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THE WAY WE SAW IT

FROM JACKSON TO LINCOLN

THE EMERGENCE OF A DEMOCRATIC NATION

IN ILLUSTRATION AND ART

A Teacher's
Resource Booklet
with Lesson Plans and Reproducible
Student Activity Assignments



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CHALLENGING STUDENTS TO THINK HISTORICALLY

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Introduction

Jackson, Lincoln and the Age of the “Common Man”

In 1835, French author Alexis de Tocqueville published *Democracy in America*, his famous account of his travels in the United States in the early 1830s. In this account, he wrote:

No sooner do you set foot upon the American soil than you are stunned by a kind of tumult; a confused clamor is heard on every side; a thousand simultaneous voices demand the immediate satisfaction of their social wants. Everything is in motion around you; here, the people of one quarter of a town are met to decide upon the building of a church; there, the election of a representative is going on; a little farther, the delegates of a district are posting to the town in order to consult upon some local improvements; or, in another place, the laborers of a village quit their ploughs to deliberate upon the project of a road or a public school.

It is unlikely that de Tocqueville would have described America in quite this way had he visited in the late 1700s. By the 1830s, however, a new democratic ethos was energizing Americans as never before. This ethos evolved out of the ideas of the American Revolution and the U.S. Constitution. However, in many ways, it deepened and even transformed those ideas. The democratic republic we have today was shaped during this period.

This booklet/transparency set traces the growth of this democratic spirit during the first half of the 19th century. It does this through just 12 visual displays focusing on several key aspects of the change. Each lesson uses three visual displays to explore one broad topic in this story. Briefly, the four lessons are as follows:

The Emergence of the Common Man

The illustrations focus on the way older images of leadership and notions of deference to one's "betters" gave way in a new dynamic republic to a growing skepticism about traditional forms of political authority.

Jacksonian Democracy

Andrew Jackson became a supreme symbol of this new democratic spirit. The illustrations here explore the reality and the image of this president.

The Great Flaw

The era's triumphant celebration of the "Common Man" was flawed in several ways. The key flaw was slavery. Until this enormous contradiction could be resolved, the nation's democratic political and cultural transformation would not be completed.

Slavery and the Crisis of Democracy

In the 1850s, slavery came to dominate and destroy the party system that took shape after 1836. Only in the fires of the Civil War could the ideal of a democratic republic be fulfilled. In images of Lincoln, the ideal of the president as a man of the people found a new, more profound expression.

Using Photos, Cartoons, and Other Visuals to Teach History

Most textbooks today are full of colorful visuals. But all too often these visuals function primarily as window dressing. They make the text more entertaining, or at least more palatable. But only occasionally do the visuals in textbooks do more than offer simple pictorial reinforcement of ideas already presented in the text. In many cases, they pander to the visual orientation of the young while doing little to help young people master the challenges of the visual media that dominate their lives.

By way of contrast, our approach to using visual materials emphasizes their unique strengths as historical documents. The lessons in this booklet focus students on the visual symbols and metaphors in editorial cartoons, the dramatic qualities of certain photographs, the potential of many images to make abstract ideas more specific and concrete, the implicit biases and stereotypes in certain images, their emotional power, and their ability to invoke the spirit of a time and place. In the process, we make every effort to strengthen students' visual literacy skills in general, as well as their ability to think critically and engage in spirited but disciplined discussions.

How to Use This Booklet

The booklet is divided into four lessons, with three illustrations per lesson. Each lesson consists of the following:

A BACKGROUND INFORMATION SHEET This page provides brief summaries explaining the three illustrations on which the lesson is based and their relevance to the lesson's objectives.

CD-ROM WITH IMAGES The ImageXaminer allows you to project the images for use in your class discussions. The CD-ROM also includes a folder containing all of the discussion questions and follow-up questions in pdf format. All of the images are also in pdf format, should you wish to create overhead transparencies.

DISCUSSION-ACTIVITY SHEETS FOR EACH ILLUSTRATION

Each sheet displays one illustration. It includes a sequence of questions to help you plan an all-class discussion while using the images in the ImageXaminer. The questions take students step by step through an analysis of the illustration. If you wish, you may reproduce these pages and hand them out. In addition to the discussion questions on the illustration itself, one or two follow-up activities are suggested. Some of these can be made into individual assignments. Others will work best as small group or all-class activities.

From Jackson to Lincoln: The Emergence of a Democratic Nation

**OBJECTIVES
FOR THIS LESSON:**

1. Students will better understand how older images of leadership and of deference to one's "betters" were giving way in the early 1800s to a new, more democratic spirit.
-

The Emerging Age of the Common Man

Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS:

Illustration 1

Our nation was founded by an elite of classically educated members of a small, wealthy class of merchants and plantation owners. Their talents and social position were obvious, easily recognized and accepted by most people. They were seen to be the "eminent" men of the community and came as close to an aristocratic upper class as could exist in America at that time. George Washington even had to resist a call by some to crown him king of the new nation. On the left President Washington is seen meeting with his Cabinet. In this image, and the one of Washington on the right, the dress, posture and opulent settings all contribute to giving these men a serene, aristocratic and dignified air.

