motivations/goals of historical actors (the goal of reform movements, for example) and interpretive frameworks (economics, social reform).]

Literacy Purposes: (See Appendix A_READI History Learning Goals)

1. To help students integrate visuals such as maps, charts, and artwork into their interpretations of history. (Goal one: Close Reading of primary, secondary, and tertiary documents).

[Teacher Comment: Although students have studied maps and other graphic representations before, in this unit they become a literacy focus.]

2. To encourage students to view annotation as a tool for thinking about the information and provides others a window into their thinking as they read (Goal one: Close Reading of primary, secondary, and tertiary documents).

3. To help students understand interpretive frameworks as tools historians use to analyze the past (through categories of activities) (Goal 4: Interpretive Frameworks).
4. To use timelines to focus on a particular interpretive framework (Goal 4: Interpretive Frameworks).

Text Set/Materials:

- Age of Jackson anchor (introductory) text (Activity 1.1a)
 - The anchor (introductory) text (Tindall & Shi, 1999. *America: A Narrative History*) provides students with a frame for this part of the unit, which will last over the course of the next several class periods. This kind of text provides a broad view of the issues, without the details that students will read about later. It helps students build a *context* for what they are reading (Goal 2: Historical reading—contextualization).
- Chart: Newspapers in Circulation & Voter Participation (Activity 1.2a)
 - The chart showing number of different newspapers published in the United States, 1775 – 1835 shows a large increase from 31 in 1775 to 1,200 in 1835. Between 1810 and 1835, circulation tripled. One could infer that reading as a form of engagement in political activity was an important part of the culture, especially if one considers that America had one of the highest literacy rates ever recorded, especially if paired with the Voter Participation chart.
 - The chart showing Voter Participation shows that the percentage of states allowing voters to choose electors and the percentage of eligible voter participation rose precipitously during the period of 1812 – 1840.
- Map: Election of 1824 compared to 1828 (Activity 1.2b)
 - These maps show that in 1824, although Andrew Jackson got the largest number of votes among four candidates, (but was denied the presidency because it wasn't a majority—thus, the House of Representatives elected John Quincy Adams. In 1828, with just two candidates, Jackson was the clear winner with Adams winning only in New England states.
- Paintings: Stump Speech & Portrait of Andrew (Activity 1.2c)
 - Stump Speaking: This was painted 1853-4 by George Caleb Bingham and is considered a good picturing of democracy, showing an attentive electorate engaged in reasoned argument.
- Robert Remini's, "The Revolutionary Age of Andrew Jackson, 1979." (Activity 1.3a)
 - This book does an excellent job of framing the Jacksonian time period. Students find the way he describes the social, political, and economic changes helpful in developing their own understanding of the Age of Jackson.

- Textbook – *American Pageant: A History of the Republic*. Bailey, Kennedy, & Cohen, Chapter 1 “New World Beginnings”, Chapter 13 “The Rise of a Mass Democracy”
- Observation, inference, elaboration chart (Activity 1.2)
- Categorization Worksheet: This worksheet lists terms such as “Lowell System,” “abolition of slavery,” and “Andrew Jackson in no particular order. Students need to group and label them. (Activity 2.1)
- Essay in Five Minutes
- Graphic Organizer
- Exemplar Essay

Activity 1: Defining Democracy

Guiding Question: What were the general characteristics of Jacksonian Democracy?

Objectives:

- To define democracy in the context of the Age of Jackson by reading visuals (maps, charts, painting) (Goal one: Close Reading of primary, secondary, and tertiary documents)

Text Set:

- Age of Jackson anchor (introductory) text (Activity 1.1a)
- Chart: Newspapers in Circulation & Voter Participation (Activity 1.2a)
- Map: Election of 1824 compared to 1828 (Activity 1.2b)
- Paintings: Stump Speech & Portrait of Andrew Jackson (Activity 1.2c)
- Robert Remini’s, “The Revolutionary Age of Andrew Jackson, 1979.” (Activity 1.3a)

Activity 1.1: Introduction to the readings.

Text/Materials: Anchor text (Activity 1.1a)

Procedures:

- Ask students to read for the purpose of finding out what they will be studying.

[Teacher Comment: Since this is the fourth unit, I have already modeled and students have participated in guided and independent practice in close reading and annotation. They have practiced annotating both general and history specific information in text.]
See Appendix A, pg. 1.

- After reading, ask students to think about the focus question for this part of the unit.
- Discuss meanings of the words: democracy, expanded, restricted, and reorganized—within the context of the reading.

[Teacher Comment: These four words are in the focus question and students will come back to them often as they read the texts.]

- Ask students, “What are some general characteristics of the age of Jackson?”

Activity 1.2: Reading non-text documents—observation, inference, elaboration

Text/Materials:

- Chart: Newspaper Circulation (Activity 1.2a)
- Maps: 1824 Election and 1828 Election (Activity 1.2b)
- Painting: Stump Speaking (Activity 1.2c)
- Observation, inference, elaboration chart (See attached Activity 1.2)

Purposes: (See Appendix A READI History Learning Goals)

- To learn to analyze visual texts (Goal 1: Close Reading)
- To think about the term “democracy” in the context of the 19th Century (Goal 2: Historical thinking—contextualization).

Procedure:

- Students will be analyzing a series of visual texts in order to develop a better understanding of the word, “democracy.” Remind students that historians are careful not to impress present definitions on past events (otherwise known as presentism). Present day definitions may lead to inaccurate or wrong interpretations of past events.

[Teacher Comment: I attempt to have students identify characteristics of the democracy in the 1830s and 1840s: political participation; property requirements no longer determined participation; emphasis on individualism; exclusions shifted from economic dependency to natural incapacity (gender and racial exclusions).

*Taking time to define democracy in the context of the 19th century is an important activity here. Students have a sense of what the word “democracy” means today, but placing into the context of the 19th century is challenging for many. In addition, I would like to emphasize **change and continuity over time** with the term “democracy.” Change and continuity are central to what historians study, so an emphasis on these will help meet History Learning Goal 6: Epistemology.]*

- Model how to fill in the Observation, Inference, and Elaboration chart (Activity 1.2). A couple of examples may be needed if this is new to students.

- Students “read” the visuals filling in ONLY the observation columns of their notetaker.
- After students have made observations, they write three inferences that can be made from their observations and an elaboration about how each inference was derived.
- Students engage in a pair/share about those inferences and elaborations.

[Teacher Comment: Observation, inference, and elaboration are an entryway into the ideas of claim (inference), evidence (observation) and warrant (elaboration or reasoning), and are especially useful for visual texts. Claim, evidence, and warrant are the tools of argumentation that students use to build an evidence-based argument.]

Activity 1.3: Defining democracy

Materials: Exit Slip

Purpose: To assess what students are thinking about the term “democracy” after their reading of the visual texts. (Goal 6: Epistemology—addressing presentism, fostering historical empathy)

Procedure: Students write an exit slip to answer the prompt: Define democracy in the 19th Century.

Homework: Read Chapter One “A Changing Society” from Robert Remini’s *The Revolutionary Age of Andrew Jackson*, 1979. (Activity 1.3a)

Activity 2: Introducing Interpretive Frameworks

Guiding Questions: What are interpretive frameworks? What is the purpose of using them in history?

Objectives: (See Appendix A READI History Learning Goals)

- To understand interpretive frameworks as a tool for organizing evidence in a meaningful and useful way by analyzing a historian’s use of interpretive frameworks in an argument. In some instances, historians use broad frameworks such as social, political and economic. (Goal 4: Interpretive Frameworks—societal structures)
- To define democracy in the context of the Age of Jackson. (Goal 6: Epistemology—addressing presentism, fostering historical empathy)

Texts/Materials:

- Robert Remini. *The Revolutionary Age of Andrew Jackson*. 1979. (Activity 1.3a)

[Teacher Comment: Aside from the Zinn chapter at the beginning of the school year (See Exploration and Early US Settlement Technical Report CM #20), students' exposure to historians' writing has been with essays. Here is another moment where students read a chapter from a book. Remini's text is not as instantly appealing to students as the Zinn chapter, but it does an excellent job of framing the Jacksonian time period. Students find the way he describes the social, political, and economic changes helpful in developing their own understanding of the Age of Jackson.]

- Category Worksheet (see attached Activity 2.1)
- Timeline (student created)

Activity 2.1: Categorization

- **Texts/materials:** Category Worksheet (Activity 2.1)

Procedure:

- Students are given worksheets and are asked to sort the evidence into categories and label the categories.
- When students have finished, share out discussion of categories and labels.

[Teacher Comment: I emphasize that interpretive frameworks are used in history to organize diverse information on a topic in an integrated, meaningful, and useful way. Historians use interpretive frameworks to help make sense of the evidence that they are evaluating when constructing their arguments. It is useful, for example, to think about history as social, political, or economic. Analyzing each piece of evidence with these and other categories in mind so that we can make deeper sense of event we are studying. We also want to think about what indicators there are for these categories. The indicators can be used to identify the category. In some instances, evidence has more than one indicator, based on interpretation, which makes it appropriate to place the term into more than one category.]

