

The War of 1812

Essential Question

How did the United States benefit from its victory in the War of 1812?

Reading Guide

Content Vocabulary

frigate (p. 296)

privateer (p. 296)

Academic Vocabulary

underestimate (p. 295)

goal (p. 297)

Key People and Events

Andrew Jackson (p. 296)

Battle of Horseshoe Bend (p. 296)

Francis Scott Key (p. 297)

Treaty of Ghent (p. 298)

Battle of New Orleans (p. 298)

Reading Strategy

Taking Notes As you read, re-create the diagram below and describe each battle's outcome.

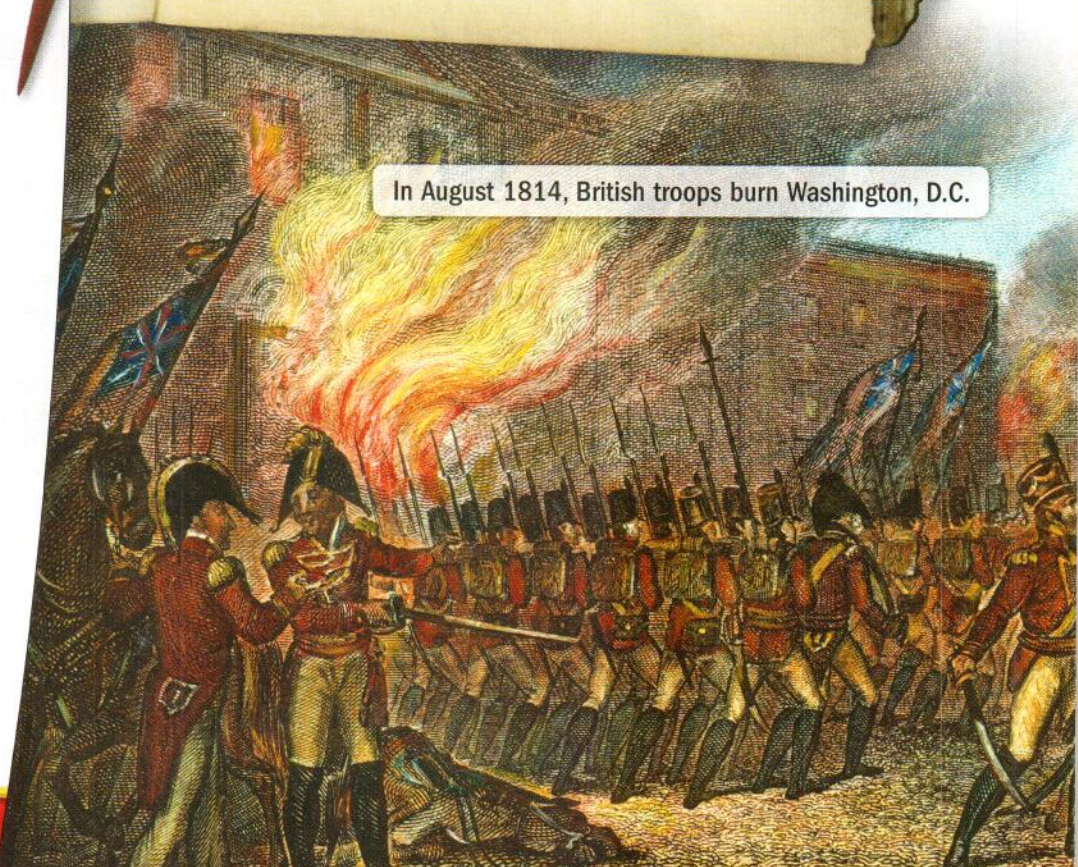
Battle	Outcome
Lake Erie	
Washington, D.C.	
New Orleans	

American Diary

"When the detachment [small military unit], sent out to destroy Mr. Madison's house, entered his dining parlor, they found a dinner table spread. . . . You will readily imagine, that these preparations were beheld, by a party of hungry soldiers, with no indifferent eye. . . . They sat down to it, therefore, not indeed in the most orderly manner . . . and having satisfied their appetites . . . they finished by setting fire to the house which had so liberally entertained them."

—quoted from George Robert Gleig,
a British soldier, in 1814

In August 1814, British troops burn Washington, D.C.



War Begins

Main Idea The United States was unprepared for war with Great Britain.

History and You Have you ever been unprepared for a quiz or a test? Read to learn how the United States was unprepared for the War of 1812.

The War Hawks were confident that they would achieve a quick victory over the British. The Americans, however, were overall unprepared for war.

The regular army had fewer than 7,000 troops, and the states had between 50,000 and 100,000 poorly trained militia. Military commanders who were veterans of the American Revolution were too old for warfare. Support for the conflict was not unanimous, and some states opposed “Mr. Madison’s War.” In addition, the Americans **underestimated**, or misjudged, the strength of the British and their Native American allies.

The war began in July 1812. General William Hull led the American army from Detroit into Canada. Tecumseh and his warriors met

Hull, who feared a massacre by the Native Americans. Hull surrendered Detroit to the British. General William Henry Harrison also made an unsuccessful attempt to invade Canada. Harrison decided that the Americans could make no headway into Canada as long as the British controlled Lake Erie.

