Power and the People

Read how Jacksonian democracy changed voting and tested government power.

8.H.16 "Identify the key ideas of Jacksonian democracy and explain their influence on political participation, political parties, and constitutional government; analyze Jackson's actions as President, such as the destruction of the National Bank..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline Jackson's actions in the bank fight, the nullification crisis, and Indian policy; circle groups included in or excluded from voting, then star one concern about limits on presidential power.

Who Had a Voice?

1 In the 1820s and 1830s, more states dropped property requirements for white men to vote. Andrew Jackson's supporters called this a victory for the "common man," though women, most Black Americans, and Native Americans remained shut out of voting. Campaign rallies and newspapers helped bring more voters into national politics. Jackson's Democrats praised majority rule and distrusted powerful elites. Their rivals, eventually organized as the Whig Party, feared that Jackson gave the president too much power. Fierce competition between parties gave voters clear choices, but those choices did not include everyone.

2 Jackson tested these ideas in his fight with the Second Bank of the United States, a national bank created by Congress. He argued that it favored wealthy investors and vetoed a bill to renew its charter in 1832. Congress could not gather enough votes to override his veto. He then ordered federal deposits moved to selected state banks, weakening the national bank before its charter expired. Supporters saw a president defending ordinary voters against privilege. Critics argued that moving the deposits stretched presidential power and weakened Congress's control over public money.

3 Jackson faced another test when South Carolina claimed it could reject federal tariffs. He denied that a state could cancel a federal law, asked Congress for authority to use force, and accepted a lower tariff compromise in 1833. Yet his view of federal power shifted in Indian policy. He signed the Indian Removal Act in 1830, which authorized negotiations to move Native nations west. After the Supreme Court recognized Cherokee rights against Georgia in 1832, his administration did not enforce that ruling. Forced removal later brought terrible suffering and death.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Jacksonian democracy increase political participation, and who remained excluded?

2. How could the bank fight deepen competition between Democrats and Whigs? Use each party's view of power.

3. How did Jackson's response to South Carolina's claim affect the balance of power between a state and the federal government?

4. Compare Jackson's response to South Carolina with his administration's response to the Supreme Court's Cherokee ruling. What difference matters for constitutional government?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence letter to a voter in 1833 arguing whether Jackson made constitutional government stronger or weaker overall. Use both the bank fight and the nullification crisis as evidence, and explain whose political voice your judgment leaves out.

ANSWER KEY

Power and the People

GRADE 8 · 8.H.16

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline Jackson's actions in the bank fight, the nullification crisis, and Indian policy; circle groups included in or excluded from voting, then star one concern about limits on presidential power. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Jacksonian democracy increase political participation, and who remained excluded?	**More white men could vote as states dropped property requirements, and rallies and newspapers drew voters into politics. Women, most Black Americans, and Native Americans remained excluded from voting.**
2	How could the bank fight deepen competition between Democrats and Whigs? Use each party's view of power.	**Democrats could support Jackson's attack on a bank they saw as favoring wealthy elites. Whigs could oppose his actions because they feared he was giving the president too much power.**
3	How did Jackson's response to South Carolina's claim affect the balance of power between a state and the federal government?	**Jackson rejected the state's claim that it could cancel a federal law. He defended federal authority while accepting a lower tariff compromise.**
4	Compare Jackson's response to South Carolina with his administration's response to the Supreme Court's Cherokee ruling. What difference matters for constitutional government?	**Jackson defended federal law against South Carolina, but his administration did not enforce the Court's ruling against Georgia. The contrast raises a question about whether a president must respect the authority of another branch of government.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Dear voter, I think Jackson made constitutional government weaker overall, even though some of his actions defended it. By rejecting South Carolina's claim to cancel a federal tariff, he defended the authority of national law. Yet moving federal deposits after Congress failed to override his bank veto made critics fear that one president could control public money. More white men could vote on such issues, but women, most Black Americans, and Native Americans had little or no voice in choosing that president.

Accept either overall judgment in Part 3 if the student supports it with accurate evidence from both events and identifies people excluded from voting. For question 4, accept answers that explain the different treatment of federal law and the Court's ruling.