

Lesson Kit: The War of 1812: Who Has the Advantage?

Grade 7: 1800–1850: Conflict and Challenges

Introduction

In this lesson, students will decide who holds the advantage at the beginning of the War of 1812 by evaluating the conditions of both the United States and Great Britain during this period.

Topic

The War of 1812

Source

Archives of Ontario's War of 1812 online exhibit - [Click here to view the War of 1812 online exhibit.](#)

Use the Archives of Ontario's online exhibit on the War of 1812:

- As a learning resource for yourself
- As a site to direct your students for inquiry projects
- As a place to find and use primary sources related to the curriculum

Themes that can be addressed

- Use of Primary Sources
- Major battles
- Alliances between First Nations and British forces
- The role of Loyalists
- Important individuals (ie. Tecumseh, Laura Secord, General Issac Brock)

Curriculum Links

Strand B. Canada, 1800-1850: Conflict and Challenges

Overall Expectations	Historical Thinking Concepts	Specific Expectations
B1. Application: Changes and Challenges	Continuity and Change; Historical Perspective	B1.1, B1.2
B2. Inquiry: Perspectives in British North Americans	Historical Perspective; Historical Significance	B2.1, B2.2, B2.4, B2.5, B2.6
B3. Understanding Historical Context: Events and Their Consequence	Historical Significance; Cause and Consequence	B3.1, B3.2, B3.3, B3.4, B3.5

Assignment & Activity Ideas

This lesson is designed to take place over two classes. However, it can be abbreviated and completed in one class or expanded and completed across multiple classes.

Getting Organized

- Review the resources at the end of this plan
- Print out a copy of the [Who Has the Advantage? Fact Cards](#) for each group of students and a [Who has the Advantage? chart](#) and [Decision Time! worksheet](#) for either each student or each group, depending on how you want to run the activity.
- Acquire one pair of scissors for each group of students.
- For the following class, prepare copies of the [Chronology of War handout](#) and the [Advantage Follow-up Questions](#) for either each student or each group of students

Lesson Outline

In small groups, give students the [Who Has the Advantage? Fact Cards](#) and ask them to cut them into twenty-one individual cards.

- Ask the students to sort the cards into three categories using the [Who has the Advantage? chart](#) as a guide. The three categories are: British Advantage, American Advantage, and Neutral. Ask students to pick two to three cards per category and write notes as to why they think the fact would provide an advantage.
- Using the [Decision Time! worksheet](#), invite students to make a decision, based on their categorizing, on which side would have the advantage at the beginning of the War of 1812. Remind them to give detailed reasons for their choices. Ask students to either hand in this worksheet at the end of class or to make a presentation as to who they felt had an advantage at the beginning of the War of 1812 and for what reasons.
- In the following class, give students a chance to reconsider their position by reading the student handout, [Chronology of War](#), and answering the questions on the [Advantage: Follow-up Questions](#) worksheet.
- As a class, discuss the different positions and what factors led to advantages for both sides.

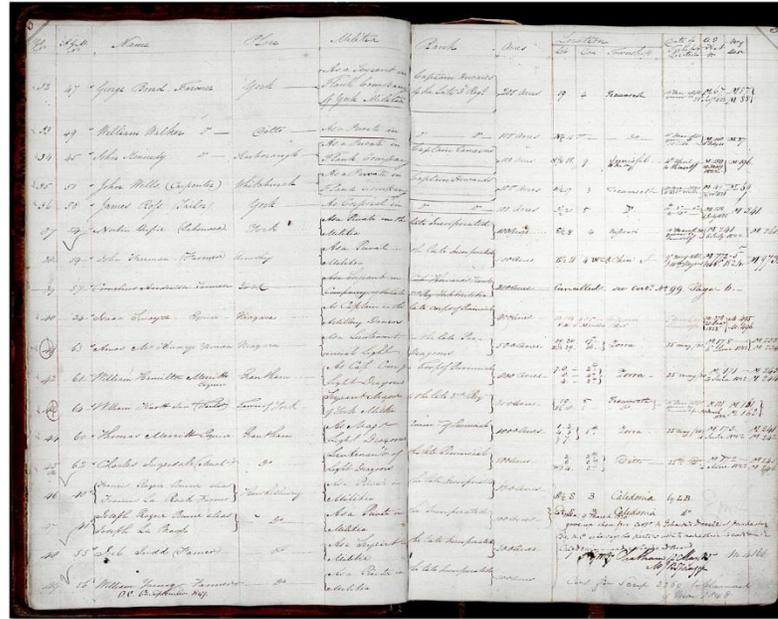
Extension / Accommodation

- Students could use the fact cards as a beginning point for a larger, research-based project and presentation on the politics and economy of the War of 1812.
- Discussion could take the form of a debate, with each student assigned a specific position.
- Students could be asked to create a graphic narrative, such as a comic strip, to illustrate the advances both sides had before, during, and after the War of 1812.

