

The War of 1812

What You Will Learn...

Main Ideas

1. American forces held their own against the British in the early battles of the war.
2. U.S. forces stopped British offensives in the East and South.
3. The effects of the war included prosperity and national pride.

The Big Idea

Great Britain and the United States went to battle in the War of 1812.

Key Terms and People

Oliver Hazard Perry, p. 285

Battle of Lake Erie, p. 285

Andrew Jackson, p. 286

Treaty of Fort Jackson, p. 286

Battle of New Orleans, p. 286

Hartford Convention, p. 287

Treaty of Ghent, p. 287

TAKING NOTES

Create a graphic organizer like the one below. As you read, take notes on the sequence of events in the War of 1812, from beginning to end.

Sequence of Events

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

If YOU were there...

It's 1812, and the United States and Great Britain are at war.

You are a sailor on an American merchant ship that has been licensed as a privateer. Your ship's mission will be to chase and capture ships of the mighty British navy. Even with the help of merchant ships like yours, the American navy is badly outnumbered. You know you face danger and may not survive.

Do you think your mission will succeed?

BUILDING BACKGROUND Anger against Great Britain's actions finally provoked the United States into the War of 1812. Britain's great navy gave it a clear advantage at sea, but the war was also fought on several other fronts. Victories in major battles along the frontier gave Americans a new sense of unity.

Early Battles

In the summer of 1812 the United States found itself in a war with one of the world's most powerful nations. Despite the claims by the War Hawks, the War of 1812 would not be a quick and easy fight.

War at Sea

When the war began, the British navy had hundreds of ships. In contrast, the U.S. Navy had fewer than 20 ships. None of them was as powerful as the greatest British warships.

Most of the British navy's ships, however, were scattered around the globe. Although small, the U.S. Navy had well-trained sailors and powerful new warships such as the USS *Constitution*. American vessels defeated British ships several times in one-on-one duels. Such victories embarrassed the British and raised American morale. Eventually, the British ships blockaded America's seaports.

Battles Along the Canadian Border

American leaders hoped to follow up victories at sea with an overland invasion of Canada. Three attacks were planned—from Detroit, from Niagara Falls, and from up the Hudson River valley toward Montreal.

The War of 1812



The attack from Detroit failed when British soldiers and Indians led by Tecumseh captured Fort Detroit. The other American attacks failed when state militia troops refused to cross the Canadian border, arguing that they did not have to fight in a foreign country.

In 1813 the United States went on the attack again. A key goal was to break Britain's control of Lake Erie. The navy gave the task to Commodore **Oliver Hazard Perry**. After building a small fleet, Perry sailed out to meet the British on September 10, beginning the **Battle of Lake Erie**. The battle ended

when the British surrendered. Perry sent a message to General William Henry Harrison: "We have met the enemy and they are ours." Perry's brilliant victory forced the British to withdraw, giving the U.S. Army control of the lake and new hope.

With American control of Lake Erie established, General Harrison marched his army into Canada. At the Battle of the Thames River in October 1813, he defeated a combined force of British troops and Native Americans. Harrison's victory ended British power in the Northwest. Tecumseh's death

during the fighting also dealt a blow to the British alliance with Native Americans in the region.

The Creek War

Meanwhile, war with American Indians erupted in the South. Creek Indians, angry at American settlers for pushing into their lands, took up arms in 1813. A large force attacked Fort Mims on the Alabama River, destroying the fort and killing close to 250 of its defenders. In response, the commander of the Tennessee militia, **Andrew Jackson**, gathered about 2,000 volunteers to move against the Creek nation.

In the spring of 1814 Jackson attacked the Creek along the Tallapoosa River in Alabama. Jackson's troops won this battle, the Battle of Horseshoe Bend. **The Treaty of Fort Jackson**, signed late in 1814, ended the Creek War and forced the Creek to give up millions of acres of their land.

READING CHECK Comparing What advantages did Great Britain and the United States have at the start of the war?

