AP EDITION · DBQ + LEQ · CLASSROOM

1832

Andrew Jackson vs Henry Clay

A 105-minute lesson on the 1832 U.S. presidential election. Includes lesson plan, DBQ pairing, student worksheet, answer key, and discussion prompts.

ERA Second Party System	ELECTORAL VOTES 286 total
WINNER Andrew Jackson (Democratic) · 219 EV	RUNNER-UP Henry Clay (National Republican) · 49 EV
KEY ISSUE Bank of the United States; nullification crisis; tariff policy	TURNOUT 57.0%

CONTENTS

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2. Lesson plan (105 min) + framework alignment
3. Background: vocabulary + primary source A
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7. Answer key + discussion

1832: Andrew Jackson vs Henry Clay

AP framework alignment

AP US History · Period varies by cycle · Reasoning skills: contextualization, comparison, causation, sourcing. CCSS · CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2 (central ideas), RH.11-12.6 (point of view), RH.11-12.7 (multiple sources). NCSS · D2.His.5.9-12, D2.His.14.9-12, D2.His.16.9-12.

Timing

5 min	**Warm-up**	Identify two structural features of U.S. political organization by 1832 that would consolidate the Jacksonian coalition rather than fragment it. For each, identify the specific 1829-1832 development most responsible.
15 min	**Reading + vocab**	The 1832 election was the 12th U.S. presidential election. It was the structural consolidation of Jacksonian Democracy and the formal completion of the convention-based nomination system that would dominate U.S. presidential politics for the next 140 years. The election's central issue - Andrew Jackson's war against the Second Bank of the United States - made it simultaneously a referendum on Jacksonian ideology, an institutional test of presidential veto power, and the structural precondition for the Second Party System (1832-1854). Jackson's first term had been politically transformative. The 1829 spoils-system reorganization of federal employment had replaced approximately 20 percent of federal civil servants with party loyalists - the largest single political turnover in U.S. federal government history to that point. The 1830 Indian Removal Act had authorized the forced relocation of the Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek, and Seminole Nations west of the Mississippi (the Trail of Tears occurred during 1838-39 under Van Buren). The 1830 Maysville Road Veto had blocked federal funding for internal improvements within a single state, articulating a strict-construction limit on federal infrastructure spending. The 1830-32 Petticoat Affair / Peggy Eaton scandal had broken Jackson's Cabinet (every member except Van Buren and one other resigned). The 1832 Worcester v. Georgia case had pitted the Marshall Court against Jackson's Indian policy, producing Jackson's alleged (though probably apocryphal) "John Marshall has made his decision; now let him enforce it" response. The Bank War was the structural centerpiece. The Second Bank had been chartered in 1816 for 20 years. Its president, Nicholas Biddle of Philadelphia (Bank president from 1823), ran the institution effectively but was politically arrogant. The Bank served as federal depository, issued the most stable paper currency in the U.S., and regulated state-bank credit by demanding redemption in specie. Biddle considered the Bank essential to American economic stability. Jackson had distrusted banks since the 1790s. His specific grievance combined

ideological opposition (concentrated economic power threatens democratic government), personal grievance (Bank credit had nearly destroyed him during 1820s land speculation), and political calculation. His December 1829 first annual message had recommended against Bank recharter. The Bank's charter would expire in 1836; the recharter question was therefore on Jackson's second-term agenda regardless of timing.

Biddle and Henry Clay made the fateful decision to push for early recharter in 1832 - four years before the existing charter expired. The strategic calculation: forcing a Bank fight in an election year would either destroy Jackson politically (if he vetoed) or rob him of populist credibility (if he signed). Congress passed the recharter in July 1832 by 28-20 in the Senate and 107-85 in the House. Both votes were partisan: Jackson's Democratic allies opposed; National Republicans and most former Federalists supported.