Illustration 2

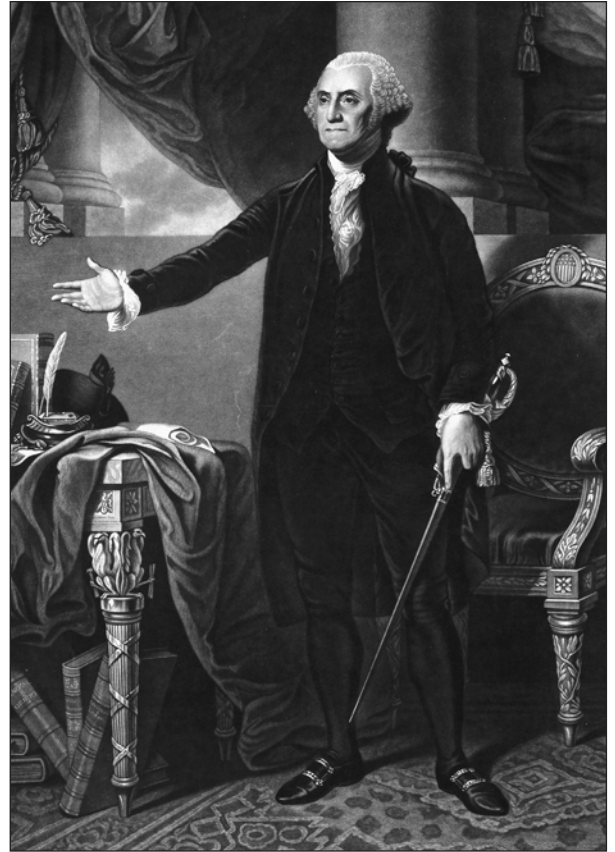
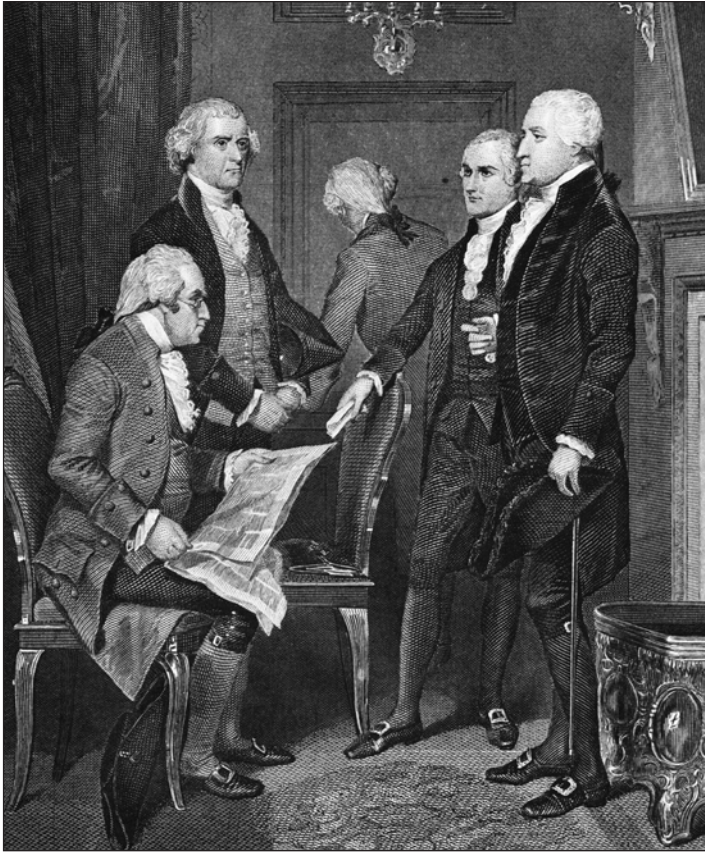
In the late 1700s, the United States was still a nation of small, rural communities. But it soon began to expand and undergo rapid social and economic change. This is clear, for example, from these two images of New York City. One, from 1647, depicts the tiny, frontier Dutch village of New Amsterdam; the other is from the mid-1800s. By then, New York was a major commercial center, linked by the Erie Canal and other routes to the farms and cities of the expanding western territories. In a bustling urban community like this, new types of social and political leaders were on the rise. And older ones were often less visible and less able to command the automatic respect they once knew.

Illustration 3

The ideas of the American Revolution combined with growing economic opportunity to fuel changing social attitudes. A new spirit of democracy was in the air, and many Americans seemed more skeptical about their "betters." In small town and rural America, everyone instantly recognized who the leading people of the community were. But in an impersonal city like New York, it was harder to be noticed and gain status. Those with ambition had to put on airs and push hard to win recognition. Yet in this new age of the "Common Man," many other Americans found it harder to respect such "strivers" and "go-getters" — as these caricatures of the newly rich suggest. In politics, the right to vote was being extended, at least to white males. By the 1820s, these voters were ready for new kind of social and political leadership.

Lesson 1 — The Emerging Age of the Common Man

Illustration 1



Both images courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustration

1. On the right is a portrait of the nation's first president. He and his first Cabinet are on the left. Name that first president and his first Cabinet.
2. George Washington was chosen unanimously as our first president. Some Americans at the time even wanted him to be a kind of king of the new nation. Why do you suppose that was? Why did Washington refuse to encourage such supporters?
3. Washington and most early U.S. presidents were members of America's small wealthy class of merchants, lawyers and plantation owners. Most in fact were members of what came to be known as the "Virginia Dynasty." What was the Virginia Dynasty and which presidents were in it?
4. Most would say that these two images convey a good idea of the style and nature of the elites that led America in these years. How do the gestures, dress settings and other features of the images you see here help to do this?

Follow-up Activities

1. From 1801 to 1825, the so-called "Virginia dynasty" held the presidency. And when Andrew Jackson won the presidency in 1828, he was the first to occupy the White House who wasn't either from Virginia or named Adams. What gave the plantation elite of Virginia such an advantage in presidential contests in the early 1800s? Was there something unique about the individual candidates that helped them win? Or were the other factors having to do with Virginia as a whole at work? Learn more about the Virginia dynasty and write a brief essay answering these questions.
2. In spite of the solemn and statesmen-like look of the men in the above illustrations, they could engage in very bitter and petty political battles. The 1800 election race between Thomas Jefferson and John Adams is a case in point. Read more about the political rhetoric in this campaign. Share some of what you find in a class discussion. Be sure to compare the 1800 campaign rhetoric to that in our most recent presidential campaign.

Lesson 1 — The Emerging Age of the Common Man

Illustration 2



Both images courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustration

1. In the late 1700s, America was still made up of small, mostly rural communities. But this soon began to change. Here are two images of New York City, one from the 1600s and the other from the mid-1800s. What big social and economic changes help explain this transformation of New York and other U.S. cities?
2. The building of the Erie Canal was a major factor helping New York grow. Why might this have helped New York City grow rapidly in the mid-1800s?
3. Thousands of people from rural America began to flock to cities like New York in the first half of the 19th century. How do you think life in a city like New York would affect the attitudes of such people?
4. Some say that westward expansion and economic growth also helped the drive for a more democratic political system. In what way did the political system become more democratic in the early 1800s? How might expansion and economic growth have helped in the drive to make politics more democratic?

