

1812: Congress's First Declaration of War Under the Constitution

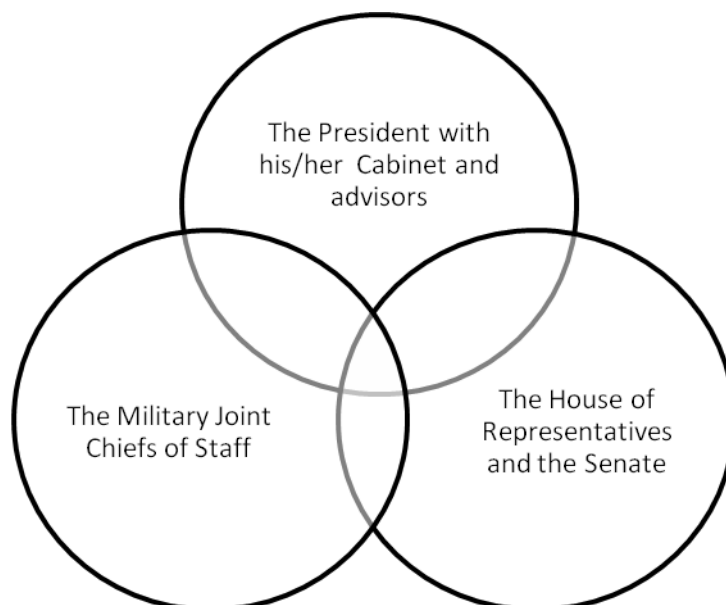
Worksheet 1: Why and How Should America Decide to Go to War?

Instructions: Discuss the following questions and Venn diagrams. Select a spokesperson to report your discussion to the class.

- Which single idea in this diagram do you think presents the strongest justification for war?
- If you could not select the intersection of all three as the strongest justification, what location would you choose?



- Which of the three groups should decide whether to go to war?
- If you could not select the intersection of all three, what location would you choose?



1812: Congress's First Declaration of War Under the Constitution

Worksheet 2: The Constitutional Context for Declaring War

Instructions: Analyze and discuss the following excerpts from the Constitution. Select a spokesperson to report your discussion to the class.

The Constitution of the United States

Article I, Section 8

The Congress shall have Power To...

To declare War, grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal, and make Rules concerning Captures on Land and Water;

To raise and support Armies, but no Appropriation of Money to that Use shall be for a longer Term than two Years;

To provide and maintain a Navy;

To make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces;

To provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions;

To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the Militia, and for governing such Part of them as may be employed in the Service of the United States, reserving to the States respectively, the Appointment of the Officers, and the Authority of training the Militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress...

Article II, Section 2

The President shall be Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of the several States, when called into the actual Service of the United States

1. To which branch of government did the Founders assign the power to declare war?
2. What role did the Founders assign to the President in declaring war?
3. What roles did the Founders give to Congress and the President in prosecuting a war after the declaration? Overall, to which branch did the Founders assign more power over questions of war? Explain your answer.
4. To what extent does this division of war power reflect the Founders concept of separation of powers?
5. How are the constitutional war-related roles of Congress and the President different from one another?

1812: Congress's First Declaration of War Under the Constitution

Worksheet 3: Document Study—President James Madison's Third Annual Message to Congress

Instructions: Answer the following questions about President James Madison's Third Annual Message to Congress. Select a spokesperson to report your discussion to the class.

1. Identifying key evidence in the text:
 - a. On what occasion was the President writing to Congress?

 - b. What facts related to foreign affairs did he convey?

 - c. What was the President asking Congress to do?

2. Determining the central ideas:
 - a. To what long-term historical situation was the President referring?

 - b. Why would the President say that Congress was most the appropriate body to address this issue?

3. Identifying the logic of the argument:
 - a. According to the President, why was the present moment more urgently calling for action than prior moments?

 - b. What consequences of inaction did the President imply?

1812: Congress's First Declaration of War Under the Constitution

4. Taking stock of the vocabulary used in the document: Define the following words and phrases:
 - belligerent powers
 - neutral commerce
 - rigorous execution
 - edicts
 - ominous
 - depredations
 - scrupulous justice
 - protracted moderation
 - legislative guardians
5. Understand how a text presents information:
 - a. Approximately how much of the information presented in the message was factual and how much was intended to persuade readers to act?
 - b. Provide examples of each.
6. Identify point of view:
 - a. According to the President's message, how dangerous was the national situation?
 - b. How strongly did the President feel about the issue? Provide two examples of language the President used to convey his point of view.

1812: Congress's First Declaration of War Under the Constitution

Worksheet 4: Document Study—The “War Manifesto,” House Foreign Relations Committee Report on a Declaration of War, June 3, 1812

Instructions: Answer the following questions about the House Foreign Relations Committee Report. Select a spokesperson to report your discussion to the class.

1. Identifying key evidence in the text:
 - a. On what occasion was the Foreign Affairs Committee reporting to the full House of Representatives?
 - b. What facts related to foreign affairs did the Committee report?
 - c. What was the Committee asking Congress to do?
2. Determining the central ideas:
 - a. To what extent did this report repeat allegations from President James Madison's Annual Message of November 5, 1811?
 - b. In what ways did this report draw upon the Declaration of Independence as a model? Cite from the report to support your answer.
3. Identifying the logic of their argument:
 - a. Why did the committee feel war was the only appropriate response to the situation the nation faced?
 - b. What was the importance of the “impartial world” in this report?
 - c. Against what British passions was the logic of the United States contrasted? How did this contrast contribute to the power of the report?

1812: Congress's First Declaration of War Under the Constitution

4. Taking stock of the vocabulary used in the document: Define the following words:
 - dispassionate
 - forbearance
 - vindicate
 - degradation
 - tyranny
 - sovereignty
 - edicts
 - redress
 - degeneracy
5. Understand how a text presents information:
 - a. Approximately how much of the information presented in the report was factual and how much was intended to persuade readers to act?
 - b. Provide examples of each.
6. Identify point of view:
 - a. According to the Committee's report, how dangerous was the national situation?
 - b. How strongly did the Committee feel about the issue? Provide two examples of language the Committee used to convey its point of view.
7. Optional question: What details of the facsimile of the War Manifesto contribute to historical insights not conveyed by the transcript of the document?