- Ask students to go back and look at their categories again to see if they need to revise them.

[Teacher Comment: Students have worked with categorizing evidence throughout the first three units. Having them sort evidence here provides me with information about their ability to categorize. I'm interested most in seeing the title they give each category. Students have already worked with the terms: social, political, and economic. However, here I am attempting to deepen their understanding of these words as "interpretive frameworks." One of the historical thinking skills in the newly redesigned AP curriculum is selection of relevant historical evidence. Part of my intention for the 2014-2015 school year was to tie this to interpretive frameworks. If a historian is constructing an argument

using economics as his interpretive framework, then economics will motivate the historian's decisions on what is "relevant" historical evidence.]

Activity 2.2: Discussing Remini.

Purpose: To identify Remini's use of interpretive frameworks in his argument. (Goal 4: Interpretive Frameworks—societal structures).

Texts/materials: Remini chapter (Activity 1.3a)

Procedures:

- Discuss "What is Remini's argument? (*Whatever the title, and however it is called, it is an age of change, an age of innovation, an age of reform*).
- Remini uses interpretive frameworks to support his claim. Students work in small groups to determine what these interpretative frameworks are and how they influenced what it meant to be living in the age of Jackson. (Remini discusses political, social, psychological, and economic changes that *influenced the history of the United States*.)
- Within their small groups, students answer the following questions:
 - What did it mean to be living in the age of Jackson?
 - What evidence did Remini include for each interpretive framework?
 - How did Remini define democracy?

[Teacher Comment: With this particular text, I am not interested so much in the historian's claim as in the way he marshals interpretive frameworks in support of the claim. Students will be tested with an essay at the end of this unit, so my goal is for the conversation about this historian's writing to possibly begin to influence the students' writing. So, when we do this activity, I make sure I help them understand how Remini is structuring his claim and evidence.]

Assessment/Student Responses: The way Remini constructs his chapter, students have a relatively easy time identifying where in the text he employs the different interpretive frameworks (political, social, etc.). In particular, students become more familiar with the evidence Remini is using to support his argument. As a part of the class discussion, focus is on students' attention to the defining of democracy. (See prior comment about the characterizations of democracy in the 1830s and 1840s.)

Activity 2.3: Returning to the initial categorization activity.

Purpose: Returning to the initial categorization activity brings students back to relevant historical evidence from the time period. Many of the words selected for the categorization activity also appear in their textbook reading. In essence, this becomes an excellent pre-reading activity for the chapter from *American Pageant*. (Activity 2.3a)

Texts/Materials: Worksheet (See attached Activity 2.1)

Procedures:

- Model completion of the categorization activity.

[Teacher Comment: I want students to pay attention to the indicator that a piece of evidence belongs in a particular category, so I model filling in the “indicator” column, explaining that this helps me justify the placement of the term. Why should this be a focal point? Because when making an argument, historians interpret evidence. BUT to convince their audience of the credibility of their argument, it becomes necessary to provide a justification of why a particular piece of evidence belongs.]

- Students complete categorization activity, including identifying what indicator they used to determine the category.

[Teacher Comment: Students are not going to actually write an essay; however, they will be planning the essay, using the text set and information outside of the text set (from textbook chapters and other readings), and they will be analyzing an exemplar essay. These activities are in preparation for future essay writing.]

Activity 2.4: Chronology—Creating a Timeline using interpretive frameworks**Texts/Materials:**

- Timeline (student created)
- Introduction text (Activity 1.1a)
- Remini chapter (Activity 1.3a)
- Visuals from Activity 1 (Activity 1.2a) (Activity 1.2b) (Activity 1.2c)

Purposes:

- To introduce the idea of a timeline helping historians to engage in chronological thinking, to situate an event in a context of other events, to provide a visual aid for identifying cause and effect, to help us think about what we already know, and to help us recognize how historic events overlap in time. (Goal 2: Historical thinking—chronology).
- To provide students with practice in selecting *political* events for the timeline. (Goal 4: Interpretive frameworks—societal structures)

Procedures:

- Provide students with a purpose for the activity—as a way to help historians see the relationships among events or to explain historical cause and effect. (Also, see the purposes, above).
- Provide the task: “The essential question for the Jackson unit implies a change over time; therefore, timelines become important to our analysis of this time

period. Because timelines can easily be cluttered, our attention is to zone in on the interpretive frameworks. The first timeline we construct will be for political events. Review the texts that we have encountered so far (Remini, anchor text, visuals). Which events are important to include on our political timeline so far?”

- Model how to **choose** a couple of events and place on the timeline.
- Students work in small groups to complete their timelines.

Activity 2.5: Exit Slip

Texts/materials: Exit Slip

Purpose: To see how students are thinking about the term, *democracy*, at this point in the unit.

Procedures: Have students complete an exit slip in response to the prompt: *Based upon the discussion today, define 19th Century democracy.*

Activity 3: Introducing Long Essay Writing

Essential Question: Jacksonian Democrats viewed themselves as the guardians of the United States Constitution, political democracy, individual liberty, and equality of economic opportunity. In light of your knowledge of the 1820s and 1830s, to what extent do you agree with Jacksonians’ view of themselves?

[Teacher Comment: Students are not going to actually write an essay; however, they will be planning the essay, using the text set and information outside of the text set (from textbook chapters and other readings), and they will be analyzing an exemplar essay. These activities are in preparation for future essay writing.]

Objectives: To understand the long essay process by

- Analyzing a document text set. (Goal 1: Close Reading; Goal 5: Evaluate historical interpretations)
- Comparing and evaluating multiple perspectives on a historical period (The Age of Jackson). (Goal 5: Evaluate historical interpretations; Goal 6: Epistemology—history as interpretation)

Texts/Materials: Jackson text set (all texts used within this module)

Activity 3.1: Essay in Five Minutes (See attached Activity 3.1)

Purpose: To help students organize their writing. The “Essay in Five Minutes” asks students to (1) read the question; (2) circle verbs, underline nouns, and describe WHAT is being asked and WHEN it takes place; (3) organize paragraphs and consider outside information they will need; and (4) write a thesis. (Goal 3: Construct claim-evidence relations)

Texts/Materials:

- Essay in Five Minutes - Graphic organizer (Activity 3.1)
- Bailey et al., *American Pageant: A History of the Republic*, Chapter 13, “The Rise of a Mass Democracy”.

Procedures:

- Students write the “Essay in Five Minutes.”
- After they are done, discuss the importance of using outside information in essays. They cannot rely on the document set alone.
- Have students discuss what they wrote down, then brainstorm additional information they have already learned from other sources regarding, economics, the Great Awakening, Electoral Politics, and the Westward Movement.

[Teacher Comment: This essay allows students to see the relevance of interpretive frameworks (economics, religion, politics, movement of people), which is another reason that leading with the Remini text is so important. Students have to put the information they have learned into these categories and then assess the relevance of the information for answering the question.]

Assessment/Student Responses: Essay in Five Minutes responses

Activity 3.2: Think-Aloud, whole class, and group practice with documents in the Document Set.

Purpose:

- To help students categorize the documents in the Document Set into the interpretive frameworks. (Goal 4: Interpretive Frameworks—societal structures)
- To help students use information from the document to help answer the question rather than simply summarizing what each document says. (Goal 3: Construct claim-evidence relations)

Texts/Materials: Jackson text set

Procedure:

- Teacher think aloud about the document, paying attention to the source of information (i.e., the author of the document and the stance being taking about the topic), the context in which it is written (year and what was happening at that

time) and, especially, *how the information in the document can be tied to the question*, placing relevant information into the graphic organizer.

[Teacher Comment: Since I teach AP History, I tell my students “Picking up on what the text says, I’m now able to return to my graphic organizer to place this evidence in categories, jotting down ideas on how this document can be used as part of the evidence in my argument. I need to keep in mind that the College Board doesn’t want me to tell them what the document says; rather, the Board wants me to create and defend with evidence my own answer to the question” .]

- Using another document, go through the process again, this time with input from students.
- Ask students to get into groups and do the same thing with each of the remaining documents in the set.

Informal Assessment: Exit slip. Have students return to the timeline and write down the events that should appear in the “political” timeline from the text set.

[Teacher Comment: Primary and secondary sources help facilitate inquiry in my classroom throughout the entire school year. While students have been exposed to sample essays from previous College Board exams, this is the first time I explicitly teach the process. The think alouds presented here demonstrate my way of tackling the documents.]

Assessment/Student Responses

Homework: Continue reading Bailey et al., *American Pageant: A History of the Republic*, Chapter 13, “The Rise of a Mass Democracy”.