Jackson vetoed the recharter on July 10, 1832. His veto message, drafted by Treasury Secretary Roger Taney (later Chief Justice), articulated a populist case against concentrated economic power. The message rejected the Bank on constitutional grounds (Jackson refused to accept the McCulloch v. Maryland holding that the Bank was constitutional), on practical grounds (the Bank's 20-percent foreign ownership; its monopoly on federal deposits; its discretion to expand or contract credit), and on ideological grounds (the Bank served "the rich and powerful" against "the humble members of society"). The veto became the founding document of American economic populism. The Senate failed to override (22-19; two-thirds needed).

The campaign was a referendum on Jackson and the Bank. Three party conventions met. The Anti-Masonic Party (the first U.S. third party of national significance) had held the first national party convention in U.S. history in September 1831 in Baltimore, nominating William Wirt of Maryland. The National Republican Convention nominated Henry Clay in December 1831. The Democratic National Convention met in Baltimore in May 1832 and renominated Jackson with Martin Van Buren as his new running mate (replacing Calhoun, who had broken with Jackson over nullification and would resign the vice presidency in December 1832).

Jackson won 219 electoral votes to Clay's 49 and Wirt's 7. South Carolina cast its 11 electoral votes for John Floyd of Virginia as a protest against Jackson on nullification. Jackson carried 16 states with 54.2% of the popular vote. Clay carried Connecticut, Delaware, Kentucky, partial Maryland, Massachusetts, Rhode Island. Wirt carried only Vermont. Turnout reached 57.0% of eligible voters.

The Nullification Crisis ran in parallel to the campaign. The Tariff of 1832 (which had reduced some of the 1828 Tariff of Abominations rates but maintained the protective principle) had been passed in July 1832. South Carolina nullified the federal tariff in November 1832, declaring it void within state boundaries. Jackson responded with the December 10, 1832 Nullification Proclamation rejecting state nullification as

unconstitutional and the December 11 message to Congress asking for the Force Bill (authorizing military action against South Carolina). The crisis was resolved by Henry Clay's March 1833 Compromise Tariff (gradually reducing tariff rates over 10 years) passed alongside the Force Bill. South Carolina nullified the Force Bill but accepted the Compromise. Calhoun's political career was severely damaged.

Jackson's second term would deliver the September 1833 Removal of Deposits (moving federal deposits from the Second Bank to state-chartered "pet banks"); the March 1834 Senate censure of Jackson (for the Removal of Deposits; the only such censure in U.S. history, expunged January 1837); and the July 1836 Specie Circular (requiring gold or silver for federal land purchases, helping trigger the 1837 financial panic that hit Van Buren's presidency). The 1832 election was the political foundation for Jackson's entire second-term economic-policy program.

The 1834 emergence of the Whig Party (combining the National Republicans, anti-Jackson Southern states-righters, former Anti-Masonics, and supporters of Daniel Webster and Henry Clay) formally completed the Second Party System. The Whigs took their name from the British anti-monarchist tradition - they framed Jackson as "King Andrew I" exercising royal-style executive power. The 1832-33 cartoon "King Andrew the First" depicting Jackson in crown and robes became one of the most-reproduced political images of the 19th century. The Second Party System (Democrats vs. Whigs) would dominate American politics until the 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act broke both parties along sectional lines over slavery extension.

20 min	**Source A**	Read aloud once; students annotate individually for tone, evidence, and audience.
20 min	**Source B**	Compare/contrast against Source A. Pair-share on the DBQ comparison question.
20 min	**Worksheet**	Eight questions: 5 short-answer, 2 stimulus-based MCQ, 1 long-essay framing.
20 min	**LEQ planning**	Students sketch a thesis + outline for the LEQ comparison prompt. Submit for next-day full essay.
5 min	**Closure**	Exit ticket: one sentence summarizing the comparison.

Background

Before the worksheet, review the key terms below and then read the primary source carefully. The two source-analysis questions on the worksheet (questions 6 and 7) ask you to quote from the excerpt.

Key terms

Bank War
The 1832-36 political fight between Andrew Jackson and the Second Bank of the United States. Jackson vetoed the Bank's recharter (July 1832), removed federal deposits to state "pet banks" (September 1833), and let the Bank's charter expire (1836). One of the most consequential economic-policy disputes in U.S. history.