Naval Battles

Oliver Hazard Perry, who commanded the Lake Erie naval forces, was ordered to seize the lake from the British. On September 10, 1813, Perry’s ships defeated the British naval force. After the battle, Perry sent General Harrison the message “We have met the enemy and they are ours.”

Lake Erie was now under American control. The British and their Native American allies tried to pull back from the Detroit area, but Harrison cut them off. In the Battle of the Thames on October 5, Tecumseh was killed.

The Americans also attacked the town of York (present-day Toronto), burning the parliament buildings. Even though Canada remained unconquered, the Americans had won some victories by the end of 1813.

Primary Source Escape from Washington

Dolley Madison wrote her sister the day before British forces burned Washington, D.C.



▲ Dolley Madison, wife of President James Madison

“At this late hour, a wagon has been procured; I have had it filled with the . . . most valuable portable articles belonging to the house [White House].

I insist on waiting until the large picture of General Washington is secured. . . . And now, dear sister, I must leave this house. . . . When I shall again write to you, or where I shall be to-morrow, I cannot tell!!”

—Dolley Madison in a letter to her sister, 1814

Critical Thinking

Making Inferences Why do you think the British burned the White House?



The U.S. Navy had three of the fastest **frigates**, or warships, afloat. When the *Constitution* destroyed two British vessels within four months, Americans rejoiced. **Privateers**, armed private ships, also captured numerous British vessels, boosting American morale.

Setbacks for Native Americans

Before the Battle of the Thames, Tecumseh talked with the Creeks in the Mississippi Territory about a confederation. However, hopes for a confederation died with Tecumseh.

In March 1814, **Andrew Jackson** attacked the Creeks. Jackson's forces slaughtered more than 550 Creek people. Known as the **Battle of Horseshoe Bend**, the defeat forced the Creeks to give up most of their lands.

Reading Check Evaluating Do you think the United States was prepared to wage war? Explain.

The British Offensive

Main Idea Americans were instilled with a sense of national pride after the Battle of New Orleans.

History and You When have you heard "The Star-Spangled Banner"? Read how the War of 1812 inspired the creation of the national anthem.

British fortunes improved in the spring of 1814. After winning the war against Napoleon, Britain was able to send more forces to America.

Attack on Washington, D.C.

The British sailed into Chesapeake Bay in August 1814. Their destination was Washington, D.C. On the outskirts of the capital, British troops quickly overpowered the American militia. They then marched into the city.

The War of 1812



New Boundaries During the War of 1812, approximately 286,000 Americans fought the British and an estimated 2,200 died. Although the Treaty of Ghent ended the war in 1815, it was not

until 1818 that the United States and Britain agreed on a boundary line between the United States and Canada.

- ★ The British navy blockades the coast, 1812
- ★ Perry defeats the British on Lake Erie, 1813
- ★ Harrison defeats British and Native American forces at the Battle of Thames, 1813
- ★ The British burn Washington, D.C. Americans recapture the city and defeat the British at Ft. Mchenry, 1814
- ★ Americans win the Battle of Lake Champlain, 1814
- ★ Jackson defeats the British at New Orleans, 1815



▲ United States military hat from 1813

Map Skills

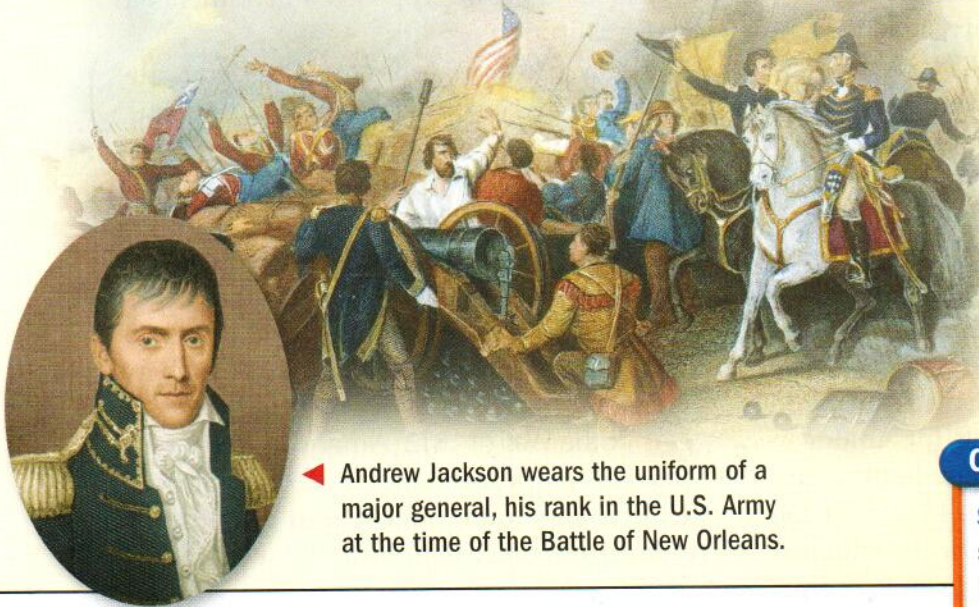
1. **Movement** How did the British navy support the British land troops?
2. **Location** Who won the Battle of New Orleans?