Activity 4: Analyzing Essays

Objective: To assess the argument of other students by evaluating the way two different students constructed their argument in response to the Jackson essay question using available evidence. (Goal 4: Interpretive Frameworks—societal structures; Goal 5: Evaluate historical interpretations)

Texts/Materials: Two essays—one “student response” and one “exemplar essay.” The student response miscategorizes some information and doesn’t include some pertinent outside information. The exemplar is a model essay.

Activity 4.1: Analyzing the student response

Purpose: To help gauge student understanding of the interpretive frameworks as well as their understanding of the evidence. I am most interested in seeing who is unable to identify the misplace/miscategorized evidence. I make a note of these students and work with them during small group discussions.

Texts/materials: Student response essay.

Procedures:

- Ask students to read and evaluate the student response, answering the following questions:
 - What outside information is missing from this document?
 - Which evidence has been misplaced/miscategorized into the interpretive frameworks?
 - Describe your reasoning for why a particular misplaced piece of evidence should be included into a particular interpretive framework.

Activity 4.2: Analyzing an exemplar essay.

Purpose: To provide students with an exemplar model. This model helps students recognize what they might need to do for their own work. In this task, I am honing in on particular details, and students can look at two “student essays” as well as look at what they planned in their “essay in five minutes” to compare and contrast. (Goal 3: Construct Claim-Evidence Relations; Goal 4: Interpretive Frameworks).

Texts/Materials: Exemplar text and student essay

Procedures:

- Students are directed to read the exemplar essay and answer the following questions:
 - How does the student organize his/her thoughts?
 - What is included in the introduction?
 - What do you notice about the thesis?
 - What is included in each of the body paragraphs?
 - What do you notice about the student’s use of outside information?
 - How does the student use the documents?
 - What claims does the student make about the interpretive frameworks?
- Students review two student essays in small groups, comparing them with the exemplar.

Using the exemplar essay as a guide, how does the other essay compare? Rank the essays from highest to lowest score, and prepare a justification for your score. Allow time for students to discuss essays - organization, outside information, use of documents, claims student makes about interpretive frameworks.
- Debrief with the whole class:

How would you rank these student essays? Discuss components (organization, outside information, etc.) across essays. What trends or patterns do you notice?

*Note: Other lessons are included before the end of the unit. This excerpted set of lessons was prepared to show how the process of deepening skill occurs in my class.

Assessment for Unit 4

Background: This assessment covers all of Unit 4, whereas the plan shared here is only for the last part of that unit. The information on nationalism versus sectionalism was in the material previous to the above activities.

FINAL Period Four Assessment:

- 35 multiple choice questions
 - 20 out of 35 will be in the format of the new test; questions clustered around documents
 - 15 questions will be in the old format
- Short Answer Questions
 1. The United States has always technically been a republic, but we often use the term “democracy” to describe our system.
 - (A) Briefly explain why ONE of the following periods best represents the beginning of a democracy in the United States.
 - Rise of political parties in the 1790s
 - Development of voluntary organizations to promote social reforms between the 1820s and the 1840s
 - Emergence of the Democrats and the Whigs as political parties in the 1830s
 - (B) Briefly explain ONE specific piece of historical evidence from the 1790s to the 1840s that supports your explanation.
 - (C) Briefly explain why ONE of the other options is not as persuasive as the one you chose.
 2. One of the main themes of this unit is the tension between nationalism and sectionalism.

Explain how ONE event from this period strengthened the forces of nationalism during this period.

Explain how ONE event from this period strengthened the forces of sectionalism during this period.

Evaluate whether nationalism or sectionalism was the stronger of the two forces during this period.
- Long Essay Question:

The Jacksonian period (1824 - 1840) has been celebrated as the era of the “common man.” To what extent did the period live up to its characterization? Consider TWO of the following in your response: Economic development, politics, and reform movements

Age of Jackson: Introduction

The election of Andrew Jackson signaled a new era in American history. By 1828, the United States was no longer an infant nation hugging the Atlantic coast. The maturing republic now included twenty-four states and almost 13 million people. Many Americans were on the move during the early nineteenth century. They formed a relentless migratory stream that spilled over the Appalachian Mountains, spanned the Mississippi River, and in the 1840s, reached the Pacific Ocean. Wagons, canals, flatboats, steamboats, and eventually railroads helped to expedite the westward migration.

While most Americans during the Jacksonian era continued to earn their living from the soil, textile mills and manufacturing plants began to dot the landscape and transform the nature of work and the pace of life. By mid-century the United States was emerging as one of the world's major industrial powers. In addition, the lure of cheap land and plentiful jobs, as well as the promise of political equality and religious freedom, attracted hundreds of thousands of immigrants from Europe. These newcomers, mostly from Germany and Ireland, faced ethnic prejudices, religious persecution, and language barriers that made assimilation into American culture all the more difficult.

All these developments gave to American life in the second quarter of the nineteenth century its dynamic and fluid quality. The United States, said the philosopher-poet Ralph Waldo Emerson, was "a country of beginnings, of projects, of designs, of expectations." A restless optimism characterized the period. People of lowly social status who heretofore had accepted their lot in life now strove to climb the social ladder and enter the political arena. The patrician democracy espoused by Jefferson and Madison gave way to the frontier democracy promoted by Jacksonians. Americans were no longer content to be governed by a small, benevolent aristocracy of talent and wealth. They began to demand – and obtain – a government of, by and for the people.

The fertile economic environment during the Age of Jackson helped foster the egalitarian idea that individuals should have an equal opportunity to better themselves and should be granted political rights and privileges. In America, observed a journalist in 1844, "One has a good chance as another according to his talents, prudence and personal exertions."

The exuberant individualism embodied in such mythic expressions of economic equality and political democracy also spilled over into the cultural arena during the Jacksonian era. The so-called romantic movement applied democratic ideals to philosophy, religion, literature and the fine arts. In New England, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau joined other transcendentalists in espousing a radical individualism. Other reformers were motivated more by a sense of spiritual mission than democratic individualism. In striving to enhance personal morality and the general welfare, mostly middle-class reformers sought to introduce public-supported schools, abolish slavery, promote temperance, and improve the lot of the disabled, insane and imprisoned. Their efforts helped ameliorate some of the problems created by the frenetic pace of economic growth and territorial expansion.

In this unit we will investigate the following question: How was democracy expanded, restricted and reorganized during the Age of Jackson?

Age of Jackson: Defining democracy

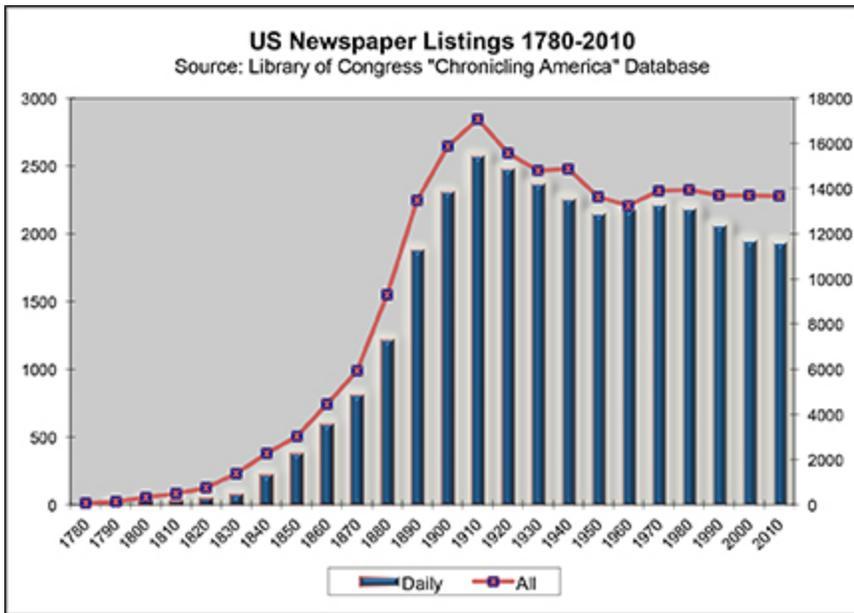
Directions: Examine each visual provided in order to develop a better understanding of the word “democracy,” as it was defined during the Jacksonian Era.

| Observation: What do you see? | Inference: What do these observations tell you about how the people live or how the people think? | Elaboration: Explain how you arrived at your inference. |
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Activity 1.2