Nullification Crisis
The 1832-33 confrontation between the federal government and South Carolina. South Carolina nullified the 1828 and 1832 federal tariffs, declaring them void within the state. Jackson threatened military force through the December 1832 Force Bill. Resolved by the 1833 Compromise Tariff. Vice President Calhoun resigned December 1832.

Pet banks
The state-chartered banks selected by Treasury Secretary Roger Taney to receive federal deposits after the September 1833 Removal of Deposits from the Second Bank. The 1837 financial panic was partially caused by their over-leveraged credit policies.

King Andrew I
The pejorative nickname for Andrew Jackson used by his Whig opponents. The famous 1832-33 cartoon "King Andrew the First" depicting Jackson in crown and robes was one of the most-reproduced political images of the 19th century. The framing was the founding political identity of the Whig Party.

Senate censure of Jackson
The March 28, 1834 Senate resolution censuring President Jackson for the September 1833 Removal of Deposits. The only Senate censure of a sitting U.S. president in history. Expunged in January 1837 after the Democrats regained Senate control - the only formal expungement of a Senate censure in U.S. history.

Second Bank of the United States
The federal national bank chartered in 1816 for 20 years. Its president was Nicholas Biddle of Philadelphia. Served as federal depository, issued the most stable paper currency in the U.S., and regulated state-bank credit. Closed when its charter expired in 1836; not replaced until the 1913 Federal Reserve System.

Force Bill
The March 2, 1833 federal law authorizing President Jackson to use military force against South Carolina if it persisted in nullifying the federal tariff. Passed alongside the 1833 Compromise Tariff as a face-saving resolution to the Nullification Crisis. South Carolina nullified the Force Bill but accepted the Compromise.

Specie Circular
The July 11, 1836 executive order issued by Jackson requiring gold or silver (specie) for federal land purchases rather than paper currency. Designed to slow Western land speculation; helped trigger the 1837 financial panic that hit Van Buren's presidency.

Whig Party
The political party formed in 1834 from the National Republicans, anti-Jackson Southern states-righters, former Anti-Masonics, and supporters of Webster and Clay. Named for the British anti-monarchist tradition. Won the presidency in 1840 (Harrison) and 1848 (Taylor); collapsed over slavery extension in the 1850s.

Bank Veto Message

ANDREW JACKSON, JULY 10, 1832

Jackson vetoed the recharter of the Second Bank of the United States on July 10, 1832 - one of the most consequential vetoes in U.S. history. The veto message, drafted by Treasury Secretary Roger Taney (later Chief Justice), articulated a populist case against concentrated economic power. The Senate failed to override (22-19; two-thirds needed). The veto reframed presidential authority by claiming the executive could veto on policy grounds, not only on constitutional grounds.

> *"It is to be regretted that the rich and powerful too often bend the acts of government to their selfish purposes. Distinctions in society will always exist under every just government. Equality of talents, of education, or of wealth can not be produced by human institutions. In the full enjoyment of the gifts of Heaven and the fruits of superior industry, economy, and virtue, every man is equally entitled to protection by law; but when the laws undertake to add to these natural and just advantages artificial distinctions, to grant titles, gratuities, and exclusive privileges, to make the rich richer and the potent more powerful, the humble members of society - the farmers, mechanics, and laborers - who have neither the time nor the means of securing like favors to themselves, have a right to complain of the injustice of their Government."*

Jackson, "Bank Veto Message" (Washington, DC, July 10, 1832). Public domain.

Document-based question

Source A is on the Background page; Source B is below. Use both as evidence for the worksheet's source-analysis questions and the LEQ.

SOURCE A

Bank Veto Message

ANDREW JACKSON, JULY 10, 1832

"It is to be regretted that the rich and powerful too often bend the acts of government to their selfish purposes. Distinctions in society will always exist under every just government. Equality of talents, of education, or of wealth can not be produced by human institutions. In the full enjoyment of the gifts of Heaven and the fruits of superior industry, economy, and virtue, every man is equally entitled to protection by law; but when the laws undertake to add to these natural and just advantages artificial distinctions, to grant titles, gratuities, and exclusive privileges, to make the rich richer and the potent more powerful, the humble members of society - the farmers, mechanics, and laborers - who have neither the time nor the means of securing like favors to themselves, have a right to complain of the injustice of their Government."

