A Union Tested

Read how Jackson responded to the Nullification Crisis.

8.C.8.2.B "Describe President Jackson's reaction to the crisis, based on his fear of secession and destruction of the Union."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline South Carolina's threat, circle two steps Jackson took in response, and number two phrases that explain why he feared the Union might break apart.

Jackson and the Nullification Crisis

1 In 1832, a dispute over tariffs pushed the United States toward a dangerous test. Tariffs were taxes on imported goods, and many South Carolinians argued that federal tariffs hurt their economy. That November, a South Carolina convention declared the tariffs of 1828 and 1832 null, or invalid, within the state. Its leaders threatened to leave the Union if the federal government tried to collect the taxes by force. President Andrew Jackson faced more than a quarrel about money: a state was claiming the power to defy a national law.

2 Jackson had supported states' rights in other disputes, but he rejected South Carolina's claim that it could cancel a federal law on its own. In a public proclamation in December 1832, he warned that secession, leaving the Union, was not a lawful solution. He believed the Constitution created a national government whose laws states could not simply set aside. If one state could break away whenever it disliked a law, he feared others might follow. To Jackson, that chain of departures threatened the survival of the United States.

3 Jackson paired his warning with preparations to enforce the tariff at South Carolina's ports. He asked Congress for authority to help collect federal duties, including the possible use of military force. Congress passed the Force Bill in 1833, while lawmakers also passed a compromise tariff that gradually lowered rates. South Carolina then withdrew its tariff nullification, and an armed clash was avoided. Jackson's response combined a firm defense of federal law with room for a political settlement. He saw a peaceful compromise as valuable, but not at the price of accepting secession.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did Jackson see South Carolina's threat as more than a dispute about tariff taxes?

2. How did Jackson's proclamation respond to secession, and why did he think one state's departure would be dangerous?

3. Why did Jackson ask Congress for authority to collect duties, even if force became necessary?

4. How did Jackson's response make room for compromise without accepting secession?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence newspaper editorial from 1833. Explain how two of Jackson's actions addressed his fear that the Union could break apart, then predict what might happen if other states also rejected federal laws.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline South Carolina's threat, circle two steps Jackson took in response, and number two phrases that explain why he feared the Union might break apart. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did Jackson see South Carolina's threat as more than a dispute about tariff taxes?	**South Carolina threatened to leave the Union and claimed it could defy a national law.**
2	How did Jackson's proclamation respond to secession, and why did he think one state's departure would be dangerous?	**He warned that secession was not lawful. He feared other states might follow, threatening the survival of the United States.**
3	Why did Jackson ask Congress for authority to collect duties, even if force became necessary?	**He wanted to enforce federal law rather than allow a state to set it aside and possibly break away.**
4	How did Jackson's response make room for compromise without accepting secession?	**He prepared to enforce the tariff while Congress passed a tariff that gradually lowered rates. He did not accept South Carolina's claim that it could leave the Union.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

President Jackson is right to warn that South Carolina cannot leave the Union over a tariff. By publicly rejecting secession, he tells other states that disagreements must not break the country apart. By preparing to collect duties, he shows that federal law will still be enforced. If every angry state followed South Carolina's example, our nation could split into rival countries instead of settling disputes together.

Accept responses that connect Jackson's warning and enforcement preparations to his fear that secession could spread and destroy the Union. Predictions should be plausible possibilities, not presented as events that occurred.