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Activity 2.1a

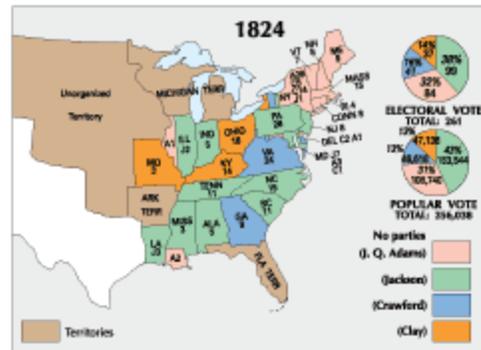
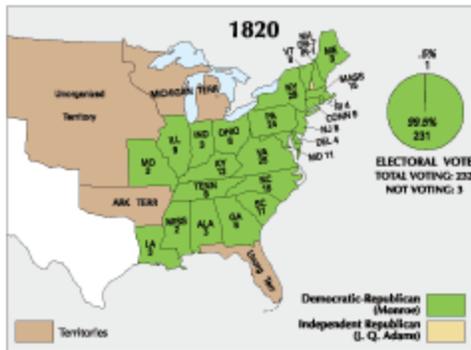
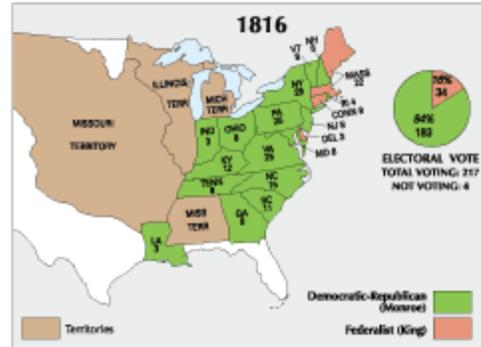
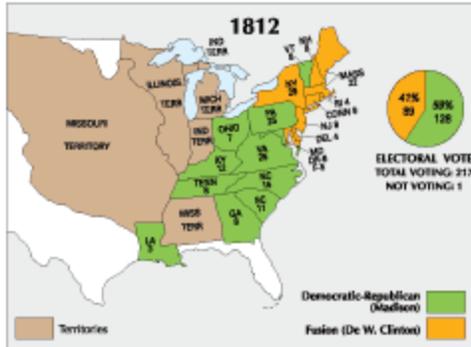


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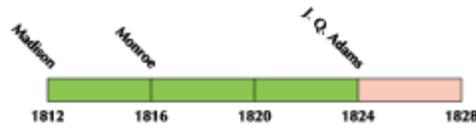


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PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS 18
ELECTORAL VOTES



Because none of the candidates had a majority in the electoral college, the election was decided in the House of Representatives, where J. Q. Adams was chosen President.



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Numbers within states reflect States are shown proportionately divided 1796-1968 maps compiled

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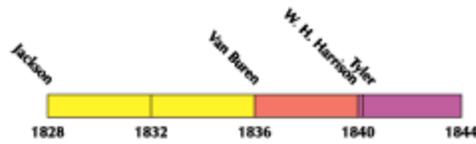
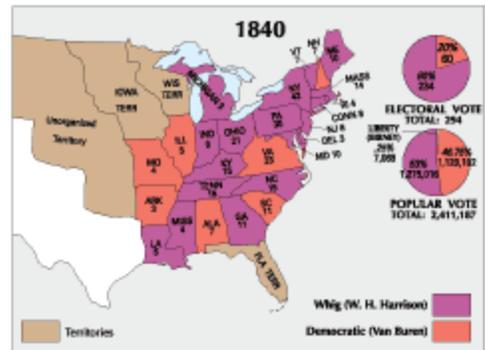
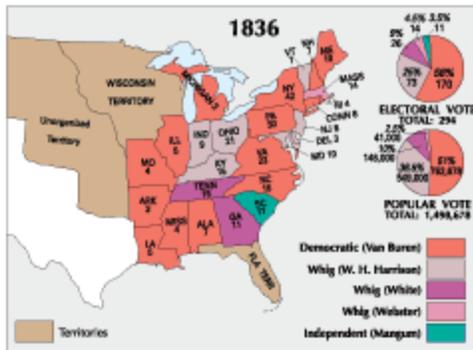
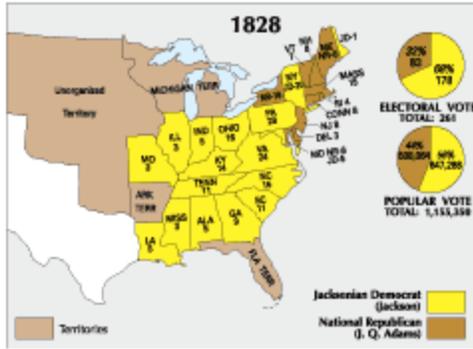
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Activity 1.2b



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Where We Are

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS 1828-1844
ELECTORAL VOTES



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The National Atlas of the United States

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Activity 1.2c



THE

REVOLUTIONARY

AGE OF

ANDREW JACKSON

Robert V. Remini



COLLECTION OF THE BOATMEN'S NATIONAL BANK OF ST. LOUIS.

Harper Torchbooks
Harper & Row, Publishers, New York
Cambridge, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Washington
London, Mexico City, São Paulo, Singapore, Sydney

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A Changing Society

THE NATION WAS in the midst of a profound revolution when Andrew Jackson entered the White House on March 4, 1829, as the seventh President of the United States. It was not a violent revolution. People weren't killing one another. No mobs rioted through the streets to vent their rage. Nevertheless, momentous changes were occurring throughout the country, changes that transformed American society and government. Indeed it is not an exaggeration to say that many of the characteristics commonly thought of today as being typically American developed during this "revolutionary" era.

Historians call it the Age of Jackson and think of it as the period in American history roughly bridging the years from the end of the War of 1812 to the coming of the Civil War. But whatever the title and however it is called, it was an age of change, an age of innovation, an age of reform.

The United States was only forty years old at the time of Jackson's election to the presidency. When the nation began in 1789 as a republic under the Constitution, it had a small population of a few million people occupying thirteen states strung along the Atlantic seaboard. Its society

(overleaf) The rapid pulse of commerce and business during the "go-ahead" years can be felt in this busy scene of lower Broadway when New York was becoming the nation's financial capital. People crowd streets and sidewalks, hustling to bring about a dynamic, industrial, modern America.

had been confined, huddled along the coastline for more than a hundred and fifty years, since colonization first began. The Appalachian Mountains served as a barrier to the west, but also provided protection against the terrors of the vast wilderness that stretched beyond. During the entire colonial period of American history, settlers had hardly moved more than a few hundred miles inland from the Atlantic shore. Most colonists were farmers and lived in small communities in which there was close contact. The ties of family, church, and community were strong and produced a sense of security and belonging. It was a closely knit society and relatively stable. Some even thought there was overcrowding!

With the conclusion of the American Revolution, a genuine westward movement began. Then, starting early in the nineteenth century, the country burst its narrow confines. Within a few decades the nation was converted from an insulated, agrarian society squeezed between ocean and mountains into a dynamic, industrial society sprawled across a three-thousand-mile continent. Gone were the old ties of family, church, and community; gone, too, was the security they provided. A people so long hemmed in by a mountain chain scrambled over it and raced across the fertile valleys on the other side, reaching the Mississippi and fording it, clearing the land and creating new states in the process. It had taken nearly two centuries for Americans to occupy a ribbon of land hardly more than a hundred miles in width. During the next sixty years, they would go the rest of the distance across the continent to the Pacific Ocean, nearly three thousand miles. A tiny rural nation struggling to maintain its existence became a continental power whose future greatness was now assured.

In the forty years from the adoption of the Constitution to the inauguration of President Jackson, the thirteen states had grown to twenty-four. In the South and Southwest, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Missouri had been added to the Union. Farther north, Maine, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois had achieved statehood. The admission of Missouri during the 1820s was particularly significant. Not only did it provoke an open controversy over slavery (which was resolved by the Missouri Compromise that retained a balance in the Union between free and slave states), but Missouri was the first state that lay totally west of the Mississippi River to enter the Union. It marked a great stride in westward expansion.

But geographical expansion was not the only change produced in this

“revolutionary” age. There were social, psychological, economic, and political changes that influenced the history not only of the United States but of the entire western world.

American society itself had changed. It was different. Everyone could see that. “Our age is wholly [sic] of a different character from the past,” said Senator Daniel Webster of Massachusetts. “Society is full of excitement.” Foreign visitors instantly noticed this excitement when they talked with people. The spirit was contagious. It was a spirit of “Go ahead.” “The whole continent presents a scene of *scrambling* and roars with greedy hurry,” observed an Englishman. “Go ahead! is the order of the day.”

More than that. “*Go ahead* is the real motto of the country,” commented most foreigners who analyzed the mood of America during the Jacksonian age. But precisely what did that mean?—“Go ahead.” For individuals it meant the consuming need to make money. There was a restless, driving desire to be better off, and this was the ambition of all classes of society, none excepted. “No man in America is contented to be poor, or expects to continue so,” stated one magazine of the time. Americans believed that in Europe children were lucky if they could maintain the station and income of their parents. Lucky if they did not slide to a lower social and financial condition. Not so in America. In America it was expected that children would improve their station, make more money than their parents, get a higher-paying job, find a better life. That’s what “go ahead” was all about.