Follow-up Activities

1. Small Group Activity: One factor in the growth of New York City after the year 1825 was the opening of the Erie Canal. Read more about the Erie Canal and its effect on the economic growth of New York and the nation. Create a map of the region showing the entire Erie Canal, the Hudson River and New York City. Use this map, along with the overhead of the above two views of the city itself in a brief presentation to the class on the impact of the Erie Canal on the growth of New York City.
2. Pretend you know nothing about the history of New York City. Someone shows you these two images, explaining that the image on the left is from 1647 and the image on the right is from the mid-1800s. Based on this, and on your general knowledge of U.S. history, write an essay explaining how New York City changed in this time period and why. Base your statements only on what these illustrations show and what your general knowledge of U.S. history helps you to see in them.

Illustration 3



Both images courtesy of the Library of Congress



Discussing the Illustration

1. Some people at the time said the America of the early 1800s was becoming a nation of “go-getters” or “men on the rise,” especially in bustling and growing cities like New York. What do you suppose they mean? Caricatures such as these from that time appear to poke fun at such go-getters. In what ways do the caricatures make fun of such types of people?
2. Some would call the men in these drawings “self-made men” or “men with drive and ambition.” Others would call them “social climbers” or “snobs.” What term do you think the creator of these drawings would have preferred? Explain your answer.
3. Do you think Americans in the days of Washington and Adams would have shared the mocking view of the wealthy expressed by these drawings? Why or why not? In what ways, if any, do these images fit with the idea that a new democratic spirit was spreading in America in the early 1800s? What other evidence for such a spirit do you know of for these decades?

Follow-up Activities

1. Small Group Activity: Have each member of your group pretend to be one of the following: James Madison, John Quincy Adams, Andrew Jackson, John C. Calhoun, Daniel Webster, Sojourner Truth, Susan B. Anthony, Walt Whitman, John Jacob Astor, Henry David Thoreau and Frederick Douglass. First, have group members learn more about the people they have picked. Then, imagine that the magazine has invited each of these people to comment on the above caricatures. Each member of the group, as the person he or she has picked, should write a detailed letter to the editor commenting on the figures and what they show about American life at the time. Use these letters as the basis for a class discussion on how American attitudes toward society, wealth and social leadership were changing in the early and mid-1800s.

From Jackson to Lincoln: The Emergence of a Democratic Nation

**OBJECTIVES
FOR THIS LESSON:**

1. Students will better understand how Andrew Jackson came to symbolize this new age of the “Common Man.”
 2. Students will critically assess both the image and the reality of Jacksonian Democracy.
-

Jacksonian Democracy

Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS:

Illustration 1

Andrew Jackson fit perfectly the image of the new kind of leader many Americans seemed to be looking for. He was quite unlike the presidents of the Virginia Dynasty (Jefferson, Madison, Monroe) and New England’s John Quincy Adams, whom he defeated in the 1828 election. He was a popular Indian fighter and the general who won the Battle of New Orleans in the War of 1812. The tale of how, as a young boy, he stood up to a British soldier during the Revolutionary War was a part of his legend — as the print on the left makes clear. “Old Hickory” was presented as a man of the people, a frontiersman unwilling to bow to any aristocrat.

Illustration 2

More and more states were dropping property requirements for voting and holding office. By the 1820s, universal white male suffrage was becoming the rule. The political process was opened to the masses. To reach and motivate enough of them to vote, candidates needed more organized and active political parties. On Inauguration Day, thousands of Jackson voters and party supporters flocked to Washington, D.C. for a celebration, shown on the left here. Some people saw this crowd as an unruly mob. Many actually came hoping that Jackson would give them government jobs. And Jackson did reward many loyal party supporters this way, a practice known as the spoils system. The cartoon criticizes this practice harshly. Jackson did not invent it. However, he did expand it in order to strengthen the large party organization backing him.

Illustration 3

Jackson presented himself as the champion of both the common man and the West against powerful and wealthy Easterners. This was especially the case in his fight against re-chartering the Bank of the United States. He pictured the bank as a means by which the privileged rich made it hard for the less well off to get ahead. In this cartoon, the bank is a monster, whose heads represent its president, Nicholas Biddle (in a top hat), and the directors of its state branches. Jackson is shown “slaying” the bank with his veto stick. The bank battle was one of many conflicts in which Jackson presented himself as the defender of the common man. This was only partly true. But whether true or not, every political leader soon felt the need to appeal to voters in this way.

Lesson 2 — Jacksonian Democracy

Illustration 1



Both images courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustration

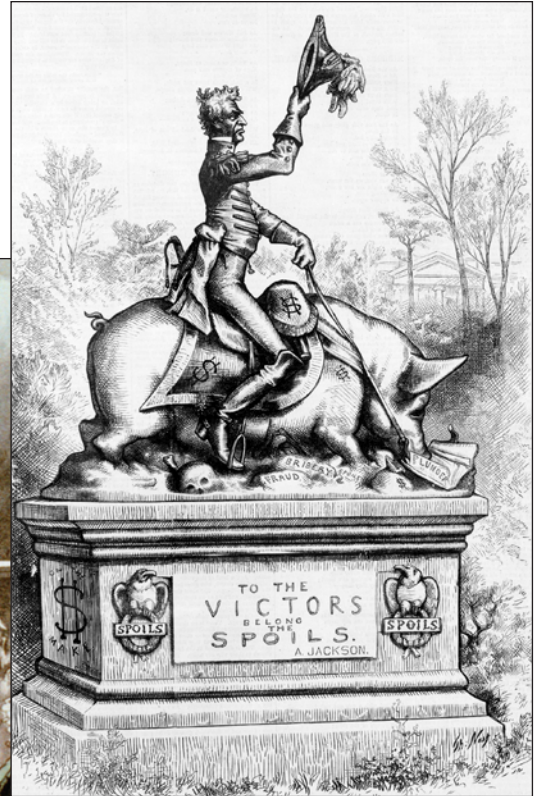
1. Both of these illustrations are of the man who became president in 1828. Can you name him?
2. These images suggest how Andrew Jackson was portrayed and how he was seen by the public. The one on the left depicts a story of Jackson as a boy standing up to the British in the American Revolution. What do you know of this story?
3. The painting on the right stresses Jackson's military leadership qualities. What made Jackson such a famous military leader?
4. Both Andrew Jackson and George Washington were military leaders. Look at the images of Jackson here and of Washington in the images for Lesson 1. How do these images call attention to the military abilities of each man? What similarities and differences do you see in the way the images do this?
5. Jackson was often seen by his admirers as more of a "man of the people." Do you think these images of him help contribute to this image? Why or why not?

