



# The Importance of Andrew Jackson

## Thematic Unit

### Introduction

There is plenty of debate about where Andrew Jackson ranks among the best presidents in our country's history, but it cannot be understated that he was one of our most *important* presidents. This program examines the life and legacy of Andrew Jackson, and why he still matters today.

### Objectives

- A. Discuss Andrew Jackson's early years and upbringing.
- B. Explore Jackson's rise to fame and political career prior to his presidency.
- C. Understand the controversy the election of 1824 presented and why it was called the "Corrupt Bargain."
- D. Explore the major issues he faced while in office.
- E. Understand Andrew Jackson's legacy.

### Background

Andrew Jackson's parents – like so many people in Appalachia – came from Northern Ireland in the 1760s, having lived in a little town called Carrickfergus. Jackson's parents were Scots-Irish and many of them moved to the frontier soon after arriving in North America. In the 1760s the frontier was anywhere 50 miles beyond the coastline, and Charleston was the closest big city to where Andrew Sr. and his wife, Elizabeth, moved – settling in a fairly unorganized area called the Waxhaws region of the Carolinas. Over the years Jackson worked various public service jobs until he eventually emerged as a national

hero after the Battle of New Orleans. This victory eventually helped lead him to the office of president in 1829.

### **Vocabulary**

Battle of New Orleans  
Corrupt Bargain  
Electoral College  
Henry Clay  
Indian Removal Act  
John C Calhoun  
John Q. Adams  
Nullification Crisis  
Precedent  
Revolutionary War  
Trail of Tears  
Veto  
War of 1812  
Waxhaw

### **Suggested Pre-Program Activities**

1. Have the class research life on the frontier for immigrants in the mid 1700s.
2. Have the students make a list of items they would take with them if they were moving to another country. Ask them why they would take these items.

### **Presentation Outline**

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

1. Begin the program by explaining when and where Andrew Jackson's family immigrated from. Also, discuss the hardships they faced after arriving.
  - a. Untimely death of Jackson's father before his birth
  - b. Vast stretches of unsettled land, a new climate, different foods, different culture, etc.
2. Discuss Jackson's role in the Revolutionary War and how it affected his view of the
3. United States, and Britain. Briefly talk about his public service leading up to the War of 1812 and the Battle of New Orleans. Explain to the students why this battle was so important to the war and the nation.
4. Explore the election of 1824 (the Corrupt Bargain) and why it was important to American politics.
  - a. Introduce and explain their role in the Corrupt Bargain: Henry Clay and John Q. Adams
5. Briefly discuss the election of 1828 and the changes made to the election process

- because of the election of 1824.
6. There were a number of issues that arose during Jackson's presidency that reshaped the way the country thinks about the president today. Discuss the major issues during his presidency:
    - a. His use of the Veto
    - b. The Nullification Crisis of 1832 and John C. Calhoun's role
    - c. Jackson paid off the National Debt; this is the only time in our nation's history that a president has paid off our national debt
    - d. The signing of the Indian Removal Act and the Trail of Tears in 1838
  7. Andrew Jackson set a precedent by asserting power that future presidents could use, and he was very much admired by those presidents who followed him. Use quotes from Franklin D. Roosevelt, Abraham Lincoln, and Teddy Roosevelt that talk about their respect for Jackson.

### **Suggested Post-Program Activities**

1. Have the class research a general who fought in the War of 1812, American or British side. Write a research paper about their role in the war and how it impacted their lives after the war was over.
2. Ask the class to imagine themselves as the president of the United States. Take the same issues Jackson faced while in office (the Nullification Crisis, the Bank War, etc.) and have them develop plans for how they would solve each issue.