So the sons took off. They vaulted over the mountains seeking to satisfy their ambitious yearning in the west. They wanted something better than a slice of a small inheritance, and they believed they could find it away from home. Some were hardly into their teenage years when they bid farewell to their families to search for that better life. There was only one way to describe them. Restless, searching, driving. By the time of Jackson’s inauguration in 1828 it was the prevailing mood of the country.

For instance, way out “west,” Chicago—a tiny settlement just getting started on the high prairie above the shore of Lake Michigan—crawled with people. And the buying and selling! the land speculation! the agitation and activity! It stunned every person who visited the town. The land speculation was especially amazing. The times and places of land sales were announced by a black man, dressed all in scarlet and carrying an enormous scarlet flag, sitting astride a snow-white

horse: Lord, they said, he was beautiful to see. At every street corner where he stopped to sing out his announcement, a crowd of people flocked around him.

This land mania infected everyone. New arrivals to Chicago were propositioned constantly. As they walked down the streets, storekeepers hailed them from their doors. "Hey! You want to buy a farm?" they shouted.

One young lawyer in Chicago claimed he realized five hundred dollars a day by merely making out titles to land. Another said he realized within two years—two years, mind you—"ten times as much money as he had before fixed upon as a competence for life."

But there was a price—a high price—Americans paid for "go ahead." They no longer had the security of a tightly integrated society in which all persons had a place and knew their responsibilities and what was expected of them. In the past everybody had belonged; all were important to each other and to society as a whole. Individuals, no matter what they did for a living or what their social position, had the comforting knowledge that they were needed and wanted. And this strong sense of belonging and participation was buttressed by powerful links of family, of community responsibility, and of church membership. But "go ahead" changed all that. With men and women on the move, scrambling to achieve material success, they had no time for the needs of others. Their responsibility was to themselves and their own goals. Never mind the neighbors. Let neighbors keep their distance and mind their own business. The needs of the community in maintaining a stable society were problems for "others" to bother about—whatever those others might be. Besides, in what now became a constant moving from place to place, few people had a real attachment to any one community. Not like the old days, when families lived for generations in a particular town. Now one was almost expected to keep moving geographically if he hoped to "go ahead" financially. And with sons breaking free from the family at an early age to seek their futures and fortunes, and girls marrying in their teens and taking off with their ambitious husbands, the strong ties of family as an important component in American society were gravely weakened. Families dispersed so quickly that the sense of belonging that characterized colonial life vanished.

This left a terrible void. And to some extent the social history of Americans during the first half of the nineteenth century is the history of the search for something to fill that void. If they no longer had family or

community or membership in a particular church to give them security, they needed something else to fill their lives and give them meaning and purpose. In time most of them found it in work—the hard, persistent application of their talents and strengths to achieve their ambitions. Americans had always believed in work. It was part of their Puritan past, but now it had an urgency that foreigners instantly detected the moment they set foot on this continent. It pulsed throughout society. One foreigner claimed that the first command of American society was to "Work!" And no excuses. "Work," he wrote, and "at eighteen you shall get . . . more than a captain in Europe. You shall live in plenty, be well clothed, well housed, and able to save." Everything else followed from this command. "Be attentive to your work, be sober and religious, and you will find a devoted and submissive wife; you will have a more comfortable home than many of the higher classes in Europe. . . . Work, and if the fortunes of business should be against you and you fail, you shall soon be able to rise again, for a failure is nothing but a wound in battle."

Thus the first article of the American faith was simply this: Keep your nose to the grindstone, lead a clean and sober life, and you cannot fail. And what was the reward? Money. Money and those creature comforts that make life more bearable. It also brought social standing, recognition that one was engaged in useful pursuits, a judgment from society that one's life was a "success."

Following this Puritan work ethic, a young man of the Age of Jackson began earning a living by the time he was fifteen. By twenty-one he was expected to be established, to have his own office or workshop or farm or whatever it was that constituted his "living." And by twenty-one a man was expected to be married. Indeed, if he was not established and not married by twenty-one, society judged him peculiar and no-account. "He who is an active and useful member of society," wrote one visitor, "who contributes his share to augment the national wealth and increase the numbers of the population, he only is looked upon with respect and favor."

Women's duties were rigidly fixed from the moment of their birth. They were expected to be wives and mothers. They were expected to be submissive—first to father, then husband—loving, gentle, and domestic. Interestingly, at the very moment the family condition was weakened, Americans exalted marriage and regarded the tie between husband and wife as the central moral bulwark of society. At the same

time women enjoyed precious few "rights," they were placed on a pedestal and revered for their "piety" and "purity"—in short, they were commissioned the moral guardians of the human race. It was in the Jacksonian era that the exaggerated, if not distorted, views of women as to their gentleness, frailty, piety, morality, and purity developed. During this period the pronounced male affection for his mother—"Momism"—is first observed. And the higher woman rose on her pedestal, the more she lost ground in attempting to gain equality with males.

But whether one was male or female, the habits and tone of American life as established in the early nineteenth century were those of an "exclusively working people." From the moment Americans got up in the morning they were hard at work and continued at it until bedtime. Rarely did they permit pleasure to distract them. Only public affairs or politics had the right to claim their time for a few minutes. And only on Sunday did Americans refrain from business, not only because of the strictures of organized religion but because it supposedly proved them God-fearing and therefore sober and clean-living. "The American of the North and Northwest," wrote one observer, "whose character now sets the tone in the United States is permanently a man of business."

According to Europeans, American men even looked as if they were built for work, as if work were God's intended objective "when He fashioned the American." Tall, slender, lithe, he had "no equal" in promptly responding to the demands of business, whatever those demands might be. This Yankee type had a hawkish look about him that bespoke shrewdness and cunning. Though gangling, rawboned, and shrewy, he was a clear-eyed, sharp-witted, practical man of affairs with educated instincts to search out the sources of wealth.

As Americans succeeded in improving their own individual economic lot, they necessarily advanced the well-being of the country. They fanned out across the continent, clearing land, planting, harvesting, searching all the avenues leading to personal prosperity. They galvanized the economy and raised the standard of living.

There was a noticeable jump in the standard of living during the first half of the nineteenth century. During the long colonial period the standard of living had remained relatively stable and relatively low. Then, with the building of a free, independent domestic economy, the standard of living for most white Americans rose sharply.

Building a free, independent economy was important in the

revolutionary changes that occurred in America during the Age of Jackson. But it took time. When the nation first won its independence its economy was based almost exclusively on international trade. But during the final years of the War of 1812 much of the nation's coastline was blockaded. Its ships could not get in or out of its harbors. Consequently the country had to look to its own resources and not rely on trade with Europe. It was forced to build its own internal economy. So capital investments went into industry and manufactures, instead of shipping. Manufactures, especially textile products, multiplied rapidly. Although industrial expansion was the most dramatic, agriculture—the main preoccupation of most Americans—also increased its productivity.

Thus, the War of 1812 compelled the United States to take a new direction into rapid industrial development. The factory system, which had already begun in Great Britain, was introduced when plans of a newly invented textile machine were secreted into the United States. And because of the great natural resources in the country, like coal, iron and water power, and because of the increasing labor supply provided through immigration, the Industrial Revolution quickly established itself in America.

What happened in Lowell, Massachusetts, is a good example. Lowell was a quiet, pleasant little New England town situated at the confluence of the Concord and Merrimack Rivers. Most of its inhabitants were farmers. But with the coming of the Industrial Revolution to Lowell in 1820, because of the easy access to water power, the town became a booming manufacturing center. By the late 1820s there were a variety of factories in Lowell: flour mills, glass works and machine manufacturers, iron and copper works, foundries and shoe factories. But the principal industry in the town was its textile mills. Once it was fully mechanized Lowell manufactured upwards of fifty-two million yards of cotton cloth a year. By the use of man-made canals the waterpower generated was sufficient to operate 286,000 spindles.

But the industrialization of America was not simply the product of hundreds of factories turning out useful manufactures. There was also a "Transportation Revolution." Again it was the War of 1812 that set the revolution in motion. For the war reminded Americans of the perpetual danger of invasion by British troops from Canada. The need to move troops rapidly to repel invasion produced a demand for improved transportation and soon the nation engaged in a gigantic program of building roads, bridges, highways, turnpikes and canals. Improved transporta-

tion and communication were first seen as essential to the nation's safety, but they also stimulated commerce and industry.

