K-2 EDITION · CLASSROOM

1824

John Quincy Adams vs Andrew Jackson

A 20-minute lesson on the 1824 U.S. presidential election. Includes lesson plan, student worksheet, answer key, and discussion prompts.

ERA Era of Good Feelings	ELECTORAL VOTES 261 total
WINNER John Quincy Adams (Democratic-Republican) · 84 EV	RUNNER-UP Andrew Jackson (Democratic-Republican) · 99 EV
KEY ISSUE Sectional rivalries; tariff policy; internal improvements	TURNOUT 26.9%

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1824

By 1824 the Federalist Party was gone. But the Democratic-Republican Party - which had been the only big party for 24 years - was splitting apart. Different leaders from different parts of the country all wanted to be president.

Four men ran. Andrew Jackson was a famous general from Tennessee who had won the Battle of New Orleans. John Quincy Adams was the secretary of state. He was the son of John Adams, the second president! William Crawford was the secretary of treasury. And Henry Clay was the speaker of the House.

No one got more than half of the electoral votes. Jackson got the most: 99. Adams was second with 84. Crawford had 41. Clay had 37.

When no one gets enough electoral votes to win, the Constitution says the House of Representatives picks the president. Each state gets one vote.

Henry Clay was out, because the rules say only the top three are in the House election. But Clay was still the speaker of the House. He told his friends to vote for John Quincy Adams. Adams won the House vote and became the sixth president.



John Quincy Adams, the sixth U.S. president. He was the son of John Adams, the second president - the first father-and-son both to be president.
GILBERT STUART (1755-1828), VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Let's talk about the story

1.

Who became the sixth president of the United States after the 1824 election?

2.

Who got the most electoral votes in 1824, even though he did not win?

3.

What was the Corrupt Bargain?

Warm-up (5 min)

In 1824 something strange happened. There were FOUR people running for president - not just two! And the person who got the MOST votes did not win.

Answer key

1.

John Quincy Adams. He was the sixth U.S. president and the son of John Adams, the second president - the first father-and-son both to serve as president.

Adams was chosen by the House of Representatives in February 1825 after no candidate won an electoral majority.

2.

Andrew Jackson. He got 99 electoral votes - more than anyone else - but did not win because he did not get more than half. He was a famous general who had won the Battle of New Orleans.

Jackson also won the popular vote. He came back to win the 1828 election in a landslide.

3.

The Corrupt Bargain was the name Jackson's supporters gave to the 1824 deal. Henry Clay, who was the speaker of the House, helped John Quincy Adams win the House contingent election. After Adams became president, he made Clay his Secretary of State - a very important job that often led to the presidency. Jackson supporters believed Adams gave Clay the job as a thank-you for the House votes.

The "corrupt bargain" charge was the central political theme of Jackson's 1828 campaign. It mobilized the new Democratic Party Jackson built.