Follow-up Activities

1. When he ran for president in 1828, Andrew Jackson was already a famous Indian fighter and a hero of the War of 1812. And as the *Currier & Ives* print here shows, the story of him standing up to a British soldier during the Revolution (at the age of only 13) was well known too. Read more about one of Jackson's famous exploits. It can be one of these or another one you come across in your reading. Imagine you are a newspaper editor in the Northeast at the time of the 1828 election. Write two accounts for your newspaper in the Northeast. Write the first account as if you are a deep admirer of Jackson and want to help form a favorable image of him for people. Write the second as a critic of Jackson. Share and discuss your two opposing articles with class.
2. Collect as many images as you can of Jackson, such as portraits, engravings, editorial cartoons, campaign ads and so on. Use these as the basis of a class discussion about the power of the visual image to shape the public's view of someone.

Lesson 2 — Jacksonian Democracy

Illustration 2



Both images courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustration

1. Jackson was elected president in 1828. Many historians say this was first truly popular election of a president. What do you think they mean by this?
2. The famous drawing on the left shows Jackson's first inauguration. In what way does the drawing help get across the idea of Jackson as a "man of the people"?
3. In popular elections, thousands must be convinced to vote for a candidate. To do this, candidates need the help of much more organized types of political parties. Jackson claimed the right to reward his party backers for their help, and the cartoon on the right comments harshly on the way he did this. Define the phrase "spoils system." Explain the point the cartoon makes about Jackson and the spoils system?
4. Some historians say this criticism of Jackson is a bit unfair to him since earlier presidents also rewarded their supporters with government jobs. Do you agree with these defenders of Jackson? Why or why not?

Follow-up Activities

1. The image of a pig is a common one in editorial cartoons. Why? Find five to 10 editorial cartoons from Jackson's time to the present that use a pig in some way. Bring copies of the cartoons to class and use them in a brief talk on the art of political cartoon and the use of the pig as a symbol in them.
2. In 1831 Alexis de Tocqueville, a French visitor to America, wrote the following about men who created the Constitution: "This race of men is disappearing, after providing America with her greatest men. With them is lost the tradition of cultivated manners. The people become educated, knowledge extends, a middling ability becomes common. Outstanding talents and great characters are more rare. Society is less brilliant and more prosperous." Learn more about de Tocqueville and his views about America in the 1830s. Pretend you are de Tocqueville and that a friend has just sent you each of these images. Write a letter to this friend commenting on the images as you think de Tocqueville would have.

Illustration 3



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustration

1. This cartoon is about a big battle Andrew Jackson had during his years as president. In the cartoon, Jackson is fighting a “many-headed monster.” Helping him is his second-term vice president (in the center of the cartoon). Can you name him?
2. The monster Jackson is slaying in the cartoon stands for the Bank of the United States. From your history reading, can you explain why Jackson and his supporters saw this bank as a dangerous monster?
3. The bank monster’s many heads are those of its president and the directors of its state branches. But these many heads also helps get across the idea of what Jackson and his supporters so disliked about the bank. How does this feature of the cartoon help explain Jackson’s views about the bank?
4. The bank battle was one of many conflicts in which Jackson presented himself as the defender of the common man against older, entrenched elites. How does the cartoon help get this idea across?

Follow-up Activities

1. Jackson pictured his battle against the bank as a fight by the common people against the powerful and wealthy few. Yet many historians say that, by destroying the bank, Jackson helped bring on a major depression in 1837. Read more about Jackson’s battle against the Bank of the United States. As you read, list points to use in arguing that this battle helped the common people and other points arguing that the battle hurt the common people. Share the lists you come up with in a class debate on this question.
2. Could the battle in this cartoon be used to illustrate some important argument in the news today? Look through newspapers and magazines for a news story in which one group or individual appears to be battling with some other group or individual about an important problem. Draw your own “many-headed monster” cartoon about this battle, and explain it to the rest of the class.

From Jackson to Lincoln: The Emergence of a Democratic Nation

**OBJECTIVES
FOR THIS LESSON:**

1. Students will better understand how slavery can be seen as the great flaw thwarting the emergence of a new, more democratic republic in America in the mid-1800s.
-

The Great Flaw

Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS:

Illustration 1

Jackson's party came to be known as the Democrats; his foes joined together in 1834 to form a new party, the Whigs. In 1840, the Whigs chose former general William Henry Harrison as their candidate. Many wealthy merchants and industrial leaders backed the Whigs. But by 1840, the Whigs had learned that to win elections in this new democratic age, they had to appeal to the "common man" just as the Democrats were doing. In campaign songs, slogans and ads, they presented Harrison as a simple farmer who lived in a log cabin and drank only hard cider, not fancy wines. The Whig campaign slogan — "Tippecanoe and Tyler too" — referred to the general's 1811 battle against Indians at Tippecanoe River and to his running mate, John Tyler.

