

## Lesson Outline: John Adams and the Federalist Era

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### I. The Election of 1796

#### 1. Emergence of Political Parties

- Federalists: Supported John Adams for president and Thomas Pinckney for vice president.
- Democratic-Republicans: Supported Thomas Jefferson for president and Aaron Burr for vice president.
- Election process:
  - President chosen by the highest votes.
  - Vice President chosen by the second-highest votes.
- Outcome: John Adams (Federalist) became president, and Thomas Jefferson (Democratic-Republican) became vice president.

#### 2. Significance

- The only time in U.S. history with a president and vice president from opposing parties.

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### II. The Adams Administration

#### 1. The XYZ Affair

- Conflict with France after signing the Jay Treaty with Britain.
- French attacks on American ships led Adams to send a peace commission in 1797.
- French agents (X, Y, Z) demanded a bribe to begin negotiations.
- Outrage in the U.S. led to increased defense spending and the creation of the Department of the Navy.
- Quasi-War (1798–1800): Battles between American and French ships without an official declaration of war.
- Adams's negotiation with Napoleon in 1799 prevented a larger conflict.

#### 2. Alien and Sedition Acts (1798)

- Aimed to address fears of anarchist and atheist ideas from the French Revolution.
- **Alien Acts:**
  - Increased waiting period for immigrants to become citizens.
  - Allowed deportation of immigrants deemed dangerous.
- **Sedition Act:**
  - Made it illegal to criticize the government.
  - Targeted opposition newspapers, particularly Democratic-Republicans.
  - Controversial for violating First Amendment protections.
- Opposition: Jefferson and Democratic-Republicans viewed the acts as unconstitutional.
- Resistance: Led to the **Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions**, emphasizing state rights and nullification.

### 3. Death of George Washington (1799)

- Revered as a unifying figure: “First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen.”
  - British ships lowered flags to half-mast in his honor.
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## III. The Federalist Era

### 1. Key Contributions

- Strengthening the central government.
- Alexander Hamilton’s financial system, including the first national bank.

### 2. Decline of Federalist Influence

- Unpopularity of the Alien and Sedition Acts.
  - Growing public concern about federal overreach.
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## IV. The Election of 1800

### 1. Campaign and Results

- Federalists: Supported John Adams’s reelection.
- Democratic-Republicans: Promised to repeal the Sedition Act and limit federal government power.
- Outcome: Thomas Jefferson elected president, marking the start of the Jeffersonian era.

### 2. Legacy of the Election

- Peaceful transition of power between political parties.
  - Shift toward a more decentralized government.
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## V. Transition to the 19th Century

### 1. Judiciary

- Adams appointed John Marshall as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.
- Marshall Court: Established judicial review, affirming the court’s role in interpreting the Constitution.

### 2. Growth and Expansion

- U.S. population reached 5.3 million by 1800, a 35% increase since 1790.
  - Economic prosperity and westward expansion began.
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## VI. Key Takeaways

1. The Adams administration balanced diplomacy and national defense during international conflicts.
  2. The Alien and Sedition Acts sparked significant debates about individual liberties and state rights.
  3. The election of 1800 marked a turning point in limiting federal power and ushered in the Jeffersonian era.
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## Multiple Choice Questions

1. Who became the second president of the United States after the election of 1796?
  - a) Thomas Jefferson
  - b) John Adams
  - c) George Washington
  - d) Aaron Burr
2. What unique outcome occurred in the election of 1796?
  - a) Both the president and vice president were from the same party.
  - b) The election ended in a tie.
  - c) The president and vice president were from opposing parties.
  - d) No candidate received enough votes to become president.
3. What caused the XYZ Affair during John Adams's presidency?
  - a) A trade embargo against Britain
  - b) France demanding bribes to negotiate with the U.S.
  - c) An invasion of American territory by France
  - d) A disagreement over the Louisiana Purchase
4. How did the United States respond to the XYZ Affair?
  - a) Declared war on France
  - b) Increased defense spending and created the Department of the Navy
  - c) Signed a treaty with Britain to form a military alliance
  - d) Imposed an embargo on French goods
5. What was the purpose of the Alien Acts passed in 1798?
  - a) To reduce immigration to the U.S.
  - b) To allow deportation of immigrants deemed dangerous
  - c) To establish new requirements for citizenship
  - d) Both b and c
6. What did the Sedition Act make illegal?
  - a) Voting for opposition parties
  - b) Criticizing the president or government policies
  - c) Owning anti-government newspapers
  - d) Protesting in front of government buildings
7. Why were the Alien and Sedition Acts controversial?
  - a) They were considered violations of the First Amendment.
  - b) They expanded the power of the judiciary.
  - c) They limited the president's ability to act during wartime.
  - d) They gave Congress power over state governments.
8. Which resolutions emphasized states' rights and nullification in response to the Alien and Sedition Acts?
  - a) New Jersey and Delaware Resolutions
  - b) Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions
  - c) Federalist and Anti-Federalist Resolutions
  - d) South Carolina and Georgia Resolutions

9. What phrase was used to describe George Washington in his eulogy?
    - a) "Father of the Revolution"
    - b) "Champion of Liberty"
    - c) "First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen"
    - d) "The Hero of Independence"
  10. Who won the election of 1800 and became the third president of the United States?
    - a) John Adams
    - b) Thomas Jefferson
    - c) Aaron Burr
    - d) Alexander Hamilton
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### Answer Key

1. b) John Adams
2. c) The president and vice president were from opposing parties.
3. b) France demanding bribes to negotiate with the U.S.
4. b) Increased defense spending and created the Department of the Navy
5. d) Both b and c
6. b) Criticizing the president or government policies
7. a) They were considered violations of the First Amendment.
8. b) Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions
9. c) "First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen"
10. b) Thomas Jefferson

### Discussion Questions for Middle School

1. Why do you think having a president and vice president from different political parties, like John Adams and Thomas Jefferson in 1796, might have created challenges? How would it be different from how elections work today?
2. The XYZ Affair caused outrage among Americans because of France's demand for a bribe. Why do you think the American people found this so offensive, and how do you think it affected U.S.-French relations?
3. The Alien and Sedition Acts gave the government the power to deport immigrants and punish people for criticizing the government. Do you think these laws were justified at the time? Why or why not?
4. The Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions argued that states could declare federal laws unconstitutional. Do you agree that states should have this power, or should the federal government always have the final say? Why?
5. George Washington was remembered as "first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen." Why do you think he was so respected, even by people who disagreed with him politically?