The Battle of New Orleans was the final battle in the War of 1812 – a war some called “the Second War of Independence” and others called “unnecessary.” Regardless, the Battle of New Orleans signified two things: the fall of the British in North America, and the rise of Major General Andrew Jackson.

Objectives

A. Examine historical information from a variety of sources, including museum and library collections, letters, maps, documents, oral histories, firsthand accounts, and web sites.
B. Analyze the causes and effects of the War of 1812.
C. Understand, through dialogue, discussion, and primary sources, the impact the victory at New Orleans on January 8, 1815 had on American history.

Background

The War of 1812 has been referred to as the Second War of Independence. With the British – fresh off Napoleon’s defeat – aiming to retake her “possessions” in North America, the Americans had no standing army, no national bank (with the charter for the 1st Bank of the United States having expired in 1811), and no major military leaders – until Andrew Jackson and his militia won a dramatic victory at New Orleans on January 8, 1815.
**Vocabulary**

Blockade  
Duel  
Impressment  
Militia  
War Hawks  

**Suggested Pre-Program Activities**

1. Have students write two editorials – one on the side of the War Hawks, and one on the side of those opposed to war with England.
2. Let students imagine they were England, planning an invasion of the United States. What would their plan be? Where would they attack?
3. The students are James Madison. How would they recruit and train a military force to stand up to the British?

**Presentation Outline**

*Note to classroom instructor: this information will be covered within the education program.*

1. Discuss the relationship between Great Britain and the United States from the end of the Revolutionary War.
2. Examine the causes of the War of 1812 – how had England backed the United States into a corner, and what could the United States have done differently?
3. Explain a better way to describe the War of 1812 – a duel. How was dueling important to War Hawks?
4. Introduce students to the War Hawks – who were they, what was their platform, and what influence did they have?
5. Discuss the South in the War of 1812 – how did Native Americans have an impact on the United States’ pursuing of the War of 1812? Emphasize Creek Civil War, Fort Mims Massacre / Battle of Horseshoe Bend.
6. Examine how the British were (initially) successful in the War of 1812 – focusing on well known episodes in American folklore (burning of the White House, Dolley Madison, Star-Spangled Banner).
7. Focus on the importance of New Orleans to both the British and the United States – why would the British want New Orleans?
8. Examine the preparations made by both sides leading up to the Battle of New Orleans.
9. How did the Americans defeat the British, and what impact did Andrew Jackson have?
10. What was the fallout from the victory over the British, and how did Andrew Jackson benefit?
**Suggested Post-Program Activities**

1. Have students draw a picture of the Battle of New Orleans (and email it to us at education@thehermitage.com).
2. Hold an essay contest on the topic of “What If The British Had Won?” How would our lives be different today?
3. Imagine throwing a party in 1815 in New Orleans celebrating the victory. Who would you invite, and what would you serve?

**Selected Bibliography**


**Web Links**

The Blog of 1812: a partnership among historic sites beginning May 2012.

Privilege vs. Equality: a podcast from The Hermitage on how the military changed after the War of 1812.

History Channel: section on the War of 1812.


National Archives and Records Administration: War of 1812 site.