Illustration 2

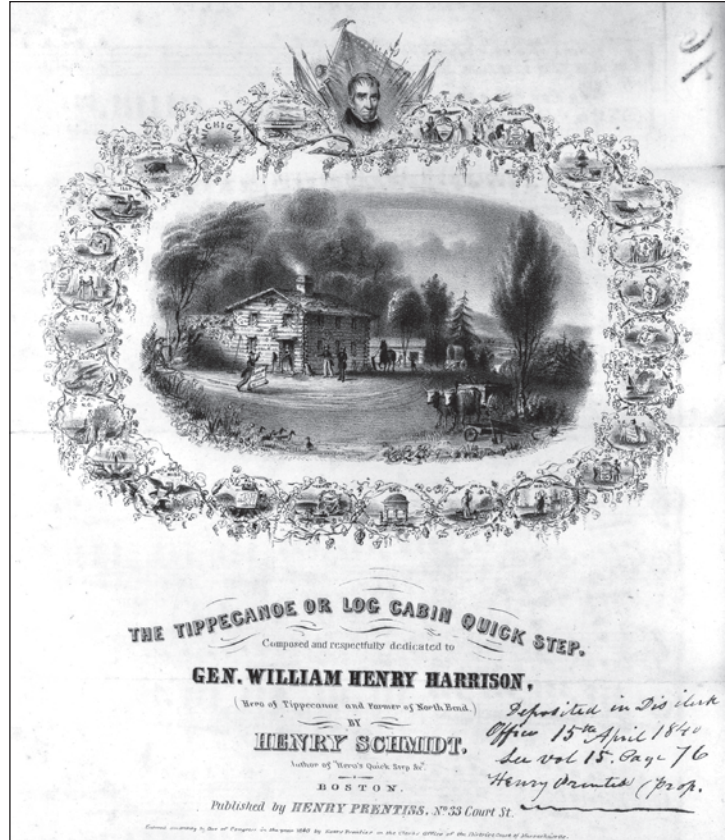
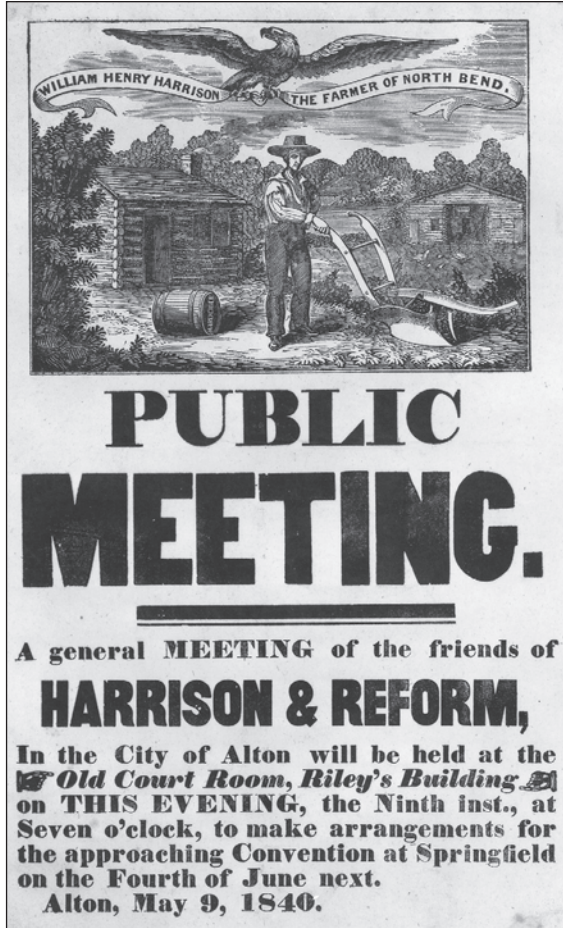
The new spirit of the common man was real, but limited. American democracy was becoming a reality only for white males. Hence, Jackson's Democrats stressed themes of concern mainly to people already free and striving to move up the ladder. Women seeking basic political rights got no sympathy from them. And they did everything they could to avoid dealing with the greatest flaw of American democracy, slavery. The ugly reality was that slavery was spreading, not fading away. Slave auctions such as this were a daily menace to vast numbers of African Americans. By the 1830s, it was already clear that the new democratic spirit and the reality of slavery were headed for a showdown.

Illustration 3

A sign of this was the famous debate in 1830 between Robert Hayne of South Carolina and Massachusetts Senator Daniel Webster, shown here with part of his reply to Hayne. The debate began over Western land sales, but it soon turned it into a philosophical clash over the nature of the Union. Webster's ominous tone here suggests a nation headed for a terrible crisis. It was the issue of slavery that was creating this desperate mood. Webster was one of several serious leaders (Henry Clay was another) who were admired but who could never really unite their political parties behind them. Both parties were increasingly being pulled apart by the slavery issue. Neither one of them would risk choosing a presidential candidate with a strong view one way or another on slavery.

Lesson 3 — The Great Flaw

Illustration 1



Both images courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustration

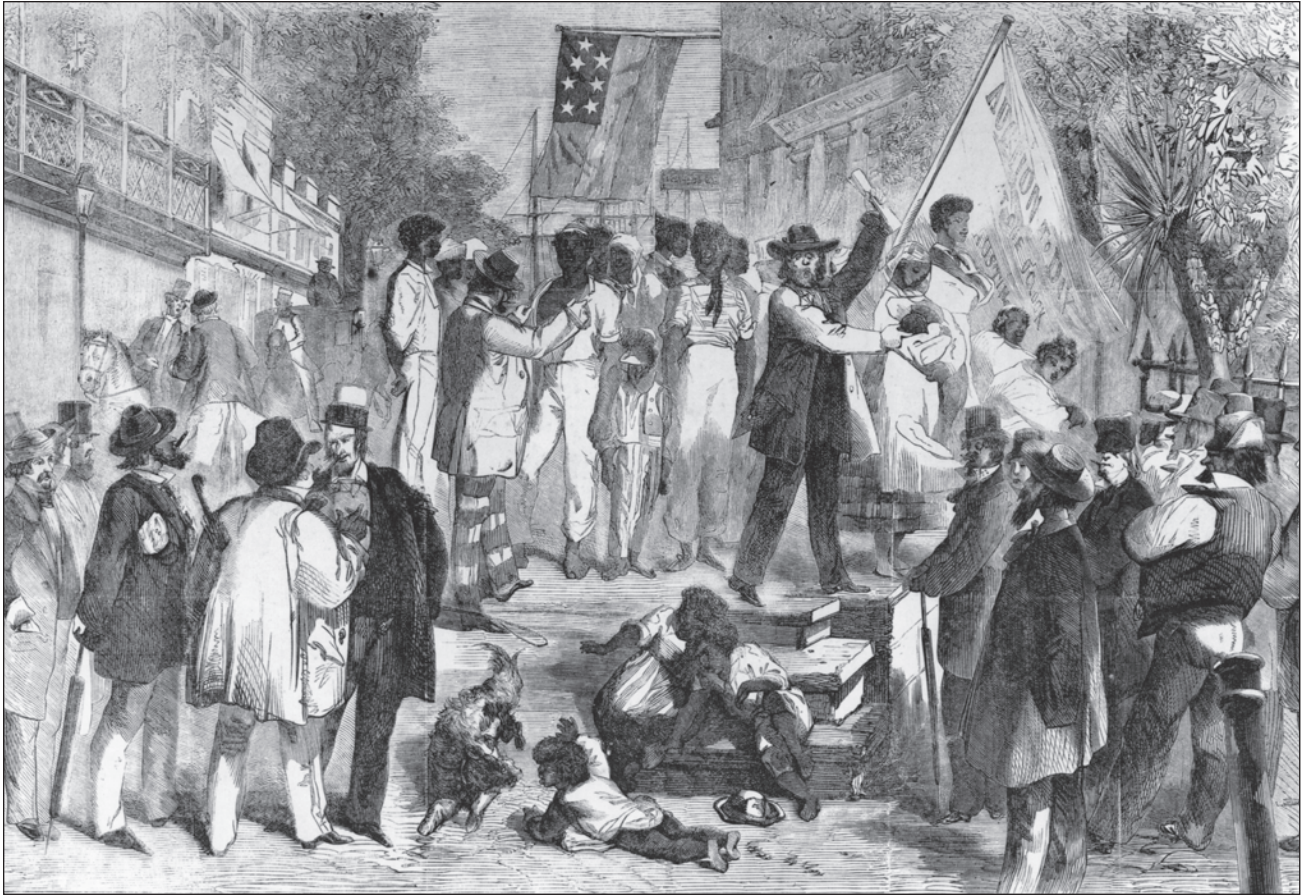
1. As president, Andrew Jackson helped strengthen his own powerful political party. In fact, it is still active today. What party is that?
2. Those opposed to Jackson formed another party in 1834. Eventually, that party won the presidency in 1840. These two posters are from that campaign. Can you name that party and its candidate in 1840?
3. Some historians say the campaign of 1840 was the first truly modern campaign and the first to fully celebrate the new “age of the common man.” Both of these campaign posters help illustrate what they mean. Can you explain how?
4. In particular, notice the “Tippecanoe and Tyler too” slogan, the log cabin images and the barrel of cider. What does each of these elements in the posters have to do with the idea of Harrison as an ordinary citizen and man of the people? How accurate a view of Harrison do you think these posters give?

