A Nation Still Standing

Read how a war shaped American independence and national pride.

8.C.7.1 "Analyze how the War of 1812 confirmed the independence of the United States of America. Summarize the causes of the war, including British trade restrictions and impressment. Explain how the war fueled a spirit of nationalism..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two causes of the war, circle the evidence that the United States remained independent, and number two examples of growing national pride 1 and 2.

The War and the Nation

1. In the early 1800s, Britain and France were at war, and the United States tried to trade with both. Britain blocked some American ships from trading with France and seized goods at sea. British warships also stopped American vessels and forced some sailors into Britain's navy, a practice called impressment. Britain claimed that some of these sailors were British deserters, but Americans saw the seizures as an attack on their rights. These pressures, along with conflicts over western lands, led Congress to declare war in 1812.

2. At Baltimore in 1814, British ships bombarded Fort McHenry through the night. At dawn, an American flag flew over the fort. Francis Scott Key witnessed the attack and wrote words that later became the national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner." The song asks whether the flag still waves and calls the country "the land of the free and the home of the brave." The surviving flag turned a battle into a story of national survival. Although the war brought defeats as well as victories, this image helped Americans feel they belonged to one nation.

3. The Treaty of Ghent ended the war without changing the border between the United States and British Canada. It did not settle impressment, but Britain soon stopped the practice as its war with France ended. The United States had fought Britain again and remained independent; its survival strengthened national pride rather than creating a new nation. During President James Monroe's years, beginning in 1817, people called this mood the Era of Good Feelings. One major political party dominated, and many Americans praised national unity, even as serious disagreements over slavery and regional interests continued.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Britain's trade restrictions and impressment each threaten what Americans believed were their rights?

2. The United States gained no land in the Treaty of Ghent. Why could Americans still see the war as confirming independence?

3. How did the flag at Fort McHenry and the anthem's words help build a spirit of nationalism?

4. How did the Era of Good Feelings show national unity, and what detail shows that unity had limits?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a five- or six-sentence label for a museum exhibit called "A Nation Still Standing." Explain how a trade or sailor dispute led to war, why the war confirmed independence without gaining land, and how both the anthem and the Era of Good Feelings expressed national pride; include one limit to national unity.

ANSWER KEY

A Nation Still Standing

GRADE 8 · 8.C.7.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two causes of the war, circle the evidence that the United States remained independent, and number two examples of growing national pride 1 and 2. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Britain's trade restrictions and impressment each threaten what Americans believed were their rights?	**Trade restrictions blocked American ships and goods, while impressment forced sailors from American vessels into Britain's navy. Americans viewed both as attacks on their rights.**
2	The United States gained no land in the Treaty of Ghent. Why could Americans still see the war as confirming independence?	**The United States fought Britain again and remained independent. The war showed that it could survive without gaining land.**
3	How did the flag at Fort McHenry and the anthem's words help build a spirit of nationalism?	**The flag's survival after the attack became a symbol of national survival. The anthem described the United States as the land of the free and the home of the brave.**
4	How did the Era of Good Feelings show national unity, and what detail shows that unity had limits?	**One major party dominated, and many Americans praised national unity. Disagreements over slavery and regional interests continued.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Britain's seizure of sailors from American ships helped push the United States into war in 1812. After fighting Britain again, the country remained independent, even though the Treaty of Ghent gave it no new land. At Fort McHenry, a flag still flying after a British attack became a sign of that survival. The anthem's words about freedom and bravery gave Americans a way to express pride in their country. During the Era of Good Feelings, many Americans also praised national unity. Yet disputes over slavery and regional interests showed that this unity did not include agreement on every issue.

Accept explanations that distinguish confirming independence from gaining it for the first time. Students may use either British trade restrictions or impressment as the cause in the exhibit label.