Maps in Motion See StudentWorks™ Plus or glencoe.com.

The Battle of New Orleans

A Final Battle As a large British fleet approached New Orleans, the Americans prepared for battle. On January 8, 1815, the British attacked New Orleans. Andrew Jackson's force of about 7,000 troops hid behind cotton bales and concentrated their fire on the advancing British. Andrew Jackson's troops won the battle within half an hour.

There were 289 British killed during the battle compared to 71 Americans. The victory made Andrew Jackson a national hero. ▼



◀ Andrew Jackson wears the uniform of a major general, his rank in the U.S. Army at the time of the Battle of New Orleans.



Jean Lafitte was a ▲ famous smuggler along the Gulf Coast. Hoping to gain a pardon for his illegal activities, he provided the Americans with information about British activities in the area.

Critical Thinking

Speculating Why do you think people support presidential candidates who have had successful military careers?

"They proceeded, without a moment's delay, to burn and destroy everything in the most distant degree connected with the government," reported a British officer.

The Capitol and the president's mansion were among the buildings burned. Fortunately, a thunderstorm put out the fires before they could do more damage. August 24, 1814, was a low point for Americans.

Baltimore Holds Firm

To everyone's surprise, the British did not try to hold Washington, D.C. They left the city and sailed north to Baltimore. In mid-September, the people of Baltimore were ready for the attack and held firm against the British. A determined defense and fierce artillery fire from Fort McHenry in the harbor kept the British from entering the city.

Francis Scott Key, an attorney, watched the bombs burst over Fort McHenry during the night of September 13. The next morning

he saw the American flag still flying over the fort. Deeply moved, Key wrote a poem that became known as "The Star-Spangled Banner." Congress designated "The Star-Spangled Banner" as the national anthem in 1931.

Defeat at Plattsburgh

Meanwhile, General Sir George Prevost led more than 10,000 British troops into New York from Canada. His **goal** was to capture Plattsburgh, a key city on the shore of Lake Champlain. The invasion was stopped when an American naval force on the lake defeated the British fleet in September 1814. Fearing the Americans would surround them, the British retreated into Canada.

After the Battle of Lake Champlain, the British decided the war in North America was too costly and unnecessary. They had defeated Napoleon in Europe. To keep fighting the United States would result in little gain and was not worth the effort.

The War Ends

American and British representatives signed a peace agreement in December 1814 in Ghent, Belgium. The **Treaty of Ghent** did not change any existing borders. Nothing was mentioned about the impressment of sailors. Even neutral rights became a dead issue because of Napoleon's defeat.

Before word of the treaty reached the United States, one final—and ferocious—battle occurred at New Orleans. British army troops moved toward New Orleans in December 1814. Andrew Jackson and his troops were waiting for them.

The British troops advanced on January 8, 1815. The redcoats were no match for Jackson's soldiers. Jackson's soldiers hid behind thick cotton bales. The bales absorbed the British bullets, while the British advancing in the open provided easy targets for American troops. In a short but gruesome battle, hundreds of British soldiers were killed. At the **Battle of New Orleans**, Americans achieved a decisive victory. Andrew Jackson became a hero, and his fame helped him win the presidency in 1828.

American Nationalism

New England Federalists opposed “Mr. Madison’s War” from the start. These unhappy Federalists gathered in December 1814 at the Hartford Convention in Connecticut. A few favored secession, but most wanted to remain with the Union. To protect their interests, they made a list of proposed amendments to the Constitution.

In the triumph following the war, the Federalists’ grievances seemed unpatriotic. The party lost the public’s respect and was weakened. The War Hawks took over the leadership of the Republican Party and carried on the Federalist philosophy of a strong national government. They favored trade, western expansion, the energetic development of the economy, and a strong army and navy.

After the War of 1812, Americans felt a new sense of patriotism and a strong national identity. The young nation also gained new respect from other nations in the world.

 **Reading Check** **Identifying Cause and Effect** What were the effects of the War of 1812?

Section 4 Review

History ONLINE
Study Central™ To review this section, go to glencoe.com.

Vocabulary

1. Define each of the following terms in a sentence: *underestimate*, *frigate*, *privateer*, *goal*.

Main Ideas

2. **Specifying** Why was the Battle of the Thames important for the United States in the War of 1812?
3. **Determining Cause and Effect** How did the outcome of the war affect the Federalist Party?

Critical Thinking

4. **Summarizing** Use a diagram like the one below to describe how the War Hawks influenced the Republican Party after the War of 1812.



5. **Making Connections** In what way did the writing of “The Star-Spangled Banner” represent the American spirit at the end of the War of 1812?

6. **Expository Writing** Take the role of an American who has witnessed the burning of Washington, D.C. Write a letter to your family out West describing your feelings about the British actions.

7. Answer the Essential Question

How did the United States benefit from its victory in the War of 1812?