Follow-up Activities

1. Commenting on Andrew Jackson, historian Samuel Eliot Morrison wrote, “Incidentally, once Jackson was in, it became difficult for anyone not born in a log cabin to reach the presidency.” The log cabin in the two images shown here is a “symbol.” A symbol is any design or thing that stands for some other object or idea. What exactly did the log cabin stand for? In your view, why did the symbol of the log cabin appeal to so many Americans in the mid-1800s? What other words or images were used in campaigns to portray candidates in this same way. As a group, create a bulletin board display of campaign posters, song sheets, buttons and other presidential election material from the years 1840 to 1860. Use this display as the basis for a class discussion of how the modern campaign came to be and how these campaigns portrayed their candidates.

Lesson 3 — The Great Flaw

Illustration 2



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustration

1. America may have been becoming more democratic in the mid-1800s. However, one huge flaw above all others kept it from becoming a fully developed representative democracy. Can you explain?
2. Slaves were seen by many slave owners and others as goods, or chattels, not free human beings. How does this drawing show that the white people in it actually do think of the black slaves as chattels?
3. Keep in mind this drawing is not a photo. The artist who drew it wanted to show this auction in a certain way. What features in the drawing help to show how the artist felt about slavery and slave auctions?
4. In the mid 1800s, slavery was actually spreading and expanding in the United States. Why was that, and in what regions was it spreading?
5. Both Democrats and Whigs sought votes in Southern states. This made it very hard for them to deal openly with this big flaw in American democracy. Why do you suppose that was so?

Follow-up Activities

1. Read more about James K. Polk, Zachary Taylor, Franklin Pierce and James Buchanan. Pay attention to their views on slavery during their presidential campaigns. Compare their views on slavery with the views within their own political parties during those campaigns. Summarize the information you find in a chart along with key events in the growing debate about slavery.
2. Small Group Activity: In 1851 Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* made angered people in the north and helped spread antislavery ideas to hundreds of thousands of people who had never supported abolitionism before. Read *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. As a group, also learn more about the following men and their views on slavery: James K. Polk, Zachary Taylor, Franklin Pierce and James Buchanan. Each member of the group should assume the role of one of these men. As this person, write a brief book review of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as you think this figure would have.

Illustration 3

*When my eyes shall be turned
to behold for the last time the
sun in heaven, may I not see
him shining on the broken
and dishonored fragments of
a once glorious Union; on
States dissevered, discordant,
belligerent; on a land rent
with civil feuds, or drenched,
it may be, in fraternal blood!*

*Liberty and Union, now and
forever, one and inseparable!*



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustration

1. This is a famous painting of one of America's most highly respected politicians from the time of Andrew Jackson. Can you identify him?
2. The words shown here are from a famous speech Webster gave during a debate he had in 1830 with Senator Robert Hayne of South Carolina. The debate was about a bill on the Western lands. But it is famous more as a debate about the federal government versus states' rights. What general problem were such arguments about?
3. Arguments over states' rights grew more heated during the Jackson years. At first, they were rarely about slavery in any direct way. But in time, slavery became the key issue in these arguments. Why do you think that was so?
4. Webster's tone here seems to be one of great fear or concern. Why do you think he felt this way? Do you think he was right to feel so strongly about the need to preserve the Union at all costs? Why or why not?

Follow-up Activities

1. The image here shows Daniel Webster giving his reply to Robert Hayne in 1830, perhaps his most famous speech. But his speech 20 years later in 1850 against slavery in the territories is also famous. Read more about both of these Daniel Webster speeches. Choose some passages from each to share with class in a report on these two speeches and their importance in the political history of this period.
2. Daniel Webster and Henry Clay were two of the most famous and impressive Whigs who wanted the presidency but never achieved it. Learn more about each man. Prepare two timelines of the careers of each. Present the timelines in a talk to the class. In your presentation be sure to talk about how the slavery issue, in particular, made it harder for each of these men to win the presidency.

