

AJ Cartoon Analysis Activity

Directions:

1. Work with a partner and rotate cartoons around your table.
2. Review the background information as you analyze each cartoon.
3. Read the questions and prompts, and record your notes/answers in your spiral. Create a chart with the following column headings.

Background Notes	Description of image	Notes & Analysis
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THE TIMES

Unknown

BACKGROUND

Following President Jackson's retirement after two terms in office, his Vice President, Martin Van Buren, was elected to the presidency in 1836. Shortly after he assumed office the nation experienced a downturn in the economy referred to as the "Panic of 1837." This period was marked by bank failures, unemployment, decline in construction (bridges, canals, railroads) and business closings.

Blamed for these economic failures, the Democrats lost the presidency to the Whigs; William Henry Harrison won the next election over Van Buren. Unfortunately, Harrison became the first president to die in office serving for only a month. He was succeeded by Vice President John Tyler of Virginia.

President Tyler, a man committed to his own ideas, differed strongly with his own party on the function of government. Eventually he broke completely with the Whigs.

3. What has been our country's most recent recession? How has it differed from the Panic of 1837?

OFFICE HUNTERS FOR THE YEAR 1834

Unknown

BACKGROUND

President Jackson has generally been given credit for initiating the “spoils system” in the federal government. The term, taken from the saying “to the victor go the spoils,” refers to the practice of placing friends and political favorites in government positions as opposed to basing such appointments on merit.

While his predecessor had placed a few political friends in government, Jackson greatly expanded this practice. He believed in rewarding loyalty, stimulating movement in the federal bureaucracy, and opening opportunities for all citizens to serve in the government.

Needless to say, this policy provided ammunition for the critics of the administration—Henry Clay and John Quincy Adams, among others.

This cartoon shows Jackson as a winged devil floating over a crowd of office seekers.

How can a victorious political candidate reward his loyal and faithful workers yet appoint responsible, properly trained persons to positions based upon merit?

The following is a contemporary (1835) physical description of Jackson, compare it with the cartoonist's. . . “General Jackson is extremely tall and thin, with a slight stoop. . . he has a profusion of stiff gray hair. . . his speech is slow and quiet and his phraseology indicates that his time has not been passed among books.”

DESOTISM—ANARCHY—DISUNION

Unknown

BACKGROUND

In 1828, while John Quincy Adams was still president, Congress passed a “protective tariff” which placed a very high duty on imports. The South condemned this “tariff of abominations,” arguing that it served only the interests of the North and adversely affected the agricultural South which had to purchase the higher priced manufactured products.

In 1832 a new tariff law passed, moderating some of the effects of the law of 1828, but continuing the “protection” policy. This time the South reacted more forcefully. South Carolina passed an Ordinance of Nullification. This act declared the tariffs null and void and not binding on the people of that state; second, it prohibited federal officials from collecting the duties; and third, the state threatened to withdraw from the Union.

The cartoonist has taken an anti-nullification position showing the Constitution dead at the bottom of the altar. John C. Calhoun is shown in the center urged on by Governor Hayne and James H. Hammond of South Carolina.

1. Historians consider the South Carolina Ordinance of Nullification an example of the march toward Civil War. What is meant by this?
2. What is the relationship of “states rights” to the South Carolina Ordinance?
3. What is the difference between the “letter” and the “spirit” of the law?

A FOOT RACE

Unknown

BACKGROUND

The election of 1824 is best remembered as the time when the electoral college failed to choose a president.

The candidates in that election were four respected and experienced men: John Quincy Adams had been Secretary of the State; William H. Crawford had served as Secretary of the Treasury and Minister to France; Henry Clay had been Speaker of the House and was a widely accepted orator; Andrew Jackson was the hero of New Orleans and a successful Indian fighter.

The candidates were chosen not by party nominating conventions, but by the state legislatures—this was also a first.

The final result in the electoral college was: Jackson 99, Adams 84, Crawford 41, and Clay 37. Since no candidate had won a majority of the electoral votes, the election was decided in the House of Representatives. The House chose Adams.

1. The election of 1824 produced no candidate with a clear majority of electoral votes. This happened, in part, because there were so many qualified candidates and the vote was split. After you study this cartoon, debate the following issue. Resolved: Political primaries and nominating conventions are the *best* way for each party to choose its presidential candidate.

1. Why did the House choose Adams, considering that Jackson had the most electoral votes?
2. What was the original purpose and function of the electoral college?

A NEW MAP OF THE UNITED STATES WITH THE ADDITIONAL TERRITORIES

Unknown

BACKGROUND

In the election of 1828 Andrew Jackson scored a major victory over President John Quincy Adams. Jackson carried the entire West and South and divided the Middle States. The election of the “people’s president” signaled a new era in American politics; elected by the common people, he was loyal to that segment of American society. Jackson’s slogan was “Let the people rule.”

This cartoon, reputed to be the first lithographed cartoon printed in the U. S., uses two animals to portray the parties. The figures on the tortoise and the alligator are spouting some of the political slogans of the day. The figures at the top in the mountains are Winnebago Indians sharing their knowledge, having recently returned from a visit to the East Coast.

1. What was so unique about the election of Jackson? Why was he called the “people’s president”?
2. Some historians have observed that the elections of 1824 and 1828 contributed to the growth of *sectionalism* in this country. Do you agree? Explain, justify, and document your answer.
3. What was there about Jackson that attracted small farmers, laborers, and frontiersmen to vote for him?

KING ANDREW THE FIRST

Unknown

BACKGROUND

President Andrew Jackson was both liked and disliked by Americans, as shown in the cartoon. While he had a great following, there were some who questioned his judgment and use of power.

This particular cartoon concerns Jackson's overthrowing of the Bank of the United States.

This bank, which was created during the administration of Washington (1791), lent funds to the government and individuals. Stock in the bank was held by private companies and individuals, with the government retaining twenty percent. Jackson believed that it favored the wealthy at the expense of the common people. was undemocratic as it was controlled by a few wealthy Easterners, and exerted too much influence granting loans to some (including Congressmen) and not others (farmers, small businessmen).

When a bill for rechartering the bank passed Congress and went before Jackson, he vetoed it (in 1816 the Bank had received its second charter). Moreover he removed the deposits of the government from the bank and put them into state banks.

This provoked a torrent of criticism from opponents of the administration and made the bank the main issue of the election of 1832 which Jackson won.

1. Why do you think the cartoonist used the symbolism of a King to picture the President?
2. What recourse does Congress have if the President vetoes a bill? What is meant by a "pocket veto"?
3. What procedures does Congress use when it wishes to "impeach" the President?

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SYMPTOMS OF A LOCKED JAW

by David Claypoole Johnston

BACKGROUND

President Andrew Jackson generally disliked banks. In particular, he disliked the U. S. Bank.

This 1834 cartoon by David Claypoole Johnston refers to the Congressional reaction to a speech against the Senate by President Jackson. After Jackson ordered the removal of government deposits from the Bank of the United States, Henry Clay led the Senate in passing resolutions of censure against the President. Jackson responded with a formal protest (blast) against the Senate demanding it should be placed in the Senate Journal. Clay—with the assistance of Webster, Calhoun, and other Senators—was able to exclude the protest from the Journal effectively "sewing up Jackson's mouth." In addition, the Senate condemned the protest as an abuse of executive power.

1. What in the background of Andrew Jackson would lead him to distrust banks?
2. Some historians have characterized Jackson's terms in office (1828-1836) as the period of "Jacksonian Democracy"; what is meant by this?
3. What was Jackson's policy toward the Indians? Do you think his was the correct policy to follow?