**Hamilton vs. Jefferson**

Differing Philosophies in the Early American Republic

From: Footprints of Freedom Lesson Study, 2012

**History Standards: 8.3.4**

Understand how the conflicts between Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton resulted in the emergence of two political parties (e.g., view of foreign policy, Alien and Sedition Acts, economic policy, National Bank, funding and assumption of the revolutionary debt).

**CCSS Standards: Reading, Grades 6-8**

1. Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

2. Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

6. Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author’s point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

**Writing, Grades 6-8**

1. Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.

2. Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes.

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

9. Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis reflection, and research.

**Guiding Question:**Various questions geared at each reading.

**Overview of Lesson:**Teachers should ensure that the students have a working knowledge of Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton. This overview should be done in a previous lesson, via textbook reading or lecture.

As a warm-up, ask students to come up with two similarities and two differences between the men – i.e., both were writers, both were statesmen, one served on two Congresses, etc. Explain to students that both men had strong opinions on how the nation should be governed, which led to disagreements. Today, students will see what issues they differed on and how.

In groups of four, students will read the assigned quotes (make sure each student has a copy of each page to keep)and create a Venn diagram or double bubble Thinking Map on large pieces of paper to document the information they learn. Students should underline the important phrases of each quote so that they may use it as evidence.

Once students have reviewed all of the primary source information, the teacher can ask them to share with the class their findings on each topic. Once they give an answer in their own words, have them give EVIDENCE, as underlined in their text.

As an exit ticket or for homework, have students write a paragraph comparing and contrasting Jefferson and Hamilton. How would they describe each man’s opinions in just a few words? Who do they think made better choices, or were they each “right” some of the time?

*\*FOCUS QUESTION: In Hamilton’s opinion what was the best way for people to work and make a good living?*

GLOSSARY manufacturing institutions: factories acquisitions: money or things

augment: increase husbandman: farmer

industrious: hard-working

**Issue/Topic: ECONOMY**

**From: *Report on Manufactures* written to the Second Congress (December 5, 1791), by Alexander Hamilton**

“This is not among the least valuable of the means, by which manufacturing institutions contribute to augment the general stock of industry and production. In places where those institutions prevail, besides the persons regularly engaged in them, they afford occasional and extra employment to industrious individuals and families, who are willing to devote the leisure resulting from the intermissions of their ordinary pursuits to collateral labours, as a resource of multiplying their acquisitions or [their] enjoyments. The husbandman himself experiences a new source of profit and support from the encreased industry of his wife and daughters; invited and stimulated by the demands of the neighboring manufactories.

“Besides this advantage of occasional employment to classes having different occupations, there is another of a nature allied to it [and] of a similar tendency. This is – the employment of a persons who would otherwise be idle (and in many cases a burthen on the community), either from the byass of temper, habit, infirmity of body, or some other cause, indisposing, or disqualifying them for the toils of the Country.”

*\*FOCUS QUESTION: In Jefferson’s opinion what is the best way for people to work and make a good living?*

**Issue/Topic: ECONOMY**

GLOSSARY cultivate: to farm wanting: needed

virtue: good character husbandry: farming

**From: *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1785), by Thomas Jefferson**

“Lands in Europe were either cultivated or ‘locked up against the cultivator,’ and manufacturing was resorted to in order to support the surplus of people. On the other hand, in America there was ‘an immensity of land courting the industry of the husbandman.’ Jefferson continued, ‘Those who labour in the earth are the chosen people of God, if ever he had a chosen people, whose breasts he has made his peculiar deposit for the substantial and genuine virtue… While we have land to labour then, let us never wish to see our citizens occupied at a work-bench. Or twirling a distaff. Carpenters, masons, smiths, are wanting in husbandry: but, for the general operations of manufacture, let our work-shops remain in Europe. …The mobs of great cities add just so much to the support of pure government, as sores do the strength of the human body. It is the manners and spirit of a people which preserve a republic in vigour.’ ”

\**FOCUS QUESTION: What does Hamilton seem to think about the U.S. having a large military?*

GLOSSARY frigates: small fast fighting ships regiments of infantry: foot soldiers

juncture: circumstance regiments of dragoons: cavalry, groups of soldiers

inadequate: not enough auxiliary: support, aid, help

provision: availability or room for

**Issue/Topic: MILITARY POWER**

**From: *Letter to Jonathan Dayton* (November 1799), by Alexander Hamilton**

“Our naval force ought to be completed to six Ships of the line Twelve frigates and twenty four sloops of War. More at this juncture would be disproportioned to our resources. Less would be inadequate to the end to be accomplished.