Handouts & Worksheets

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Introduction to Primary Sources



Register of militia grant, 1820-1850

Reference Code: RG 1-152-0-1

Archives of Ontario

A **primary source** is a document or object from the past created by people who lived during that time. Primary sources provide a view into an event or experience that only people living during that time could have experienced.

Archives collect and preserve primary sources so that students can learn history from the experiences of people who were there. In an archive, primary sources are called records. In a museum, primary sources are called artifacts.

Primary Sources	Secondary Sources
Original material from the past	Material people today write about the past
<p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letters Diaries Photographs Paintings and other art work Graphs Maps 	<p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Textbooks Reference books Websites such as Wikipedia Current news articles Documentaries and films

**What are some other examples of primary and secondary sources?
Can sources be both primary and secondary?**

Who Has the Advantage? Fact Cards

Cut out the following fact cards, and arrange them on the [“Who has the Advantage?” Chart](#) as showing British Advantage, Neutral, or American Advantage.

Cut out each fact card!	Cut out each fact card!
Most of the people who lived in Upper Canada were United Empire Loyalists or people who had recently moved there from the United States.	The Americans were facing uprisings from Native groups upset with American settlers moving westward into their territories.
The economy of British North America and Upper Canada was agricultural. Almost all manufactured goods were imported.	Great Britain was unsure of the loyalty of the French Canadians in Lower Canada and that of settlers who had newly arrived from the United States.
Many of the younger American officers and regular troops had no experience with fighting.	Most of the top military leaders in the United States were older and only had experience fighting during the Revolutionary War over thirty years earlier.
Great Britain had approximately 6,000 regular troops in British North America with 1,500 in Upper Canada.	General Brock, the leader of the British troops, had been in charge of the military in Upper Canada for 10 years.
The population of all of British North America was approximately 500,000. About 100,000 lived in Upper Canada.	The economy of the United States was both agricultural and industrial.
The voluntary militias in both the United States and British North America were very poorly fed , clothed and equipped.	Great Britain had a much larger and better trained navy than the United States in 1812.
The American military was made up of approximately 7,000 regular troops.	The United States had a population of more than four million in 1812.

Cut out each fact card!	Cut out each fact card!
<p>Not all Americans supported the idea of war. Many New Englanders, in fact, openly opposed the war.</p>	<p>The United States had factories that could produce military weapons located quite close to the borders of British North America.</p>
<p>Most of the British officers and regular army soldiers had at least some war experience.</p>	<p>Great Britain was already at war with France in Europe. Most of Great Britain's navy was involved in the blockade in Europe in 1812.</p>
<p>An American militia with 50,000 volunteers was set up in 1812.</p>	<p>All military stores and equipment for British North America had to be imported from Great Britain.</p>
<p>All men in British North America were technically part of the militia and could be called upon in time of war. Only a few had any training.</p>	<p>Great Britain is approximately 5,250 km west of the Great Lakes region in North American, where much of the fighting occurred during the War of 1812.</p>

Student Handout: Who has the Advantage? Chart

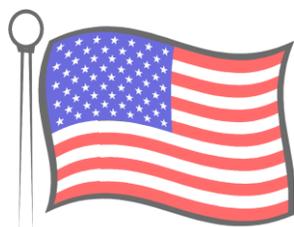
Arrange the Who has the Advantage? Fact Cards in either British Advantage, Neutral, or American Advantage.

British Advantage



Neutral

American Advantage



Student Worksheet: Decision Time!

Who do you think would have the advantage at the beginning of the War of 1812?

(Write your answer on the line provided below)

What are your reasons?

Reason 1:

Evidence for Reason 1:

Reason 2:

Evidence for Reason 2:

Reason 3:

Evidence for Reason 3:



Student Handout: Detailed Chronology of War

This on-line exhibit can be found on the Archives of Ontario's website: [Click here to access 1812 online exhibit.](#) **Note:** in the list below, victories are indicated by the flags of the winning side.

1812	Winning Side
June 18: United States Declares War on Great Britain.	
July 12: General Hull invades Upper Canada at Sandwich (Detroit River)	
July 17: Captain Charles Roberts captures Fort Michilimackinac from the United States (Lake Huron)	
August 15: Americans evacuate Fort Dearborn (Chicago), post destroyed by First Nations	
August 16: General Brock and Tecumseh capture Detroit with combination of militia, First Nations and British regulars	
September 21: Americans raid Gananoque destroy military depot	
October 13: Americans defeated at Queenston Heights (Niagara), Brock killed	
November: an American army approaches Lower Canada from the south but withdraws without attempting to capture the city or engage British troops.	
November 29: Americans cross Niagara River at Frenchman's Creek, withdraw after counter attack by British and militia.	