From Jackson to Lincoln: The Emergence of a Democratic Nation

**OBJECTIVES
FOR THIS LESSON:**

1. Students will better understand how slavery came to divide and then destroy the two major parties of this era.
 2. Students will assess images of Lincoln as the fulfillment of the ideal of this age of the “Common Man.”
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Slavery and the Crisis of Democracy

Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS:

Illustration 1

The Whigs were increasingly unable to keep their pro-slavery and anti-slavery supporters in the party. For awhile, to keep the party united, they chose safe and popular figurehead candidates. In 1848, they nominated Zachary Taylor, a general in the Mexican War. The campaign print on the left lists a Taylor military victory on each huge letter of his name while also identifying various battle scenes. Taylor, who had never voted in his life, had little political skill. In 1852, the Whigs chose another military man, General Winfield Scott. Taylor won his election; Scott did not. But both were military heroes who briefly united a party that was in fact deeply divided.

Illustration 2

By 1856, the Whigs had split apart and all but disappeared. Meanwhile, Northern Democrats were deserting their party in droves over its support for slavery. Here a crude cartoon comments harshly on the “slave power” and its control over the Democrats. Democrat Franklin Pierce won the 1852 election for president. He had tried to avoid dealing with slavery, though he definitely favored the South. He backed the Compromise of 1850, one part of which let California in as a free state while another part gave the South a much stronger fugitive slave law. This cartoon attacks Pierce and the Democrats for what it sees as their cowardly surrender to the slaveholders. The crude artwork of the cartoon suggests a growing gulf of hatred between pro-slavery and anti-slavery forces.

Illustration 3

The Republican Party first appeared in 1854. It included former Whigs, Democrats and others united against the extension of slavery into the territories. In 1860, Abraham Lincoln was the Republican presidential candidate. His victory that year split the nation apart and brought on the Civil War. But Lincoln was a strong leader who ended a long line of weak and less admirable presidents. These illustrations seem to depict Lincoln as a new kind of “common man,” one less overbearing than Jackson. His image is of a humble man and of a leader fully dedicated to the idea of equality. As the nation finally began to face up to the great flaw of slavery, Abraham Lincoln seemed to many to be a redeemer of the democratic promise and ideal itself.

Illustration 1



Both images courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustration

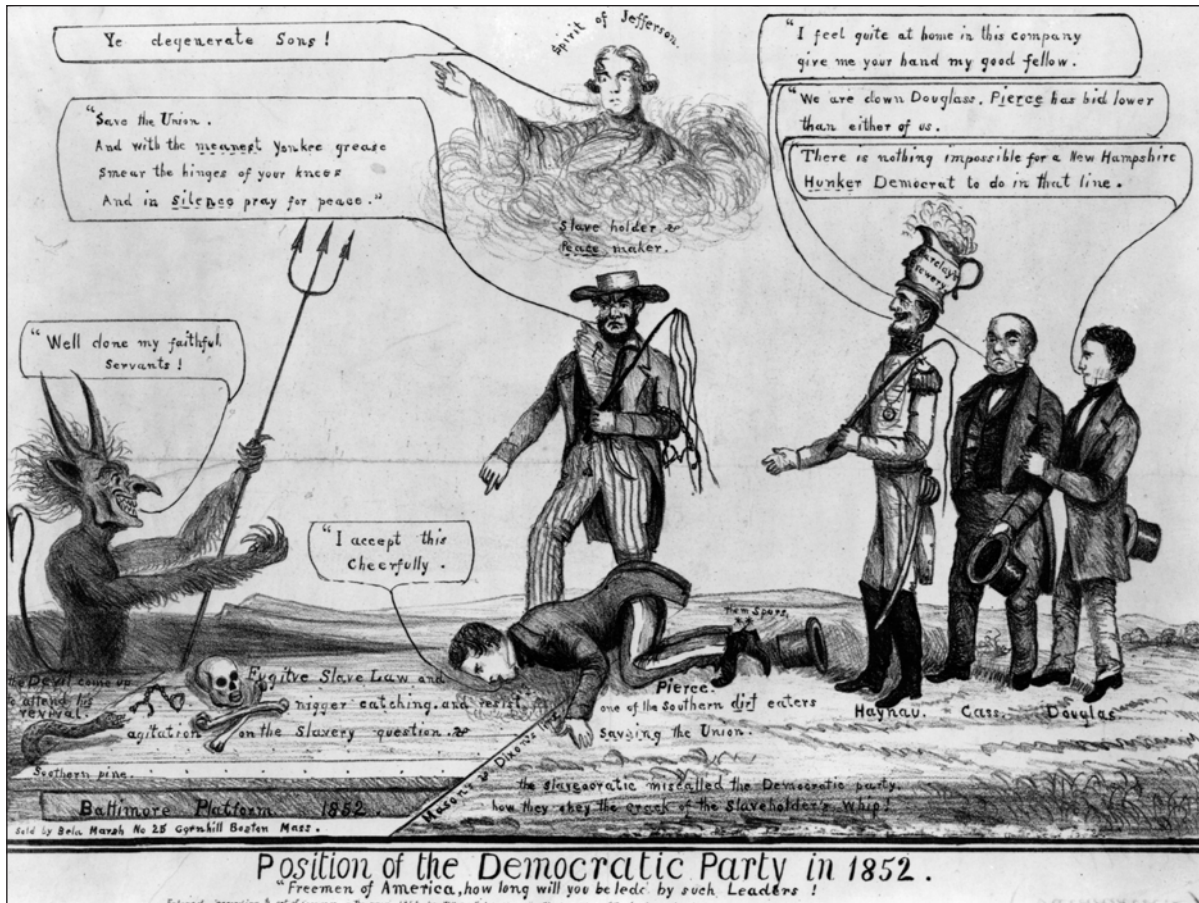
1. In the 1850s, each political party tended to choose presidential candidates who were well known and very popular, but whose views on slavery were not at all clear. Why do you suppose such candidates had an especially strong appeal to the leaders of the two main political parties in the 1850s?
2. Campaign illustrations for two such Whig candidates are shown here — the Whig nominees for 1848 and 1852. Can you identify each candidate?
3. Both Zachary Taylor and Winfield Scott were well known and popular because of their military accomplishments. Can you explain? Only one of these candidates won his election as president. Which one?
4. William Henry Harrison was also a military hero. Why do you think the Whigs found it easier to win elections with such military figures rather than with political leaders of great stature such as Daniel Webster or Henry Clay?

