

The War of 1812: Who Has the Advantage?

Grade 7: History – British North America



Overview

In this lesson, students will decide who holds the advantage at the beginning of the War of 1812 by viewing information from our War of 1812 on-line exhibit and looking at the conditions of both the United States and Great Britain during this period.

Curriculum Connections

This plan meets the following expectations for the Grade 7: British North America curricula:

Overall Expectations

- Explain and outline the causes, events, and results of the War of 1812

Specific Expectations

Inquiry/Research and Communication Skills

- Formulate questions to facilitate research on specific topics
- Analyse, synthesize, and evaluate historical information
- Construct and use a wide variety of graphs, charts, diagrams, maps, and models to organize and interpret information
- Communicate the results of inquiries for specific purposes and audiences, using media works, oral presentations, written notes and reports, drawings, tables, charts, and graphs
- Use appropriate vocabulary to describe their inquiries and observations.

Getting Organized

To prepare for this lesson, you can:

- 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 wanted 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
- * All resources can be found at the end of this lesson

Lesson Plan

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.

- 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 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 hand in this worksheet at the end of class or 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 student 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 can 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 students assigned specific positions

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.

Resources

| | |
|---|----|
| <i>Student Handout: Who Has the Advantage? Fact Cards</i> | 4 |
| <i>Student Handout: Who has the Advantage? Chart</i> | 6 |
| <i>Student Worksheet: Decision Time!</i> | 7 |
| <i>Student Handout: Chronology of War</i> | 8 |
| <i>Student Worksheet: Advantage Follow-up Questions</i> | 12 |
| <i>Marking Rubric</i> | 13 |

Student Handout: Who Has the Advantage? Fact Cards

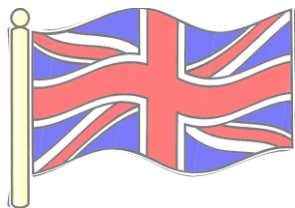
The following facts are to go on the “Who has the Advantage?” Chart under British Advantage, Neutral or American Advantage

- The United States had a population of more than **four million** in 1812
- The Americans were **facing uprisings** from Native groups upset with American settlers moving westward into their territories.
- The American military was made up of approximately **7,000 regular troops**.
- 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 economy of British North America and Upper Canada was agricultural. Almost all manufactured **goods were imported**.
- All military stores and equipment for British North America had to be **imported from Great Britain**.

- Not all Americans supported the idea of war. Many New Englanders, in fact, **openly opposed the war.**
- Most of the British officers and regular army soldiers had at least **some war experience.**
- 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 **United States had factories** that could produce military weapons located quite close to the borders of British North America.
- An **American militia with 50,000 volunteers** was set up in 1812.
- **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.
- 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.

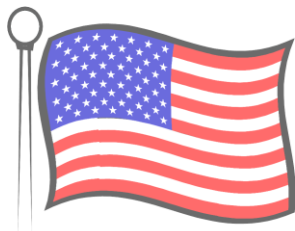
Student Handout: Who has the Advantage? Chart

British Advantage



Neutral

American Advantage



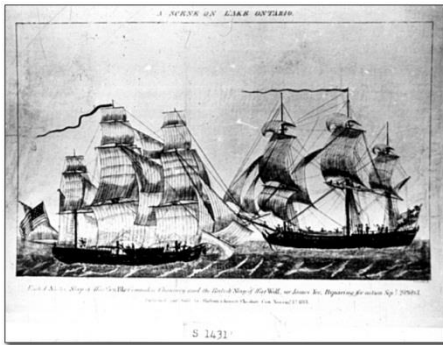
Student Worksheet: Decision Time!

The USS General Pike and HMS Wolf,
September 28, 1813

Archives of Ontario Photographic Collection

Reference Code: S 1431

Archives of Ontario



Who Would Have the Advantage at the beginning of the War of 1812? For what reasons?

Reason 1:

Evidence for Reason 1:

Reason 2:

Evidence for Reason 2:

Reason 3:

Evidence for Reason 3:

Student Handout: 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.














Britain
























American



| War of 1812 | Winning side / Flag images |
|---|---|
| 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 |  |

| War of 1812 | Winning side / Flag images |
|---|---|
| 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 | |
| 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 Macdonnell 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 |  |

| War of 1812 | Winning side / Flag images |
|--|---|
| 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. |  |
| 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 | |
| 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 |  |

| War of 1812 | Winning side / Flag images |
|---|---|
| August 12: British naval and army personnel capture two American war vessels off Fort Erie: the Ohio and the Sommers. |  |
| 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 Niagara Peninsula | |
| December 25: Treaty of Ghent signed ending the War of 1812 | |
| 1815 | |
| 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 chose to have the advantage at the beginning of the war really did have an advantage. Did that that advantage continued to the end of 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? Did your prediction hold true? Was there any pattern to which side won when?
2. What was the most significant battle fought in 1812? Why did you choose that particular battle?
3. Did any change occur to the pattern of victories in 1813? Why do you think that did or did not happen?
4. What was the most significant battle fought in 1813? Why did you choose that particular battle? Did any change occur to the pattern of victories in 1813? Why do you think that did or did not happen?
5. 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?
6. By 1814 both sides were ready to negotiate a peace settlement. Why do most historians argue that there was no winner to this war?
7. The Treaty of Ghent ending the war was signed December 25, 1814 yet 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 | Evidence used to back up decision is intuitive, informative, thoughtful and detailed |