“Our Military force should for the present be kept upon its actual footing; making provision for a reenlistment of the men for five years in the event of a settlement of differences with France—with this condition that in case of peace between Great Britain France and Spain, the U. States being then also at peace, all the Privates of twelve additional Regiments of Infantry and of the Regiments of Dragoons exceeding Twenty to a Company shall be disbanded. The corps of Artillerists may be left to retain the numbers which it shall happen to have; but without being recruited until the number of privates shall fall below the standard of the Infantry & Dragoons. A power ought to be given to the President to augment the four Old Regiments to their War Establishmnt…

“The Institution of a Military Academy will be an auxiliary of great importance.

“Manufactories of every article, the woolen parts of cloathing included, which are essential to the supply of the army ought to be established.”

*\*FOCUS QUESTION: Does Jefferson think a lot of money should be spent on military power?*

GLOSSARY rigorously frugal: very cheap depredations: ruin or destruction

revenue: money or earnings burthens: burdens

solely: only

**Issue/Topic: MILITARY POWER**

**From: *Letter to Elbridge Gerry* (January 26, 1799), by Thomas Jefferson**

“I am for a government rigorously frugal & simple, applying all the possible savings of the public revenue to the discharge of the national debt; and not for a multiplication of officers & salaries merely to male partisans, & for increasing, by every device, the public debt, on the principle of it’s being a public blessing. I am for relying, for internal defence, on our militia solely, till actual invasion, and for such a naval force only as may protect our coasts and harbors from such depredations as we have experienced; and not for a standing army in time of peace, which may overawe the public sentiment; nor for a navy, which, by it’s own expenses and the eternal wars in which it will implicate us with public burthens, & sink us under them.”

*\*FOCUS QUESTION: How did the views of Hamilton & Jefferson differ on the issue of a National Bank?*

GLOSSARY patronage: support, backing

estimate of their tendency: point of view

augmentation: increase

not improperly denominated dead stock: not being put to good use

**Issue/Topic: NATIONAL BANK**

**From: *Report on a National Bank* (to Congress on December 14, 1790), by Alexander Hamilton**

“It is a fact well understood, that public Banks have found admission and patronage among the principal and most enlightened commercial nations. They have successively obtained in Italy, Germany, Holland, England, and France, as well as the United States. And it is a circumstance, which cannot but have considerable weight, in a candid estimate of their tendency, that after an experience of centuries, there exists not a question about their util[ity] in the countries in which they have been so long established…

“The following are among the principal advantages of a Bank.

First. The augmentation of the active or productive capital of a country. Gold and Silver, when they are employed merely as the instruments of exchange and alienation, have been not improperly denominated dead Stock; but when deposited in Banks, to become the basis of a paper circulation, which takes their character and place, as the signs or representatives of value, they then acquire life, or, in other words, an active and productive quality.”

*\*FOCUS QUESTION: How did the views of Hamilton & Jefferson differ on the issue of a National Bank?*

GLOSSARY incorporation: establishment

enumerated: different ideas listed by numbers

**Issue/Topic: NATIONAL BANK**

**From: *Opinion on the Constutionality of Establishing a National Bank* (February 15, 1791), by Thomas Jefferson**

“… I consider the foundation of the Constitution as laid on this ground that ‘all powers not delegated to the U.S. by the Constitution, not prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states or to the people’ [Xth. Amendmt.]. To take a single step beyond the boundaries thus specially drawn around the power of Congress, is to take possession of a boundless field of power, no longer susceptible of any definition.

