Votes and Voices

How changing voting rules and a candidate's image shaped the 1828 election

8.C.8.1 "Describe the factors that led to the election of President Andrew Jackson, including state laws expanding white male suffrage and Jackson's identification with the "common man.""

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two changes to voting rules that brought more white men to the polls. Circle two details that helped Jackson appear to be a "common man," then write 1 and 2 beside two other factors that helped his 1828 campaign.

The Road to the White House

1. Imagine a crowded polling place in 1828. More white men could vote than in earlier elections because many states had dropped property ownership rules for white male voters. In some states, officials also removed taxpaying requirements. These changes did not make voting open to everyone. Women could not vote, and most Black men and Native Americans were shut out. Some states even took voting rights away from free Black men. Still, the larger pool of white male voters changed presidential campaigns. Candidates now had stronger reasons to win support beyond wealthy landowners.

2. Andrew Jackson grew up with little wealth on the frontier and later became a military hero after the Battle of New Orleans in 1815. Supporters presented the Tennessee politician as a defender of the "common man" against powerful insiders. That image could appeal to newly eligible white male voters who wanted a leader they believed understood them. Yet the image left out key facts: Jackson became a wealthy plantation owner and enslaved people. His campaign's message was about belonging, even though many people were barred from voting.

3. The election of 1824 added fuel to Jackson's 1828 campaign. Jackson won the most popular and electoral votes in 1824, but no candidate won an electoral majority. The House of Representatives chose John Quincy Adams as president. Jackson's supporters called the result unfair and accused Adams and Henry Clay of making a secret deal, though no deal was proved. In 1828, Jackson's allies used newspapers and local campaign groups to spread his message and draw voters to the polls. Jackson defeated Adams that year.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did changes in state voting rules give Jackson's campaign more people to reach?

2. Why might Jackson's background and military record have made his “common man” message appealing?

3. What facts in the passage limit the claim that Jackson represented the “common man”?

4. How did the 1824 election result and Jackson's campaign organization each help his 1828 effort?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence newspaper editorial for voters in 1828. Explain how expanded voting and Jackson's “common man” image could work together to help him win, and include one fact that calls that image into question.

ANSWER KEY

Votes and Voices

GRADE 8 · 8.C.8.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two changes to voting rules that brought more white men to the polls. Circle two details that helped Jackson appear to be a "common man," then write 1 and 2 beside two other factors that helped his 1828 campaign. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did changes in state voting rules give Jackson's campaign more people to reach?	**Many states dropped property ownership rules for white male voters, and some removed taxpaying requirements. More white men could vote, so Jackson's campaign had a larger group to reach.**
2	Why might Jackson's background and military record have made his "common man" message appealing?	**His modest beginnings could make voters feel he understood them, while his military success made him a well-known figure.**
3	What facts in the passage limit the claim that Jackson represented the "common man"?	**Jackson was a wealthy plantation owner who enslaved people. Women, most Black men, and Native Americans could not vote, so his appeal did not include everyone.**
4	How did the 1824 election result and Jackson's campaign organization each help his 1828 effort?	**The 1824 result gave supporters a reason to argue that Jackson had been treated unfairly. Newspapers and local campaign groups then spread his message and brought voters to the polls.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

New voters, your ballots can shape this election because many states no longer require white men to own property. Jackson's supporters call him a man of the people, pointing to his modest beginnings and his military fame. As more white men enter polling places, that message may bring many of them to his side. But remember that Jackson owns a plantation and enslaves people, while women and most Black men and Native Americans remain unable to vote.

Accept historically accurate explanations that connect expanded white male voting to Jackson's appeal or campaign reach. For the editorial, look for four sentences that connect both factors and identify a genuine limit to the "common man" image.