



# *What is America?*

## Thematic Unit

### Introduction

**What do we want them to know?** The United States of America uses symbols and protocol to reflect its national heritage, pride, and identity. Andrew Jackson's role in the War of 1812 and his work as seventh President of the United States, gives him a unique relationship to these elements of our national heritage.

**Why do we want them to know it?** Understanding and identifying national symbols is critical to a student's shift from forming his personal identity to his community identity. As the President, the Hero of New Orleans and namesake of an historical era, Andrew Jackson is a critical figure in establishing the American identity. Beyond Jackson's political and military actions, his plantation, The Hermitage, serves as a microcosm of westward expansion, especially as it pertains to slavery, agriculture, and frontier culture.

**How does this meet the mission of or connect to all the resources of the Andrew Jackson Foundation?** The mission of the AJF is to preserve, educate and inspire citizenship based on the example of Andrew Jackson. This program incorporates resources from the mansion, historic landscape, and traditional exhibitions.

### Tennessee Social Studies Standards Met

K.2	1.17	2.17	2.40	4.49
K.14	1.19	2.21		4.50
K.16	1.26	2.22		4.51
K.19	1.36	2.32		4.55
K.27	1.37	2.33		ELA Key Ideas and Details
K.30	1.41	2.37		ELA Integration Knowledge & Ideas

## **Format**

This class addresses K-2 and 4<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum related to the War of 1812, famous Tennesseans, Tennessee's place in America, citizenship, and national symbols. It utilizes three guided activities in various locations at The Hermitage. Students will be divided into smaller groups and led through a series of three activities by a museum educator. Each activity will be conducted at various points on the Hermitage property, using the full range of facilities available on site. Each activity will meet a variety of curriculum standards, using a wide variety of methods and materials. Two of the three activities will employ literacy strategies as the primary means of learning. The program lasts one hour, including time for movement between activities.

## **Activity A: Our Flag Was Still There!**

**Standards met:** (K.16, 1.26, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade Review; 4<sup>th</sup> grade Review)

- Identify the 50-star flag as the national symbol of the United States
- Identify the elements of the flag and what they represent
- Identify the State of Tennessee flag and what its elements represent

**Location:** Flag Court

**Procedures:** In this activity, students will identify the parts of the national flag and the Tennessee state flag. The educator will teach the students about the proper protocol of handling, raising, lowering, and folding the national flag. Students will practice this protocol by properly unfolding the flag (if raising) or folding the flag (if lowering). For this activity, we are using a reproduction of the 1837 national flag, which represents the state of the Union at the conclusion of Jackson's presidency. Students will raise the flag, or lower it, for all to see.

## **Activity B: Rockets' Red Glare!**

**Standards met:** (K.14, 1.17, 1.19, 2.17, 2.21, 2.40; 4.49, 4.50, 4.51)

- Locate Tennessee and the US on a map.
- Locate Washington, DC and Nashville on a US map.
- Locate major cities, bodies of water, and rivers in the United States.
- Recite and analyze the lyrics of "The Star Spangled Banner" to determine the meaning of the song and its origins in the War of 1812.
- Analyze primary and secondary source maps, photographs, and artifacts for contradictions, supporting evidence, and historical details.

**Location:** Award-winning exhibition "Andrew Jackson: Born for a Storm"

**Procedure:** This activity utilizes the section of "Andrew Jackson: Born for a Storm" that tells the story of the War of 1812 and concludes with the story of Jackson's stunning defeat of the British at the Battle of New Orleans. After the destruction of Washington, DC by

the British Army, Jackson's soldiers in New Orleans appear to be America's last chance for victory in the War of 1812. As the educator tells the exciting story of the war, students will be using the artwork in the exhibit to identify historic images, maps, and other primary source material that illustrate the lyrics to the Star Spangled Banner. Students will be introduced to Francis Scott Key, James Madison, Andrew Jackson, the Battle of New Orleans, the Gulf of Mexico, the Mississippi River, Fort McHenry, and Washington, DC. Students will have a chance to sing the national anthem at the conclusion of the activity.