Follow-up Activities

1. Both Zachary Taylor and Winfield Scott were heroes of the Mexican War. Find out more about the impact of Mexican War on U.S. domestic politics. What does your textbook say? What other sources on this can you find? Write an essay in which you discuss each of these two Whig candidates, their backgrounds and any other ways in which the Mexican War affected their party's policies in the 1840s and '50s.
2. Small Group Activity: Throughout our nation's history, presidential candidates have often been drawn from the ranks of the military. Read more about the many military leaders who have become presidents. Discuss the pros and cons of a military leader as president. Create a bulletin board display on all of the presidents who were military leaders, starting with Washington and continuing all the way to Eisenhower. Summarize their presidencies. Offer your own or others' opinions on these presidencies individually and as a group.

Lesson 4 — Slavery and the Crisis of Democracy

Illustration 2



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustration

1. In this cartoon, a slaveholder is standing over the Democratic presidential candidate in 1852. That candidate won the 1852 election. Can you name him?
2. The slaveholder is happy because Pierce is agreeing to strictly enforce the Compromise of 1850. Can you explain what part of the Compromise of 1850 the slaveholder would most have wanted Pierce to enforce?
3. On the right, other Democrats are amazed at how low Pierce is willing to stoop. Some words on the ground say, "Pierce, one of the Southern dirt eaters, saving the Union." What attitude toward Pierce does this cartoon take?
4. As with the Whigs, Northern and Southern Democrats also disagreed about slavery. The cartoon comments on the way the Democratic Party appears to be dealing with this division. Can you explain? Do you think this cartoon was right in its judgment about the Democrats in 1852? Why or why not?

Follow-up Activities

1. On the left in the cartoon, the Devil says, "Well done my faithful servants." Scrawled in the ground is the following sentence: "The Slave-ocratic miscalled the Democratic Party — How they obey the crack of the Slaveholder's whip." Read more about Franklin Pierce and about Democratic President James Buchanan, elected in 1856. Based on what you learn, write an essay on these words in the cartoon and express your opinion about their accuracy.
2. At the top of the cartoon, the "Spirit of Jefferson" says, "Ye degenerate Sons." Jefferson once wrote of the Missouri Compromise: "This momentous question, like a fire-bell in the night, awakened and filled me with terror. I considered it at once as the knell of the Union. It is hushed, indeed, for the moment. But ... every new irritation will mark it deeper and deeper." Read about the Missouri Compromise. Then write an essay explaining what Jefferson meant in his comments on it and what he would have said about slavery if he had been alive in the 1850s?

Lesson 4 — Slavery and the Crisis of Democracy

Illustration 3



Both images courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustration

1. By 1860, the nation was splitting apart over the issue of slavery. A new party arose in 1854 that did deal clearly and decisively with the slavery issue. What party was that, and what stand did it take on slavery?
2. In 1860, the Republican Party chose the man shown here as its presidential candidate. His victory that year lead directly to the Civil War. Can you name him?
3. On the left is a painting of Lincoln as a younger man. On the right is a scene of him from the famous Lincoln-Douglas debates. Like Jackson, Harrison and other candidates of the mid-1800s, many images of Lincoln also present him as a “common man” or “man of the people.” How do each of these images do this?
5. One writer says, “Lincoln was able to redeem the democratic ideal that Jackson and the others expressed only imperfectly.” What do you suppose this writer meant? Do you think these images of Lincoln support this view? Do you agree with this view? Why or why not?

Follow-up Activities

1. Read more about the famous Lincoln-Douglas debates of 1858. Create a map as the central element in a bulletin board display about the debates. Print out short excerpts from each of the debates, and connect them to the locations in Illinois where they were spoken. Find as many images as you can of the debates to add “color” to the display. Write an introductory paragraph about the debates. Finally, be sure to describe any pattern you can see in how the debates developed from one location to the next.
2. **Small Group Activity:** Find as many images of Abraham Lincoln as you can. Create a slide show on how Americans have portrayed Lincoln over the years. How do these images compare to the ones you’ve seen of Andrew Jackson? What changes, if any, over time do you see in the way Lincoln is portrayed. Present your slide show to the class. Have each member of your group take a turn handling some aspect of the presentation.

Answers to Factual Questions

(Answers provided only to questions
requiring a single correct answer)

Lesson 1

- Illustration 1** Question 1: George Washington; Cabinet: Henry Knox (War), Thomas Jefferson (State), Alexander Hamilton (Treasury) Edmund Randolph (Attorney General)
Question 2: A small group of wealthy Virginia plantation owners, including Presidents Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and James Monroe
- Illustration 2** Question 2: The Erie Canal made it easier for western farmers to ship and market goods through New York.
- Illustration 3** (no fact questions)

Lesson 2

- Illustration 1** Question 1: Andrew Jackson
Question 2: According to the story, Jackson fought back when the soldier attacked him for refusing to clean his boots.
Question 3: battles with Indians in the Southeast, the Battle of New Orleans in 1815, etc.
- Illustration 2** Question 1: The popular vote much more completely determined
Question 2: the number of electors each candidate received. Based on the phrase “to the victor go the spoils,” it is the system by which government jobs (the spoils) are given to loyal supporters in the candidate’s party.
- Illustration 3** Question 1: Martin Van Buren
Question 2: They said it was controlled by wealthy Easterners who used it to enrich themselves and limit economic opportunity for others.

Lesson 3

- Illustration 1** Question 1: The Democratic Party
Question 2: Whig Party; General William Henry Harrison
- Illustration 2** Question 1: Slaves had no political rights at all. Slavery was spreading rapidly in the South, where slaves were used to produce products, especially cotton, in growing demand in the North and in Europe.
Question 4: Massachusetts Senator Daniel Webster
Arguments about which powers belonged to the federal government and which belonged to the states
- Illustration 3** Question 1: Zachary Taylor, 1848, and Winfield Scott
Both were generals in the Mexican War, 1846-48. Taylor won his election.

Lesson 4

- Illustration 1** Question 2: Franklin Pierce
Question 3: Its provision of a tough new fugitive slave law
- Illustration 2** Question 1: Republican; it firmly opposed the extension of slavery into any more of the nation’s western territories.
Question 2: Abraham Lincoln

