

# Adams Under Pressure

Trace how events at home and abroad shaped one presidency.

**SS.8.A.3.13** "Explain major domestic and international economic, military, political, and socio-cultural events of John Adams' presidency."

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## 1 READ AND MARK \_\_\_\_\_ Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline events that show economic, military, political, or socio-cultural change, then label each one E, M, P, or S and add D for domestic or I for international.

### A President Faces Conflict

- ① In 1797, John Adams became the second president as France and Britain fought a long war. Both countries interfered with American trade, but French privateers seized many U.S. ships after the United States made a treaty with Britain. Adams sent diplomats to France. French agents, later called X, Y, and Z, demanded a bribe before talks could begin. Americans were angry, and Congress expanded the navy. Adams avoided a full war, but an undeclared naval conflict with France began in 1798.
- ② Fear of France shaped domestic politics. In 1798, the Federalist-controlled Congress passed the Alien and Sedition Acts. The laws made it harder for immigrants to become citizens, allowed the president to remove some noncitizens judged dangerous, and punished certain false, scandalous writings against the government. Federalists said the laws protected national security. Democratic-Republicans argued that the Sedition Act threatened free speech and the press. The Virginia and Kentucky legislatures protested, deepening the political divide between the nation's two major parties.
- ③ Adams also faced economic trouble at home. To pay for a stronger military, Congress imposed a federal property tax. In Pennsylvania, John Fries led resistance to the tax in 1799 and 1800. Federal troops arrested the rebels, and Adams later pardoned Fries. In 1800, Adams sent a new peace mission to France despite opposition within his own party. The Convention of 1800 ended the naval conflict. That same year, Adams lost the bitter election to Thomas Jefferson, and power passed peacefully to a rival party in 1801.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

- 1 Explain why the United States entered an undeclared naval conflict with France and describe Adams's response.

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- 2 How did the Alien and Sedition Acts affect immigrants and free expression? Why did Democratic-Republicans oppose the laws?

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- 3 Explain the connection between the federal property tax and Fries's resistance in Pennsylvania.

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- 4 What political importance did the election of 1800 have, according to the passage?

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## 3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Write four sentences explaining how concern about France influenced one decision at home during Adams's presidency. Include one result of that decision for Americans or the government.

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**PART 1 • READ AND MARK**

Underline events that show economic, military, political, or socio-cultural change, then label each one E, M, P, or S and add D for domestic or I for international. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

**PART 2 • ANSWERS**

| # | QUESTION                                                                                                                   | ANSWER                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Explain why the United States entered an undeclared naval conflict with France and describe Adams's response.              | <b>France interfered with U.S. trade, seized ships, and its agents demanded a bribe from U.S. diplomats. Adams and Congress expanded the navy, but Adams avoided a full war.</b>                                                          |
| 2 | How did the Alien and Sedition Acts affect immigrants and free expression? Why did Democratic-Republicans oppose the laws? | <b>The laws made citizenship harder for immigrants, allowed removal of some noncitizens, and punished certain writings against the government. Democratic-Republicans believed the Sedition Act threatened free speech and the press.</b> |
| 3 | Explain the connection between the federal property tax and Fries's resistance in Pennsylvania.                            | <b>Congress imposed the property tax to help pay for a stronger military. Fries led resistance to that tax, federal troops arrested the rebels, and Adams later pardoned Fries.</b>                                                       |
| 4 | What political importance did the election of 1800 have, according to the passage?                                         | <b>Adams lost to Thomas Jefferson, and power passed peacefully to a rival political party in 1801.</b>                                                                                                                                    |

**PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)**

Concern about France led Congress to expand the navy after the XYZ affair. The United States then fought an undeclared naval conflict instead of a full war. Fear of France also helped Federalists support the Alien and Sedition Acts. Opponents said the Sedition Act threatened free speech and the press, which increased division between parties.

Accept clear explanations that connect a foreign threat to a domestic military or political action and accurately state a result from the passage. Events may reasonably fit more than one category when the student explains the label.