



## **Andrew Jackson: A Man for the People Classroom Guide**

Andrew Jackson was the nation's 7<sup>th</sup> President. Today, his face adorns the \$20 bill and he is remembered as one of the most complex men to hold the nation's highest office. Elected in 1829, Jackson served two terms as President. This 1-hour BIO follows Jackson's life from his youth as an orphan in the Carolina backwoods, to his ascendancy as a military general, through his death in 1845. **Andrew Jackson** chronicles the triumphs and tribulations that transformed Jackson from a hardened youth to a keen and decisive president. Tracing his military background, this documentary provides a pivotal bridge from Jackson's life as a general during the War of 1812 and other campaigns to his elevation as a political leader in the 1820s.

Nicknamed "Old Hickory" for his fierceness in battle, Jackson was equally as tough as a senator and president. Today, he is remembered as a populist president for his campaign to reform the central banking system to benefit the "common man" and for his advocacy for "equal protection and equal benefits." Yet Jackson is also regarded as a ruthless leader for his unrelenting attacks against Native Americans which culminated in the removal of Indian populations throughout the U.S known as the Trail of Tears. This BIO would be an insightful addition to course units on Jackson specifically, or on any aspect of U.S. history between the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the Civil War era.

### **Curriculum Links:**

**Andrew Jackson** would be useful for high school and middle school classes on United States History, Colonial History, Political Science and Civics.

**Vocabulary:**

Using the dictionary at [www.merriamwebster.com](http://www.merriamwebster.com), an internet resource such as [www.google.com](http://www.google.com), or an encyclopedia, students should define or explain the significance of the following terms:

- [abomination](#)
- [ardent](#)
- [avenge](#)
- [chaste](#)
- [gauntlet](#)
- [impressment](#)
- [monopoly](#)
- [nullification](#)
- [sovereignty](#)
- [tenacity](#)
- [usurper](#)
- 

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What was Andrew Jackson's upbringing like and how do you think his childhood shaped him?
2. Andrew Jackson came to national prominence during the War of 1812. How did the war change the perception of European countries in regard to the United States?
3. The 19th century is the century of American expansion. How did the War of 1812 contribute to this expansion? How might American history be different if the British had won the war?
4. It is said that Andrew Jackson changed American politics and government and ushered in a new order. What is meant by a new order? How did Jackson's presidency transform the American political system?
5. Historians believe that Andrew Jackson was the first modern president. What is the difference between Jackson's presidency and the presidents that came before him?
6. Andrew Jackson lost the election of 1824 even though he had the most popular votes. John Quincy Adams became president by what many believed was a corrupt bargain. What is the corrupt bargain? What differences are there in presidential elections today that would prevent a corrupt bargain?
7. The election campaign of 1828 was a particularly dirty campaign with both candidates slandering each other. Compare the methods of discrediting a candidate used in 1828 with methods used today.
8. Andrew Jackson was an extremely popular president with the common man. How do you think Native Americans viewed Jackson?
9. Discuss Andrew Jackson's policies concerning Native Americans.
10. How did the nullification crisis portend the coming of the Civil War?
11. What is the central issue in the bank controversy?

### **Extended Activities**

1. Most people think of cartoons as humorous entertainment, but cartoons are also used to convey political messages. How can you convey your political views using cartoons? Draw a political cartoon indicating an either pro-Jackson or anti-Jackson stand.
2. Research the removal of the Cherokee nation from Georgia and then write an essay about this Trail of Tears. The Indian Removal Act of 1830 is an important source for understanding Jackson's policies and their ramifications. Read this act and write a short synopsis of Jackson's policies regarding Native Americans. You can also discuss this document with the larger class or group.
3. Imagine that you are a reporter assigned to cover Andrew Jackson's inauguration. Write a short article about Jackson's campaign and approach to leadership.
4. From watching this documentary, students will discover the complexity of Andrew Jackson's life and career, and the many phases of his life. Ask students to create a mini-biography of 300 words or less which encapsulates Jackson's history and the various phases of his life. As an alternative, students can also write obituaries of Jackson's life, analyzing his career and the way he might be remembered in American history.

### **Books:**

Borneman, Walter R. *1812: The War that Forged a Nation*. Harper Perennial, 2005.

Brands, H.W. *Andrew Jackson: The Life and Times*. Anchor, 2006

Feller, Daniel. *The Jacksonian Era: America 1815 to 1840*. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995.

Jahoda, Gloria. *Trail of Tears*. Wings, 1995.

Remini, Robert V. *Andrew Jackson: The Course of American Empire, 1767-1821*. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998.

### **Websites:**

Read more about Jackson on Bio.com:

<http://www.biography.com/articles/Andrew-Jackson-9350991>

Official biography of Andrew Jackson:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/aj7.html>

Official Cherokee Nation website:

<http://www.cherokee.org/>

Official website of The Hermitage:

<http://www.thehermitage.com/>