THE IMPACT TODAY

Inspired by the Americans' strength at Fort McHenry, Francis Scott Key wrote the national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner."

Great Britain on the Offensive

Despite U.S. success on the western and southern frontiers, the situation in the East grew worse. After defeating France in April 1814, the British sent more troops to America.

British Attacks in the East

Now reinforced, the British attacked Washington, D.C. President Madison was forced to flee when the British broke through U.S. defenses. The British set fire to the White House, the Capitol, and other government buildings.

The British sailed on to Baltimore, Maryland, which was guarded by Fort McHenry. They shelled the fort for 25 hours. The Americans refused to surrender Fort McHenry. The British chose to retreat instead of continuing to fight.

The Battle of New Orleans

After the attack on Washington, the British moved against New Orleans. British commanders hoped to capture the city and thus take control of the Mississippi River.

Andrew Jackson commanded the U.S. forces around New Orleans. His troops were a mix of regular soldiers, including two battalions of free African Americans, a group of Choctaw Indians, state militia, and pirates led by Jean Lafitte.

The battle began on the morning of January 8, 1815. Some 5,300 British troops attacked Jackson's force of about 4,500. The British began marching toward the U.S. defenses, but they were caught on an open field. The British were cut down with frightening speed. More than 2,000 British soldiers were killed or wounded. The Americans, for their part, had suffered about 70 casualties. **The Battle of New Orleans** made Andrew Jackson a hero and was the last major conflict of the War of 1812.

READING CHECK Finding Main Ideas
What happened at the Battle of New Orleans?

First Lady Saves Washington's Portrait



Dolley Madison refused to leave Washington, D.C., until a famous portrait of the first president was saved from the executive mansion.



Analyzing the War of 1812

QUICK
FACTS

Causes of the War

- Impressment of American sailors
- Interference with American shipping
- British military aid to Native Americans

Effects of the War

- Increased sense of national pride
- American manufacturing boosted
- Native American resistance weakened

Effects of the War

Before the battle of New Orleans, a group of New England Federalists gathered secretly at Hartford, Connecticut. At the **Hartford Convention**, Federalists agreed to oppose the war and send delegates to meet with Congress. Before the delegates reached Washington, however, news arrived that the war had ended. Some critics now laughed at the Federalists, and the party lost much of its political power.

Slow communications at the time meant that neither the Federalists nor Jackson knew about the **Treaty of Ghent**. The treaty, which had been signed in Belgium on December 24, 1814, ended the War of 1812.

Though each nation returned the territory it had conquered, the fighting did

have several consequences. The war produced feelings of patriotism in Americans for having stood up to the mighty British. Some even called it the second war for independence. The war also broke the power of many Native American groups. Finally, a lack of goods caused by the interruption in trade boosted American manufacturing.

READING CHECK Analyzing Information

What were the main effects of the War of 1812?

SUMMARY AND PREVIEW The War of 1812 showed Americans that the nation would survive. In the next chapter you will see how the United States continued to grow.

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

consequences
the effects of a particular event or events

Section 4 Assessment

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Online Quiz

KEYWORD: SC7 HP8

Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and People

1. a. **Identify** What losses did American forces face in the early battles of the War of 1812? What victories did they win?
b. **Make Generalizations** What role did American Indians play in the war?
2. a. **Describe** What attacks did the British lead against American forces?
b. **Evaluate** What do you think were the two most important battles of the war? Why?
3. a. **Identify** What was the purpose of the Hartford Convention?
b. **Draw Conclusions** How did the United States benefit from the War of 1812?

Critical Thinking

4. **Comparing and Contrasting** Review your notes on the battle dates. Then compare and contrast the details of the major battles during the War of 1812 in a chart like this one.

| Battle | Details (Winner, Location, Importance) |
|--------|--|
| | |
| | |
| | |

FOCUS ON WRITING

5. **Organizing Your Ideas** Reorder the items on your lists from least important to most important.