“The incorporation of a bank, and other powers assumed by this bill have not, it my opinion, been delegated to the U.S. by the Constitution.

I. They are not among the powers specially enumerated, for these are:

1. A power to *lay taxes* for the purpose of paying the debts of the U.S. But no debt is paid by this bill, nor any tax laid. Were it a bill to raise money, it’s origination in the Senate would condemn it by the constitution.

*\*FOCUS QUESTION: In Hamilton’s opinion with which country should the U.S. be allies (friends)?*

GLOSSARY unsound: wrong endeavors: attempts or efforts resentment: anger or bitterness

**Issue/Topic: FOREIGN RELATIONS/FOREIGN POLICY**

**From: *Letter to Edward Harrington* (May 20, 1792), by Alexander Hamilton**

“In respect to our foreign politics the views of these Gentlemen are in my judgment equally unsound & dangerous. *They have a womanish attachment to France and a womanish resentment against Great Britain*. They would draw us into the closest embrace of the former and involve us in all the consequences of her politics, and they would risk the peace of the country in their endeavors to keep us at the greatest possible distance from the latter. This disposition goes to a length particularly in Mr. Jefferson of which, till lately, I had no adequate Idea. Various circumstances prove to me that if these Gentlemen were left to pursue their own course there would be in less than six months *an open War between the U States and Great Britain*.”

*\*FOCUS QUESTION: In Jefferson’s opinion with which country should the U.S. be allies (friends)?*

GLOSSARY anxiety: concern or fear retard: to hinder or delay check: prevention half-way house: compromise

**Issue/Topic: FOREIGN RELATIONS/FOREIGN POLICY**

**From: *Letter to George Mason* (February 4, 1791), by Jefferson**

“I look with great anxiety for the firm establishment of the new government in France, being perfectly convinced that if it takes place there, it would spread sooner or later all over Europe. On the contrary a check there would retard the revival of liberty in other countries. I consider the establishment and success of their government as necessary to stay up our own and to prevent it from falling back to that kind of Half-way house, the English constitution.”

*\*FOCUS QUESTION: According to Hamilton who should be in charge of the government?*

GLOSSARY turbulent: wild, fighting, arguing annually revolve: change every year distinct: separate permanent body: group that stays

check: stop or prevent together all the time advantage: benefit imprudence: making bad decisions

**Topic/Issue: WHO SHOULD RULE?**

**From: Hamilton’s Speech to the Constitutional Convention (June 18, 1787), by Alexander Hamilton**

“All communities divide themselves into the few and the many. The first are the rich and well-born, the other the mass of the people. The voice of the people has been said to be the voice of God; and however generally this maxim has been quoted and believed, it is not true in fact. The people are turbulent and changing; they seldom judge or determine right. Give therefore the first class a distinct, permanent share in the government. They will check the unsteadiness of the second, and as they cannot receive any advantage by a change they therefore will ever maintain good government. Can a democratic assembly, who annually revolve in the mass of the people be supposed steadily to pursue the public good? Nothing but a permanent body can check the imprudence of democracy. Their turbulent and uncontrouling disposition requires checks.

*\*FOCUS QUESTION: According to Jefferson should be in charge of the government?*

GLOSSARY principle: idea or belief virtuous: having good character

prevail: to win chiefly: mainly convention: constitution

vacant: empty amend: to change corrupt: shady, dishonest

**Topic/Issue: WHO SHOULD RULE?**

**From: *Letter to James Madison* (December 20, 1787 after returning from several years in France) by Thomas Jefferson**

“After all, it is my principle that the will of the Majority should always prevail. If they approve the proposed Convention in all its parts I shall concur in a cheerfully, in hopes that they will amend it whenever they shall find it work wrong. I think our governments will remain virtuous for many centuries; as long as they are chiefly agricultural; and this will be as long as there shall be vacant lands in any part of America. When they get piled upon one another in large cities, as in Europe, they will become corrupt, as in Europe. Above all things I hope the education of the common people will be attended to; convinced that on their good sense we may rely with the most security for the preservation of a due degree of liberty.”