Jackson, "Bank Veto Message" (Washington, DC, July 10, 1832). Public domain.

SOURCE B

Senate Speech Against the Bank Veto

DANIEL WEBSTER, JULY 11, 1832

"It is to be regretted that the message of the President should disregard, deny, defy, and overturn so much that has been established by the great department of the Government to which the interpretation of the Constitution is confided. According to the message, the President holds the power of veto over the acts of Congress, not only when these acts shall be unconstitutional, but also when they may appear to him to be inexpedient, or impolitic. This new doctrine is one of the most extraordinary that has ever been advanced. The President, by the Constitution, is required to give his reasons whenever he vetoes a bill, and those reasons, when given, are to be entered on the journals of Congress, that they may be considered."

Webster, "Senate Speech on the Bank Veto" (Washington, DC, July 11, 1832). Public domain.

The 1832 Election

Answer the eight questions below. Source A is on the Background page; Source B is on the DBQ Pair page.

QUESTION 1 · SHORT-ANSWER

Identify the key phrase in Source A (Jackson's Bank Veto) that frames the Bank as serving privileged interests against ordinary citizens. Quote it verbatim.

QUESTION 2 · SHORT-ANSWER

Identify the key phrase in Source B (Webster's speech) that names the veto as a constitutionally unauthorized expansion of presidential authority. Quote it verbatim.

QUESTION 3 · SHORT-ANSWER

Both sources address the 1832 Bank Veto, but they make incompatible claims about its constitutional standing. Identify the specific claim each source makes.

QUESTION 4 · SHORT-ANSWER

Source B was delivered the day after Source A. What does the rapid response tell you about how the Bank Veto crystallized as constitutional political controversy?

QUESTION 5 · SHORT-ANSWER

Source B argues that vetoes should be based on constitutional rather than policy grounds. Identify two specific later U.S. presidents who used the veto on explicit policy grounds, and explain whether the practice has become structurally normalized.

QUESTION 6 · MULTIPLE-CHOICE

The 1833 Removal of Deposits transferred federal funds from the Second Bank to:

( ) A. State Treasury offices
( ) B. Pet banks
( ) C. The U.S. Mint
( ) D. The Specie Reserve

QUESTION 7 · MULTIPLE-CHOICE

The 1834 Senate censure of Jackson for the Removal of Deposits was:

( ) A. Upheld and never expunged
( ) B. Expunged in 1837
( ) C. Reversed by Supreme Court
( ) D. Replaced by impeachment

QUESTION 8 · SHORT-ANSWER

Sketch your thesis sentence for the LEQ (next page). State your position: was the Bank Veto structural, contingent, or natural? Identify one piece of evidence from each source you will use.

Long-essay-question

LEQ PROMPT

Jackson's 1832 Bank Veto Message (Source A) frames the veto as a defense of "the humble members of society" against "the rich and powerful" who "bend the acts of government to their selfish purposes." Webster's 1832 Senate Speech (Source B) frames the same veto as an unconstitutional expansion of executive authority - the president vetoing legislation on policy grounds rather than constitutional grounds. Using BOTH sources and your knowledge of the 1819-1840 period, evaluate the extent to which Jackson's Bank Veto represented (a) a structural transformation of presidential authority that legitimized policy-based vetoes for all subsequent presidents, (b) a contingent political move responding to the specific Biddle-Clay early-recharter gambit that would not have produced lasting institutional change without it, or (c) the natural extension of Jacksonian Democracy's popular-sovereignty ideology into the constitutional structure of executive power. Defend a clear thesis.

GRADING RUBRIC

Thesis (1 pt): must take a defensible position on the structural-vs-contingent-vs-natural axis. Contextualization (1 pt): mention at least two of the Removal of Deposits, the Senate censure, the Nullification Crisis, the Specie Circular, the Whig Party formation. Evidence (2 pts): must quote at least one phrase from each source. Analysis (1 pt): must explicitly evaluate the extent rather than treating the three framings as equivalent. Total 5 points.