The individual states led the way in this feverish rush to construct public works. The Pennsylvania Turnpike stretched from Philadelphia to Lancaster and the Wilderness Road cut across Virginia into Kentucky. The great National Road, begun in 1811 from Cumberland, Maryland, steadily inched its way westward nine hundred miles to Vandalia, Illinois, in 1838. New York began the mighty Erie Canal in 1817; completed eight years later, it linked the Hudson River to Lake Erie in a 363-mile stretch that permitted water transportation from the Atlantic Ocean to the Great Lakes. This canal made Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, and Illinois accessible to the thousands of European immigrants who soon came flooding through the port of New York. The value of land and of personal property in New York City rose sixty percent in five years and the Canal itself earned nearly a million dollars annually. The activity generated by the Canal enormously enhanced the wealth, population, and power of New York. It became the Empire State. Its immediate and visible success prompted other states to imitate this colossal feat, and during the 1820s a mania of canal building swept the country. In Pennsylvania a canal system linked Philadelphia with Pittsburgh. Cleveland on Lake Erie was joined to Portsmouth on the Ohio River by canal. And the building of the Illinois and Michigan Canal in the late 1830s and 1840s made it possible to travel by water from Lake Michigan to the Illinois River and from there to the Mississippi River. When the War of 1812 had ended there had been less than a hundred miles of canals in the United States. Twenty-five years later there were well over three thousand miles.

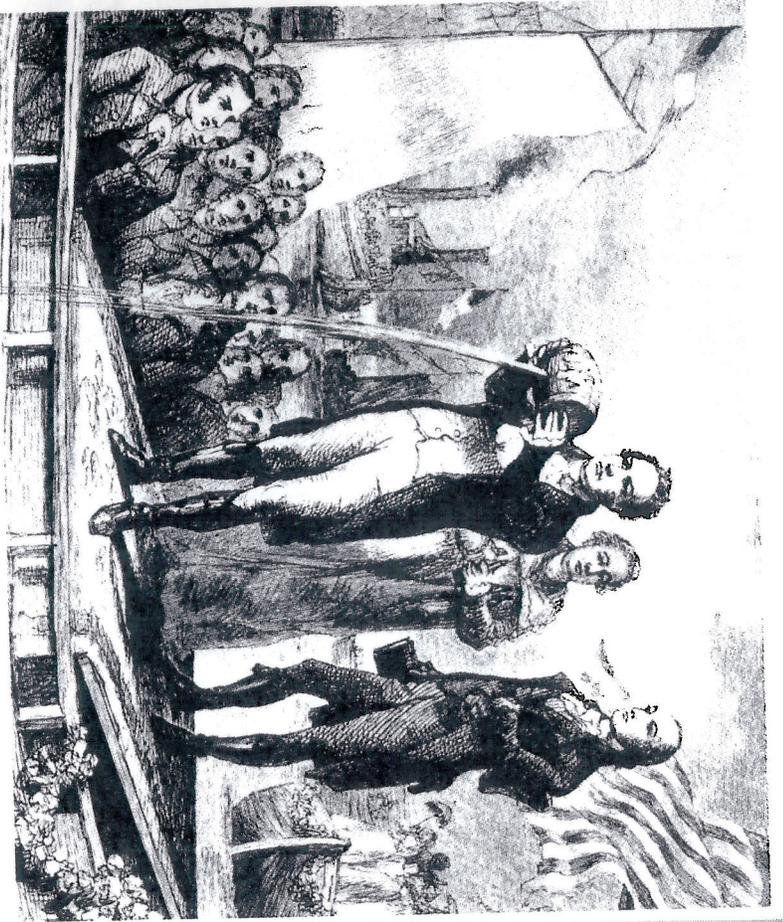
Better and quicker transportation aided this generation of hustling Americans to drive faster and deeper into the continent. Moving goods, supplies, manufactured articles, and agricultural staples from one section of the country to another was important in developing a free, independent domestic economy.

Still, canals and roads and bridges and turnpikes paled in significance when compared to the railroads. The railroads, which began to be built late in the 1820s, were absolutely central to industrializing America. Not only did they quicken travel and westward expansion across the continent—burrowing through, around, and over mountains—but they created new communities and, with them, additional markets. Where-

ever the railroad stopped, or changed direction, or intersected with other forms of transportation, a town or city sprang up. Railroads became lifelines stringing communities of people together over thousands of miles, from the Atlantic coast to the Great Plains beyond the Mississippi River and eventually reaching the Pacific coast. They were the nation's arteries, providing a constant flow of people and commodities from city to town to remote rural community and pumping economic life to all the areas they served. Furthermore, the railroads attracted financial capital in the form of investments from foreigners as well as Americans who sensed the opportunity to make an economic killing. Investors found railroads irresistible. They were drawn by the prospect of enormous profits, particularly after the federal government lavished the roads with land grants and other subsidies to encourage their growth. Within a few decades a stupendous amount of money was generated, much of it squandered, much of it badly used, much of it siphoned off by swindlers. But enough remained to build a nation. It was the coming of the railroad to Chicago, for example, that catapulted that hustling lakeside community of land jobbers into a roaring metropolis of merchant princes, the hub city of the entire West.

The first railroad in the United States was built in Massachusetts in 1828. But the important history of railroading really began the next year with the construction of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Symbolically, the man who lifted the first spadeful of dirt to start that construction was Charles Carroll of Carrollton, the last surviving signer of the Declaration of Independence. To some observers it seemed appropriate that a man who had signed the document that brought forth an independent nation should also, by the action of a shovel, signal the beginning of a modern, industrial society for that nation. Within two years the B & O consisted of thirteen miles of road; but within another six years over one thousand miles of track stretched across eleven states.

The speed and ease with which Americans accepted and adopted modern industrial tools won the admiration of foreign visitors. It explained how a society was revolutionized. The American, said one foreigner, was remarkable in his ability to adjust himself—and anything else for that matter—to the demands of business. "No one else can conform so easily to new situations and circumstances; he is always ready to adopt new processes and implements or to change his occupation. Where in Europe young men write poems or novels, in America,



The “Transportation Revolution” began symbolically with the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825. New York’s Governor DeWitt Clinton poured a barrel of Lake Erie water into the Atlantic Ocean, in what was called the “marriage of waters.” The Canal cut the cost of transporting a ton of goods from Buffalo to New York from \$100 to \$15.

especially Massachusetts and Connecticut, they invent machines and tools.” The American “is a mechanic by nature.” He prizes gadgets and tools which make life more agreeable.

It was extraordinary how many important tools and gadgets were invented during this Jacksonian age! Many raised the standard of living. Some changed society and the economy. Even so-called minor inventions altered social life. For example, the invention of a special bit permitted cutting ice so that large chunks could be shipped without melting and then brought into city homes. Having ice for refrigeration meant that people could congregate in cities where, unable to produce their own food, they could still enjoy fresh food almost anytime they wanted. This ability to store food was vital to the growth of American cities.

At this time, too, the process of canning foods was developed, an invention that had a most profound impact on the eating habits of the American family. “Opening a can” to prepare lunch or dinner became a way of life for some. Americans, by and large, are not gourmets and never were—we are a nation of hamburger and hot-dog eaters—so the can made it very easy to dispense with all the preparation needed for fixing meals. It left more time for work.

Americans proved how inventive and adaptable they were in other ways. For instance, when oil was discovered in Pennsylvania, there seemed to be no apparent use for it except as a base for “snake oil” in medicine shows. But some “go-ahead” Americans used their ingenuity to create a market for it by developing a special lamp—a kerosene lamp—to burn the oil, and then trumpeted it around the country as an inexpensive and efficient source of illumination for the home. With that, a new business—indeed several new businesses—were off and running. But what was so “typically American” about all this was the way the opportunity was handled. Here was a product of little apparent use and with no market. Americans created the market. They came up with a gadget to burn the oil and then successfully peddled it with a massive advertising campaign.

Also during this age there were some spectacular inventions: the mechanical reaper for harvesting grain, invented by Cyrus H. McCormick in 1831; Charles Goodyear’s process of vulcanizing rubber in 1839; Samuel F. B. Morse’s telegraph in 1844; Samuel Colt’s revolver in 1835; and Elias Howe’s sewing machine in 1846. These were only the most important. Anaesthesia, discovered by a dentist

named William T. G. Morton in 1842—the discovery was also claimed by at least three other men—was one of the most valuable and important discoveries in the entire history of medicine.

What made these inventions so spectacular was that they revolutionized entire industries, created new industries, or developed new processes which advanced the industrialization of the nation. The new companies resulting from these inventions attracted additional capital into the country. New jobs were created. New markets found. By 1840 the country—especially the North and Northwest—was hurrying toward rapid industrialization. The country had begun converting from a rural and agricultural society to an urban and industrial one. There was a long way yet to go, but it was the beginning.

In the South the push toward industrialization was not so obvious, although some industrialization could be found. But even in that section there was enormous economic energy. The principal business was cotton, and eventually—that is, just prior to the Civil War—the South was growing two-thirds of the total world supply of cotton. The plantation system widely utilized in the South was based on black slavery. However morally indefensible, the system—in the opinion of some recent historians—was far more efficient and economical than the methods of farming pursued in the Northwest.

