Ships and Choices

How President Adams defended a young nation

5.C.7.2 "Identify the significant work of President John Adams, which ensured the new nation's ability to defend itself by strengthening the army and navy left a legacy of cautious foreign policy based on national interest."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two steps Adams took to strengthen the nation's defenses, and circle his step toward peace. Number the three marked steps in the order they appear.

Defending a Young Nation

1. When John Adams became president in 1797, the United States was still a young nation. Trouble soon came from France. French warships seized American trading ships at sea, putting sailors and valuable goods at risk. Many Americans demanded war. Adams had to decide how to protect the country without pulling it into a costly fight that could threaten its future.

2. Adams prepared the nation to defend itself. Under his leadership, Congress created a separate Navy Department, and the United States added warships to guard trade at sea. The government also expanded the army in case fighting reached American soil. U.S. and French ships fought at sea in a limited conflict called the Quasi-War, but Adams did not declare a full war against France.

3. Even while ships fought, Adams sent diplomats to seek peace with France. In 1800, the two countries reached an agreement that ended the fighting at sea. Keeping trade safer mattered, but Adams also wanted to avoid the heavy cost of a larger war. His choices left a lesson for future leaders: build the strength to defend national interests, yet look for peaceful solutions before entering a major war.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Adams strengthen the navy, and what did that help protect?

2. Why did the government expand the army under Adams?

3. What did Adams do to seek peace while U.S. and French ships were fighting?

4. What lesson about defending national interests did Adams leave for future leaders?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine that another country threatens U.S. fishing boats near American shores. Write a four-sentence note to the president suggesting an Adams-style response. Include a defense step, a peace step, and how your plan serves the nation's interests.

ANSWER KEY

Ships and Choices

GRADE 5 · 5.C.7.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two steps Adams took to strengthen the nation's defenses, and circle his step toward peace. Number the three marked steps in the order they appear. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Adams strengthen the navy, and what did that help protect?	**Under Adams, Congress created a separate Navy Department, and the United States added warships to protect trade at sea.**
2	Why did the government expand the army under Adams?	**The army was expanded in case fighting reached American soil.**
3	What did Adams do to seek peace while U.S. and French ships were fighting?	**He sent diplomats to France. The two countries reached an agreement in 1800 that ended the fighting at sea.**
4	What lesson about defending national interests did Adams leave for future leaders?	**Leaders should prepare to defend the nation while seeking peaceful solutions before entering a major war.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Send navy ships to patrol the fishing area and help keep crews safe. Ask the other country's leaders to discuss how both sides can avoid more threats. These steps protect people's lives and their ability to earn a living. They also give both countries a chance to settle the problem without a war.

Accept defense and peace steps that fit the fishing-boat situation and a clear explanation of how they protect U.S. interests. The student need not name the Quasi-War.