Answer key

QUESTION 1

Accept any of: "the rich and powerful too often bend the acts of government to their selfish purposes", "when the laws undertake to add to these natural and just advantages artificial distinctions, to grant titles, gratuities, and exclusive privileges, to make the rich richer and the potent more powerful", "the humble members of society - the farmers, mechanics, and laborers - who have neither the time nor the means of securing like favors to themselves". The "rich and powerful bend the acts of government" phrase is the cleanest articulation.

Jackson's framing positions the Bank as government-created privilege rather than legitimate enterprise.

QUESTION 2

Accept any of: "the President holds the power of veto over the acts of Congress, not only when these acts shall be unconstitutional, but also when they may appear to him to be inexpedient, or impolitic", "this new doctrine is one of the most extraordinary that has ever been advanced", "the message of the President should disregard, deny, defy, and overturn so much that has been established". The "this new doctrine" phrase is the cleanest constitutional critique.

Webster's argument that policy-based vetoes are constitutionally unauthorized was the leading Whig framing. AP students should recognize the constitutional theory.

QUESTION 3

Source A claims the Bank Veto is constitutionally legitimate because the executive's duty to defend the people's rights against government-created privilege supersedes the legislative procedure. Source B claims the Bank Veto is constitutionally illegitimate because policy-based vetoes exceed the textual scope of the Article I, Section 7 veto power. The two framings are politically incompatible: the first treats the veto as defensive constitutional duty; the second treats it as offensive constitutional violation.

AP students should be able to identify the two constitutional theories as distinct.

QUESTION 4

Webster's same-day response shows that the Bank Veto crystallized as constitutional controversy almost instantly. The Whig Party would not formally exist for two more years (1834), but its constitutional theory of executive restraint was already articulated by Webster on July 11, 1832. The rapidity tells you that the Whig coalition had been forming around opposition to Jackson's expansive executive practice (the spoils system, the 1830 Maysville Road Veto, the 1830 Indian Removal) before the Bank Veto - which then crystallized the constitutional disagreement into a structural party-defining issue. The Whig Party's entire identity from 1834 onward was organized around the "King Andrew I" framing of unconstitutional executive expansion.

AP students should be able to articulate how a single executive action can crystallize a pre-existing political coalition.

QUESTION 5

Accept any two: Franklin Pierce, James Buchanan, and Andrew Johnson all used the veto on policy grounds. Grover Cleveland (1885-89, 1893-97) used it extensively. Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt, and every subsequent president has used the veto routinely on policy grounds. Policy-based vetoes have become structurally normalized: by the late 19th century, vetoes on inexpediency rather than unconstitutionality were the standard form. Webster's 1832 framing was politically powerful in the short term but did not survive as a structural constraint. The institutional outcome has been the opposite of what Webster argued: presidents routinely veto on any grounds they prefer, with Congress limited to overriding by two-thirds majorities.

AP students should be able to identify the long-term institutional outcome and contrast it with Webster's 1832 theory.

QUESTION 6

Pet banks. The state-chartered banks selected by Treasury Secretary Roger Taney to receive federal deposits after the September 1833 Removal of Deposits. The pet-banks system contributed to the 1837 financial panic.

AP students should know the pet-banks term and its connection to the 1837 Panic.

QUESTION 7

Expunged in 1837. The March 1834 Senate censure of Jackson for the Removal of Deposits was the only Senate censure of a sitting U.S. president in history. It was expunged in January 1837 after the Democrats regained Senate control - the only formal expungement of a Senate censure in U.S. history.

AP students should know the 1837 expungement detail.

QUESTION 8

Open-ended thesis sketch. Acceptable answers should: (1) state a clear position on the structural-vs-contingent-vs-natural axis, (2) avoid treating them as equivalent, (3) signal at least one piece of evidence from each source. Award credit for any defensible thesis that meets these three conditions.

The thesis sketch is preparatory. The LEQ rubric evaluates the full essay.