But whether North or South, East or West, the nation during the Age of Jackson throbbed and pulsed with energy. "Life consists in motion," wrote one visitor, and in the relentless need to be better off—to make it. When foreigners chided Americans about their pursuit of wealth, they were promptly corrected. Americans hotly denied that they valued wealth more than other people. They simply insisted that the pursuit of money in other countries, especially in Europe, was necessarily confined to a very small group of people—the privileged few, the upper class, the aristocracy—while in America it was open to all. Everyone should have the right to make money if he had the drive and desire to go after it. That's what freedom was all about. "In this country," wrote one commentator, "there are no established limits within which the hopes of any class of society must be confined as in other countries." Here children are expected to do better than their parents because here there is "equality of opportunity," which in turn has produced "universal ambition and restless activity."

When Jacksonians talked about equality they were not thinking in literal terms of everyone being equal. They realized that everyone was not equal—and maybe there was some advantage to that. Talents varied,

abilities differed. What they did believe and were committed to was the notion of equality of *opportunity*. Everyone should have the opportunity to make it, to get ahead, to achieve financial success. No one should have special privileges that work to the disadvantage of others. Thus, one of the functions of government was to see to it that the race for success was a fair contest. Government must serve as a referee among all classes in society and prevent any one from gaining an advantage over the others.

Privileges, or what Jacksonians called "artificial distinctions," that blocked equality of opportunity had to be removed by governmental action. And Americans were particularly conscious of political and economic privileges. Political privileges included the right to vote or hold office because of wealth or social standing. Restricting the right to vote to persons owning at least one hundred dollars worth of property had been the classic form of political privilege during the colonial era. But this practice started to fade rapidly as Americans dissolved their political ties to Great Britain and geographical ties to the Atlantic shoreline. As they moved westward Americans established local governments that did away with property qualifications, giving every white man over the age of twenty-one the right to vote and hold office. Consequently, when Western states such as Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri applied for admission into the Union, their constitutions specifically guaranteed white manhood suffrage. In no time the influence of the West was felt in the East. Several of the older states whose constitutions had been written in the eighteenth century called new constitutional conventions in the 1820s and not only liberalized the franchise but democratized the entire political process. For example, though several state constitutions had originally provided that presidential electors be chosen by the state legislatures, the constitutional conventions of the 1820s abolished this practice and provided *popular* election of presidential electors.*

Economic privilege, on the other hand, took the form of monopolies or exclusive rights and franchises which granted advantages to some but denied them to others. These privileges were particularly hated because,

*The electoral system written into the Constitution provides for what is in fact indirect election of the President. Each state is allotted a number of electors equal to its number of representatives and senators in Congress. These electors are appointed as the state's direct. In the beginning they were chosen by state legislatures, later by popular vote. Yet as late as 1860 electors in South Carolina were still chosen by the legislature.

granted by the government, whether state or national, they institutionalized inequality. When the Massachusetts legislature, for example, gave a charter to the Charles River Bridge Company to build the one and only bridge across the Charles River to connect Boston with Cambridge, and to charge a fee to anyone using the bridge, the people in the area protested. They wanted a free bridge. When a second company was proposed to satisfy the public clamor, the Charles River Bridge Company pointed to the clause in its charter which implied *exclusive* rights to the bridge business over the Charles. Eventually the entire matter landed in the United States Supreme Court, where the right of a state to grant exclusive privileges at the expense of community need and desire was struck down. Monopolies were so despised in this age committed to equality of opportunity that one writer went so far as to define liberty "as nothing more than the total absence of all MONOPOLIES of all kinds, whether of rank, wealth or privilege."

To most Americans, therefore, the elimination of privilege necessarily provided equality of opportunity. They regarded privilege as synonymous with "aristocracy," a term held in the highest contempt since the Revolution. Conversely, "democracy" was defined as the removal of every political and economic barrier blocking the progress of all citizens in their quest for personal freedom and material happiness. If this nation was to be truly democratic, editorialized the New York *Evening Post*, then there must come the end "of all privilege." Indeed, the writer continued, every democratic advance achieved in this country in the past had come as a result of "breaking down the privileges of a few."

The job of the government was clearly understood as assisting this process. Not that Americans wanted a government that constantly intruded on their lives and private affairs. Far from it. As a matter of fact one Washington newspaper published a brief motto over its masthead: "The World Is Governed Too Much." And this conviction was shared by many Americans. Most people seemed to feel the proper function of government was in the role of referee or honest broker. The government should see to it that no one group or class in society gained advantages over others, particularly government-granted advantages. Thus, monopolies had to be abolished and voting rights equalized. In the contest for the pursuit of happiness, the government had to make certain that the contest was a fair one. No one must have a head start as the result of government-granted preference.

When all is said and done, two basic qualities tell the most about Americans in this Jacksonian era. First, they were materialists. They were out to make it. They wanted money, and they wanted the security and social position it provided. "At the bottom of all that an American does," said a shrewd foreign commentator, "is money; beneath every word, money." Perhaps this was the substitute they found for all that had been lost from that earlier and simpler time when men were content to stay close to the place where they were born.

The second basic quality about these Americans was that they were champions of equality—that is, of course, for those who were white and male. Women did not need equality. They were up there on their pedestals shining forth beauty and goodness. To give them equality would demean their status in society. So the poor unfortunate female had no rights. She was chattel. She could not vote or hold office; her "right" to property was limited; she could not enter most professions; she could not make a will, sign a contract, or witness a deed without her father's or husband's consent; and her children could be taken from her if her husband so directed. Nor was there any concerted drive for equality for blacks or Indians on the part of most Americans. Women, blacks, and Indians just didn't enter the thinking of these people when they argued for equality.

To fault Americans of this period for failing to understand what the modern world means by equality is a pointless and futile exercise. But if they are examined on their own terms, with all their faults and limitations, they make an exciting bunch to watch as they changed their world and shaped so many things that became basic to the American system. Not all they attempted can be described here. The list is much too long. The efforts to achieve women's rights; the temperance and peace movements; the reforms of education, penal institutions, and insane asylums; the religious innovations; the search for perfection in communal living—all these are far too complex and involved to discuss in a short book. Besides, these reform movements expressed the thinking and activity of a relatively small number of Americans. They were not typical. What will be attempted here is a discussion of the *political* issues of the Jacksonian age—those which had a major impact on the history of the country or still maintain their relevance today. These issues include the problem of keeping the relatively new Union in one piece despite sectional arguments, especially over slavery; the push toward a more democratic society; the problem of the Indian presence in

the midst of a white society; the growth of the power of the presidency; and the changing structure and operation of the federal government as controlled by the emergent two-party system.

And central to all these issues—the one person around whom much of the controversy of this era raged—was Andrew Jackson.

Jackson's name still clangs with the sound of battle. Disagreement over his accomplishments and contributions persists to this day. Here was the man whose election to the presidency his contemporaries considered the mark of a new era in American politics. That era was later termed "the rise of the common man." For with the widespread removal of restrictions to the suffrage, the electorate trooped to the polls and chose this westerner as their President, a man who had not only risen from poverty to fortune on the frontier but also gained undying fame in the War of 1812 as the conqueror of the British invaders.

Jackson was both a product and shaper of his age. He was the living embodiment of the changes and improvements that had occurred in the country since the Revolution. He was the symbol of the aspirations and expectations of Americans committed to "go ahead" and the creation of a more equal and democratic society. He was simply "the Hero," the man whose military victories restored the nation's confidence in its ability to face a hostile world and proudly—defiantly—proclaim its liberty and independence.

Andrew Jackson was the nation's image of itself.

Andrew Jackson

THE LIFE OF Andrew Jackson spanned the years in which the nation moved from colonial status to an independent, bustling, thriving republic, just emerging as an industrial society, sure of itself and its future, and chewing up a continent as fast as Americans could clear it of Indians, Mexicans, Spaniards, Englishmen, and any others in their way. Jackson's life began in poverty and ended in unparalleled success and triumph. It was a life that epitomized what would later be called the "American dream." He was a "self-made man"—to use a term invented at this time—who through his own efforts and talents climbed from obscurity to the rank of first citizen in the nation.

Andrew Jackson was born on March 15, 1767, in the Waxhaw settlement on the northern South Carolina frontier, a remote community on the rim of civilized life. His father had migrated with his wife from Carrickfergus in northern Ireland, and died shortly before Andrew was born. During the American Revolution his mother died of cholera while nursing patriot soldiers held captive aboard British prison ships in Charleston harbor, and his two older brothers also died during the Revolution, their deaths indirectly connected to the war. Orphaned at the age of fourteen, Andrew drifted from place to place and one occupation to another, including schoolteaching and saddlemaking. In these

Age of Jackson: Categorizing Terms

Directions: Using the following interpretive frameworks – social, political and economic, organize the following terms into the categories. Elaborate on the indicator that encouraged you to place the term in a particular category.

