1828

Andrew Jackson vs John Quincy Adams

A 20-minute lesson on the 1828 U.S. presidential election. Includes lesson plan, student worksheet, answer key, and discussion prompts.

ERA Second Party System	ELECTORAL VOTES 261 total
WINNER Andrew Jackson (Democratic) · 178 EV	RUNNER-UP John Quincy Adams (National Republican) · 83 EV
KEY ISSUE Revenge for the 'Corrupt Bargain'; democratic reform; tariff policy	TURNOUT 57.3%

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1828

Four years had passed. President John Quincy Adams had a hard time as president. People were angry about how he won. They thought Henry Clay had made a corrupt deal to help Adams.

Andrew Jackson had been waiting. Look at the picture. That's General Jackson, the hero of the Battle of New Orleans. His supporters had spent four years getting ready for a rematch. They built a brand-new political party. They called it the Democratic Party. It is one of the same two big parties we have today.

Something big had changed. Many more white men could vote now than before. Most states had dropped the rule that said you had to own land to vote. So the people in 1828 had more voters than ever before. About three times as many men voted in 1828 as in 1824!

The campaign was nasty. Jackson supporters said Adams was a snob who had wasted public money. Adams supporters said Jackson was a hot-tempered killer who had married another man's wife. Both sides said terrible things about the other.

Jackson won by a lot. He got 178 electoral votes. Adams got 83. Jackson became the seventh president. He moved his family from Tennessee to the White House. His friends came too—so many



Andrew Jackson, the seventh U.S. president. He came back in 1828 and won a landslide election after losing the disputed 1824 contest.
RALPH E. W. EARL (1788-1838), VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Let's talk about the story

1.

Who became the seventh president of the United States after the 1828 election?

2.

What big change about who could vote happened by 1828?

3.

What new political party did Andrew Jackson and his supporters build?

Warm-up (5 min)

Andrew Jackson had lost the 1824 election even though he got the most votes! In 1828 he ran again. This time the rules were different - more people could vote than ever before.

Answer key

1.

Andrew Jackson. He started his job on March 4, 1829.

Jackson won 178 EV to Adams's 83 - a 95-vote landslide. The 1828 cycle is often treated as the founding election of the modern Democratic Party.

2.

Most U.S. states had dropped the rule that said voters had to own land. So many more white men could vote in 1828 than in earlier elections. About three times as many men voted in 1828 as in 1824.

Universal white-male suffrage was largely complete by 1828. The expanded electorate is one of the main structural reasons Jackson's populist message succeeded.

3.

The Democratic Party. Andrew Jackson and his supporters - especially Senator Martin Van Buren of New York - built it between 1825 and 1828 to oppose John Quincy Adams. It is still one of the two main political parties in the United States today.

The 1828 Democratic Party is the direct ancestor of today's Democratic Party. It was the first U.S. political party to organize at the mass level rather than through congressional caucus.