

James Madison

Introduction: The date is 1807, and you are aboard the American navy ship *Chesapeake*. When you sailed from Virginia, you thought you were on a peaceful mission. But now suddenly the British ship *Leopard* looms up and its crew demands to board your ship. Your captain refuses to let the British board the *Chesapeake*. The British respond with thundering cannon fire, killing three of your fellow sailors. To avoid further bloodshed, your captain allows the British to board. The British sailors pick out four of your crew, claim they are British deserters, and take them aboard the *Leopard*. You don't know it at the time, but you have been part of an event that will help push the United States back into war with the British.

In the early 1800s, events like the one above happened over and over again to American ships. Both France and Great Britain stopped the American ships. During this time Great Britain and France were at war with one another and, neither side wanted the other to get supplies from the United States. This situation caused major tension between President Jefferson and the British, but Jefferson did not want to take sides, he wanted to remain neutral.

In 1809, James Madison became President. Like Jefferson, he wanted to keep the nation out of war with the British, but Americans were shouting war because the British continued attacking American ships and taking American crew members. By 1812, war was inevitable, and the War of 1812 started. In 1814, British troops marched through Maryland into Washington D.C. They burned the nation's Capitol, White House, and most other government buildings. Dolly Madison (President Madison's wife) became a national hero. She stayed behind until the last minute to save an important painting of George Washington. From Washington D.C. the British troops sailed on to Baltimore, Maryland, and attacked Fort McHenry, which guarded the city. The battle lasted for over twenty-five hours; the Americans refused to surrender the fort causing the British to retreat. During this battle at Fort McHenry, Francis Scott Key witnessed the attack. He could see the American flag flying over the fort. He watched as the British fired their cannons throughout the night, and when the smoke cleared the next morning he saw that the flag was still flying proud above the fort. Francis Scott Key sat and wrote a poem about what he had witnessed throughout the night, and that poem became known as the "Star Spangled Banner," which became our national anthem in 1931.

On December 24, 1814, the Treaty of Ghent was signed in Belgium and ended the War of 1812. Each nation agreed to return the territory it had conquered during the war, but neither side agreed on how to end the attacking of American ships. Although the War of 1812 did not settle any issues between the British and the Americans, the United States did gain respect from other countries, and the Americans now had a new sense of pride for their country.

After reading the selection on James Madison, answer the following questions. You are to write out the question on loose-leaf paper, skip a space, and then answer the question.

1. When did James Madison become the 4th President of the United States?
2. Why could Madison not stay neutral in the war between France and Great Britain? Explain your answer in a sentence or two.
3. What war took place during Madison's Presidency that involved the United States?
4. What country did the U. S. fight in this war?
5. What made Dolly Madison a national hero in this war?
6. What famous poem was written during the Battle of Fort McHenry?
7. Who wrote this poem?
8. What is the name of the treaty that ended the war?
9. What major issue was not settled by this treaty?
10. What 2 things did the United States gain from the War of 1812?