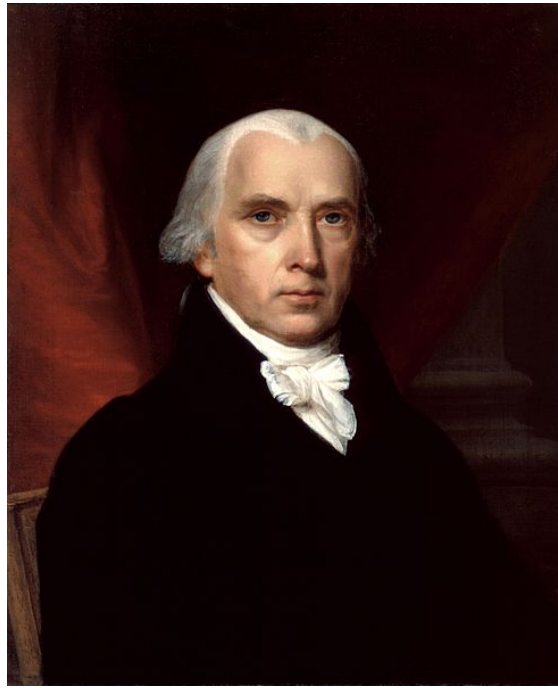


U.S. Presidents James Madison



James Madison was the fourth President of the United States. He is best known as the Father of the Constitution for his leading role in shaping the **document**.¹ Madison designed the constitution's system of checks and balances at the Constitutional Convention of 1787. The system balances the power between Congress, the president and the Supreme Court. It gives each branch some control over the actions of the others. This way, one branch of government can't become too powerful. Madison also helped create the U.S. federal system. This system divides power between the central government and the states. Most importantly, he drafted the first 10 amendments to the Constitution. The amendments are called the Bill of Rights.

Like his predecessor, Thomas Jefferson, Madison was a Virginia man. He served as Secretary of State under President Jefferson. During this time, Madison worked extra hard to keep America out of wars that were happening all over Europe. In 1812, however, Madison led America into a war with Great Britain. Great Britain was interfering with American trading ships. They were also becoming allies with Native Americans in the west. The British encouraged Native Americans to attack Americans.

¹ **document** – a piece of paper containing important information

Madison realized that his nation needed to fight back, even though they were unprepared. At one point in the War of 1812, British troops captured Washington, D.C. They destroyed the White House and other government buildings. But their success was only temporary. America won the war in 1815 when General Andrew Jackson defeated the British in the south.

The British **invasion**² caused Madison and his wife, Dolly, to flee Washington, D.C. Dolly was famous for throwing **lavish**³ parties at the White House. The fact the White House was burned by the British didn't stop her. She continued her presidential entertaining from a new Washington home. Madison served out his second term while the White House was rebuilt. The war had brought an era of good feeling. Americans were more united. The economy was growing. Madison left office in 1817. He retired to Montpelier, his estate in Virginia.

² **invasion** – entering by force

³ **lavish** – generous or extravagant

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. According to the passage **predecessor** means
 - a. person in office before.
 - b. person not in office before.
 - c. person who lost the office.
 - d. person who doesn't care about the office.

2. The federal system shares power between the central government and
 - a. law makers.
 - b. Washington, DC.
 - c. states.
 - d. senators.

3. It must have been _____ for Madison to lead America into the War of 1812.
 - a. easy
 - b. difficult
 - c. fun
 - d. popular

4. Which best describes the War of 1812?
 - a. an easy British victory
 - b. an easy win for America
 - c. the Native American's War
 - d. a challenging but important victory for America

5. Why was Dolly Madison famous?
 - a. for throwing lavish parties
 - b. for being good looking
 - c. for her charity work
 - d. for wearing nice clothes

6. What effect did the British invasion have on President Madison and his wife?

7. What did the British do when they captured Washington?

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

_____ wanting to keep the peace, Madison was forced to declare war on the British in 1812.

- a. For
- b. Because
- c. Despite
- d. In

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below:

In 1812, the United States began a domestic war against the British because the Britons were interfering with America's trade.

What? _____

(did) What? began a domestic war against the British

When? _____

Why? _____

10. **Vocabulary Word:** federal: having or relating to a system of government in which several states form a unity but remain independent in internal affairs.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: _____

Teacher Guide and Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 740

Featured Text Structure: Descriptive - the writer explains, defines or illustrates a concept or topic

Passage Summary: The passage tells the story of Madison, the 4th US president who helped construct and pass the Constitution.

1. According to the passage, **predecessor** means
 - a. **person in office before.**
 - b. person not in office before.
 - c. person who lost the office.
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 - a. **for throwing lavish parties**
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 - d. for wearing nice clothes

6. What effect did the British invasion have on President Madison and his wife?

Suggested answer: Answers may vary but could include that it caused Madison and his wife to flee Washington, D.C. Because the White House was burned, it also caused them to be relocated to a different home. It also caused Dolly to throw her lavish parties outside of the White House.

7. What did the British do when they captured Washington?

Suggested answer: They burned the White House.

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

_____ wanting to keep the peace, Madison was forced to declare war on the British in 1812.

- a. For
- b. Because
- c. **Despite**
- d. In

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below:

In 1812, the United States began a domestic war against the British because the Britons were interfering with America's trade.

What? **the United States**

(did) What? began a domestic war against the British

When? **in 1812**

Why? **because the Britons were interfering with America's trade**

10. **Vocabulary Word:** federal: having or relating to a system of government in which several states form a unity but remain independent in internal affairs.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: answers may vary.