White male suffrage

Lowell System

Road construction

Mechanical reaper

Election of 1824

Election of 1828

Monopoly

Andrew Jackson

Abolition of slavery

Democratic-Republicans

Individualism

Sewing machine

stump speech

Cult of domesticity

westward migration

Canal construction

Turnpike construction

Elizabeth Cady Stanton

Prison reform

Public education

Temperance

| Category | Evidence Term from list above | Indicator Why does the term belong here? |
|------------------|---|--|
| Political | | |
| Economic | | |
| Social | | |

An Essay in Five Minutes

Jacksonian Democrats viewed themselves as guardians of the United States Constitution, political democracy, individual liberty, and equality of economic opportunity.

In light of the following documents and your knowledge of the 1830s and 1840s, to what extent do you agree with the Jacksonians' views of themselves?

Step 1: Read the question

Step 2: Panic

Step 3: Read it again. Circle the verb. Underline nouns. About WHAT and WHEN are you being asked? Restate the question in your own words.

Step 4: Create a "treasure chest" of meaningful outside information that you think will answer the question.

Step 5: Write a clear, well-developed thesis that evaluates the relative importance of historical factors asked for in the questions.

Activity 4.1

Sample Essay 1:

Jacksonian Democrats were not the "guardians of Democracy" that they claimed to be, but instead were merely guardians of their own sectional interests and Andrew Jackson's inflated ego. Jacksonians were skilled at emotionalizing issues and rallying the support of the South and West. Their primary goals were not Constitutional justice and individual liberty, but instead they strived to suppress New England, the Whig party, and business interests and to preserve state's rights.

Andrew Jackson (despite allegations to the contrary by South Carolina and Tennessee) was born in North Carolina and grew up a son of the frontier. The hero of the Battle of New Orleans and a proven hothead (he flagrantly disobeyed orders and hanged a few of the enemy in the Seminole War), Jackson was also not what one would call an intellectual. Emotionalization of campaign issues got him elected in 1828 over a superior statesman, President John Q. Adams. Through an over-emotionalized revivalistic campaign style, Jackson's camp brought the common man out of the backwoods into the voting booth. (Records show that voter participation rose dramatically through the Jackson era). By exploiting the class difference between the urban Eastern industrialists and the South-and-Western agrarian, Jackson's aides turned "Old Hickory" into a symbol for the fight against the upper class and intellectualism. Henceforth it mattered little what Jackson did as president, as long as it was perceived as the will of the common man.

The Bank of the United States, under the direction of Nicholas Biddle, had, to an extent, become an agent by which "fat-cat" Northern merchants filled their money bags. The Bank was not good, however, for Western speculators who had borrowed a great deal of money from the bank and now, in the late 1820s, were feeling the crunch of leveling-off land prices. Because the Bank did not benefit Jackson's constituency (and because of a personal dislike for "Czar" Biddle), Jackson vetoed the bill for recharter of the Bank, proclaiming that was in the "hands of a few men irresponsible to the people." He of course meant the common individual. Intellectuals like Daniel Webster saw through this exploitation of industry/agrarian conflict. Webster's reply in Document C shames Jackson for turning a political issue into an emotional quandary. (It should be noted, in fairness to Andrew Jackson, that Webster owed several thousand dollars to the B.U.S.). Still, Jackson claimed to be protecting the rights of individuals, instead of the interests of Western speculators. In Roger B. Taney's decision (Taney was a Southern and a Jacksonian) in the 1837 Charles River Bridge Case, business was overruled by the rights of the community and the individual, or was it? Taney's decision really set a precedent for state's right intervention in commerce, though it claimed to support the individual's liberty.

Sometimes, however, it was Jackson's ego and not sectional favoritism that drove Jacksonian democracy. When Chief Justice John Marshall (a Federalist) ruled that the Cherokee nation had a right to its territory, Jackson declared, "Justice Marshall has made his decision now let him enforce it." Jackson claimed that the "common man" wanted the Indians removed and promptly sent the Cherokee down the "Trail of Tears" to Oklahoma. The move was actually fueled by Jackson's dislike for Marshall and his feeling that the executive branch superseded the Court. Jackson vetoed the Maysville Road project in Kentucky, claiming that the Constitution mandated internal improvements in intra-state areas be the responsibility of local government. He declined to mention that the road ran through the home district of his archrival, Whig Speaker of the House Henry Clay. In truth, Jacksonian Democracy did not protect individual rights, as evidenced by the mistreatment of blacks, Indians, and immigrants. Most Jacksonians were slaveholders, and until Jackson's individual pride was damaged by the nullification crisis of 1828 (Jackson resented upstart South Carolina and John C. Calhoun, due to the Eaton affair), Jackson was an advocate of slavery. The Cherokees were brutally mistreated by Jackson's removal policy. Irish immigrants were often the victims of big city riots in the East, which Andrew Jackson did nothing to prevent. These injustices were usually concealed from visitors like Harriet Martineau and Alexis De Toqueville.

Jacksonian Democracy did little for individual liberty and constitutional justice, but instead hid behind emotionalized issues. Jackson's ego dictated policy, as did the needs of the South and West. Several examples of suppressed individual freedom occurred. Jacksonians were more the protectors of self interest, than the guardians of Democracy.

READI History Learning Goals for Instruction*

The READI team developed six learning goals that reflect an integrated instructional approach to the Core Construct knowledge, skills, and practices that had guided the development of the initial units. The learning goals were intended to guide the instructional design as well as the assessment of progress toward the goals.-

The six READI learning goals in history are the following.

1. *Students engage in close reading of historical resources, including primary, secondary, and tertiary documents, to construct domain knowledge. Close reading encompasses meta-comprehension and self-regulation of the process.*

Reading closely is just as important and relevant to the study of history as it is to the English Language Arts. Through close reading in history, students learn what the text says – literal comprehension, as well as what the text is doing, and its larger meaning. These processes inform analysis and evaluation of the information, processes that are detailed in additional learning goals (Goals 2-6) discussed below. Close reading is in service of these other goals.

When prompted, historians have been found to be actively reflective about the processes they use to read history text, and they explicitly regulate how they read.⁷ Thus, a close reading goal includes these attributes. We wanted students to engage in the process of close reading as historians do.

2. *Students synthesize and reason within and across historical resources using comparison, contrast, corroboration, contextualization, sourcing, and other historical inquiry processes.*

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Historians have particular ways of interpreting what they read and study about the past. They consult many sources of information because they know that no single source tells the whole story. They compare one version of events with another, looking for consistencies and inconsistencies across different versions. They interpret a document based upon its place in history, about what was happening at the time and how the document fits into that milieu, the chronology of events and activities, and how it helps them make claims about aspects of history such as cause-effect and significance. Like historians, we wanted students to engage in these processes in order to identify, understand, and make claims about significance, cause/effect, and other insights into the past.

3. *Students construct claim-evidence relations, using historical evidence and explaining the relationship among pieces of evidence and between evidence and claims. Historical claims interpret the past. The interpretations are grounded in historical evidence (written documents, eyewitness testimonies and artifacts from the period of study) and informed by the work of historians on the subject. These claims, which form historical argument, may be expressed as descriptive, explanatory or narrative accounts.*

Historical arguments explain the relationships among pieces of evidence and the reasoning that connects evidence and claims. For example, a historian may describe and discuss the evidence itself, show how various pieces of evidence together build a cohesive picture or how a particular perspective made sense within the context of the times. We wanted students to engage in historical argumentation themselves by learning to analyze evidence, create claims, and explain how the evidence connects to the claim.

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4. *Students use interpretive frameworks such as societal structures (e.g. political, economic, technological), systems (e.g. feudalism, colonialism, Jim Crow), patterns (e.g. periodization, individual vs. mass agency, immigration, industrialization) and schools of historical thought (e.g. idealism, material determinism) to analyze historical claims and evidence.*

Interpretive frameworks are the lenses historians use to analyze the past. These lenses allow them to not only analyze claims and evidence but to create their own arguments and even their own interpretive frameworks. We wanted students to become aware of all of these kinds of interpretive frameworks and use them in the development of their own arguments.

5. *Students evaluate historical interpretations for coherence, completeness, the quality of evidence and reasoning, and perspective.*

In order for historians to create plausible interpretations of the past, they must evaluate what they read, and so must students. In order to evaluate a historical interpretation (argument), they must be able to read the argument closely and analyze it on a number of levels. We want students to recognize the work of historians as argument and have the tools to comprehend, analyze and evaluate them.

6. *Students demonstrate understanding of the epistemology of history—as inquiry into the past, seeing history as competing interpretations that are contested, incomplete approximations of the past, open to new evidence and new interpretations.*

This last focus is the most overarching of the six—encompassing understandings gleaned from each of the prior points. Students will be hampered in developing historical inquiry practices and achieving the other five learning objectives if they do not take up

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the epistemology of historians. However, many students view history as a set of facts to memorize.⁸ Rather than just hope that students, by working toward the other five goals, will come to view history as interpretation, the epistemology needs to be made explicit through document sets that contradict one another (provide conflicting accounts), through discussions about why historians read and write the way they do, and by opportunities to engage in reading, thinking and writing like a historian.

*Excerpted from:

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