

War of 1812

Read the article and write the title and answers to questions on a lined piece of paper

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The War of 1812 was the second war between the United States and Great Britain. The United States won its independence in the first war—the American Revolution. Neither country won anything important in the War of 1812.

Background

In the early 1800s Great Britain was fighting a war against France. The United States did not take part in this war, but Britain tried to keep U.S. ships from stopping at French ports. The British also took sailors away from U.S. ships and forced them to join the British Navy. These actions angered many people in the United States.

People who lived in newly settled areas of the United States were also angry with Britain. They accused the British of getting Native Americans to attack settlers.

Henry Clay of Kentucky led a group in Congress called “war hawks.” The war hawks got President James Madison to sign a declaration of war against Britain on June 18, 1812.

Early Battles

The United States first tried to take Canada, which belonged to Britain. The attacks failed. Britain struck back by taking Detroit, Michigan. The ships of the U.S. Navy were more successful at first. The USS Constitution (“Old Ironsides”) won several battles in the Atlantic.

U.S. forces won two notable victories in 1813. On September 10 ships commanded by Oliver Hazard Perry defeated British ships on Lake Erie. He then helped recapture Detroit. In October, Perry’s ships and troops commanded by William Henry Harrison chased the British into Canada. There the U.S. forces defeated the British in the Battle of the Thames. The Native American leader Tecumseh died while helping the British. After this battle, most of the Native Americans abandoned their association with the British.

Later Battles

These victories did not stop the British, however. In August 1814 British troops sailed up Chesapeake Bay and entered Washington, D.C. They burned the White House and other government buildings. They then tried to capture Baltimore, Maryland, but failed. Francis Scott Key wrote the words to “The Star-Spangled Banner” after this battle.

On January 8, 1815, British soldiers attacked troops led by Andrew Jackson at New Orleans, Louisiana. Jackson’s forces defeated the British. Both sides fought this battle without knowing that their countries had signed a peace treaty in Ghent, Belgium, on December 24, 1814.

The war was over, but there was no clear winner. The boundaries returned to where they were before the war. Andrew Jackson and William Henry Harrison were considered heroes because of the battles that they won. Both were later elected president of the United States. Another result of the war was that the United States became more independent from Europe. The country developed more of a sense of national identity.

Cite

While every effort has been made to follow citation style rules, there may be some discrepancies. Please refer to the appropriate style manual or other sources if you have any questions.

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① Summarize what the War of 1812 was.

② Describe two causes of the War.

③ Identify the U.S.'s notable victories in 1813.

④ Who won the war?

⑤ Explain one result of the War of 1812.