### **Activity C: Meet Old Hickory!**

**Standards met:** (K.2, K.19, K.27, K.30, 1.36, 1.37, 1.41, 2.22, 2.32, 2.33, 2.37, ELA 4<sup>th</sup> grade standards for Key Ideas & Details and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas)

- Scanning and identifying historic images and placing them in sequence
- Understanding historic chronology
- Visual thinking strategies refined
- Literacy in writing; identifying parts of a story.
- Identifying newspapers, maps, and images

**Location:** Education Center

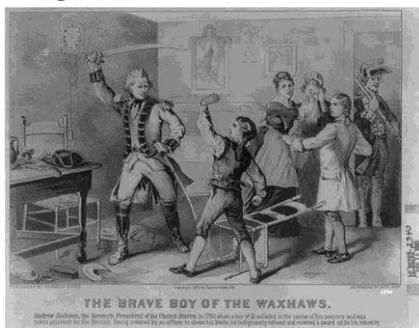
**Materials Used:** SmartBoard, Newspaper template with images, email

**Procedures:**

***\*\*Teachers: In the interest of time and accuracy of detail, we highly recommend practicing this activity ahead of time in your classroom!***

Students will be divided into four groups. Each group must be assisted by a chaperone, in addition to the museum educator. Working with an enlarged historic image of Andrew Jackson, students will answer questions to construct a narrative of Jackson's life. There will be four articles in the newspaper. The four sections will include: Jackson's early life, the Battle of New Orleans, the presidency, and life at The Hermitage. At the conclusion of the activity, the teacher will be emailed a poster-sized copy of the newspaper for her class.

Images used in the class are as follows:



Article 1: Youth; Revolutionary War; orphanhood

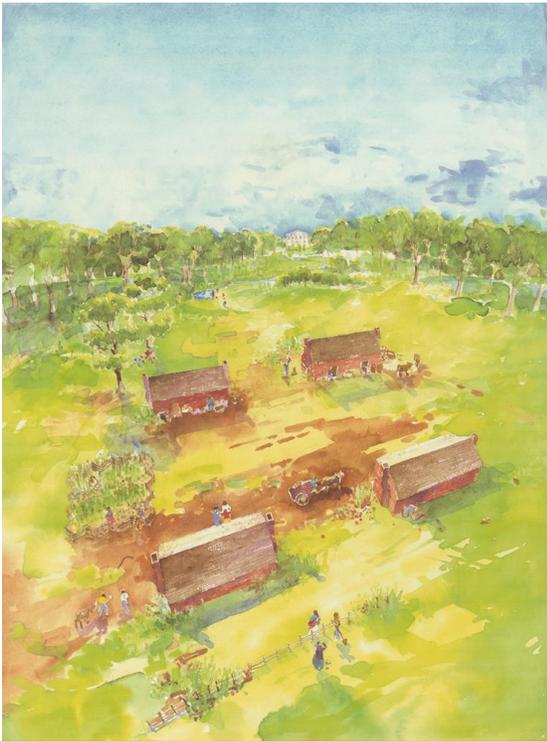


Article 2: Battle of New Orleans, Military Career, Life in

TN



Article 3: Presidency



Article 4: The Hermitage as a working plantation that used slaves to grow crops.

### **Pre- and Post-Visit Activities and Additional Resources:**

1. Visit the three cemeteries located at the Hermitage Church before leaving for the day: the Donelson family cemetery, the Confederate Soldiers' Home cemetery, and "Follow the Drinking Gourd" the Hermitage's memorial built to the enslaved community. In addition to flags, students can examine inscriptions to soldiers and settlers, look for insignia, and discuss the role of slavery in American advancement.
2. While at The Hermitage, set students the task of counting how many flags or other national symbols they see represented on site. Examples: pictures of flags in the museum exhibition or the eagles on the capitals of the mansion's four downspouts and gutters.
3. Attend the annual Naturalization Ceremony at The Hermitage, which happens every third Friday in September. (Reservations required.)
4. Have your students organize, watch or participate in a flag-raising ceremony at your school.
5. Participate in a flag-disposal ceremony, conducted by the American Legion. (Local Posts can be found by going to [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org))
6. Visit or arrange a visit by your state's wildlife agency or state parks agency to conduct programs on Birds of Prey, including Bald Eagles. (Tennessee contacts: Reelfoot Lake State Park, Standing Stone State Park, Tims Ford State Park; [www.tnstateparks.com](http://www.tnstateparks.com); or [david.haggard@tn.gov](mailto:david.haggard@tn.gov))

### **Bibliography**

Landau, Elaine. *The National Anthem*. True Books: American History.

Radomski, Cassandra. *Mr. Madison's War: The War of 1812*. Causes and Effects Series.

Remini, Robert V. *Andrew Jackson: Volume Two, The Course of American Empire, 1767-1821*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998.