1813	Winning Side
January 19: Battle of Frenchtown - Colonel Proctor with mixed force of regulars: militia and First Nations defeats U.S. General Winchester and compels surrender	
February 22: Lieutenant-Colonel George Macdonnel raids Ogdensburg, New York	
April 27: Dearborn's forces raid York (Toronto), British forces retreat on Kingston	
April 28-May 10: Siege of Fort Meigs on the Maumee (Ohio) fails to capture the American post	
May 25-27: Dearborn captures Fort George (Niagara), British forces under General Vincent retreat to Burlington	
May 29: British raid on Sackets Harbor (Lake Ontario), fail to destroy American naval base	
June 6: Battle of Stoney Creek: American forces withdraw to Fort George	
June 24: Battle of Beaver Dams: American detachment: surrounded by First Nation warriors: forced to surrender to Colonel Fitzgibbon following warnings by Laura Secord	
August 2: Attack on Fort Stephenson on the Sandusky River (Ohio) repulsed with heavy losses: Proctor retreats to Detroit	
September 10: Battle of Lake Erie: British squadron captured. Proctor decides to evacuate Detroit and eventually withdraws completely from the area due to failing supplies	
October 5: Battle of the Thames: British defeated, Tecumseh killed, General Proctor retreats on Burlington	
October 26: Battle of Châteauguay in Lower Canada, American army under Wade Hampton retreats back over the border.	

1813	Winning Side
November 11: Battle of Chrysler's Farm: U.S. forces repulsed: American army retreats after word of the defeat at Châteauguay in Lower Canada	
December 10: General McClure burns Niagara and retreats to American side of the Niagara River	
December 19: British Capture Fort Niagara, destroy American settlements along the Niagara in retaliation for Niagara	

1814	Winning Side
March 4: Battle of Long Woods or Battle Hill near Thamesville - American raiders from Detroit repulse attack by British regulars and Upper Canadian militia.	
Spring and Summer: Royal Navy raids communities and shipping along Virginia and North Carolina coastline. Economic blockade of the United States tightened.	
May 6: British capture Oswego: New York: destroy depot	
May 23-June 21: Treason Trials at Ancaster Upper Canada (Hamilton)	
July 3: General Jacob Brown captures Fort Erie	
July 5: Battle of Chippewa: British defeated under General Rial, retreat on Queenston	
July 25: Battle of Lundy's Lane: British under General Drummond: Americans withdraw to Fort Erie next day	
August 4-5: Successful British defence of Michilimackinac	
August 12: British naval and army personnel capture two American war vessels off Fort Erie: the Ohio and the Sommers.	

1814	Winning Side
August 14: British supply ship Nancy destroyed in engagement in Nottawasaga Bay.	
August 15: British attack Fort Erie, repulsed with heavy loss.	
August 24: Battle of Bladensburg: British defeat U.S. forces and destroy part of Washington in retaliation for York.	
August 31: Castine and other coastal towns in Maine captured in joint action by British army and Royal Navy.	
September 3: American war vessel Tigress captured off Mackinaw Island by British gunboats (renamed the Surprise)	
September 5: American war vessel Scorpion captured by Tigress (renamed the Confiance)	
September 11: Battle of Lake Champlain: British squadron defeated: General Prevost retreats without attacking American garrison at Plattsburg	
September 17: Americans attack British siege positions: destroy Battery	
October 19: Battle of Cooks Mills: last fight in Upper Canada	
November 5: American forces evacuate the Niagara Peninsula	
December 25: Treaty of Ghent signed, ending the War of 1812	

1815	Winning Side
January 8: Battle of New Orleans: British defeated: two weeks after the preliminary terms of the peace treaty were signed	

Student Worksheet: Advantage Follow-up Questions

After looking at the Detailed Chronology of the War handout, determine if the side you thought had the advantage at the beginning of the war really did have an advantage.

Did that advantage remain throughout the war?

Answer the following questions to think about who had the advantage during the War of 1812.

1. Who won the most battles in 1812?
2. Did your prediction hold true? Was there any pattern to which side won when?
3. What was the most significant battle fought in 1812? Why did you choose that particular battle?
4. Did any change occur to the pattern of victories in 1813? Why do you think that did or did not happen?
5. What was the most significant battle fought in 1813? Why did you choose that particular battle?
6. Did any change occur to the pattern of victories in 1813? Why do you think that did or did not happen?
7. In 1814 the British war with France ended with the defeat of Napoleon. Why would this have a significant impact on the War in North America?
8. By 1814 both sides were ready to negotiate a peace settlement. Why do most historians argue that no one won this war?
9. While the Treaty of Ghent was signed on December 25, 1814, ending the war, the Battle of New Orleans occurred January 8th, 1815. Why would the fighting continue after the war was over?

Marking Rubric

Category	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Analysis, Synthesis, Evaluation	Had difficulty categorizing facts appropriately	Categorized obvious facts appropriately	Categorized all facts appropriately	Categorized and organized facts effectively
Communication	Evidence used to back up decision is incomplete or lacking in detail	Evidence used to back up decision provides some detail	Evidence used to back up decision is adequate and provides some detail and evidence of thought	Categorized and organized facts effectively