

Prompt 5.6 - Adams & Controversy

Warmup:

Activity: Go through the box of Adams quotes. Copy 2 significant ones and explain their significance.

Quote 1 “

From:

To:

Date:

Explain -

Quote 2 “

From:

To:

Date:

Explain -

Share: Write down something interesting you learned from another group's quote.

Brainstorm: Write at least 5 words that describe John Adams in your opinion.

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Read: Read about each problem Adams' faced and think about what you would do in his situation.

The XYZ Affair

After Washington's retirement, Thomas Jefferson wrote that the former "*president is fortunate to get off just as the bubble is bursting, leaving others to hold the bag.*" This "bubble" was the **Jay Treaty** and it would prove to be a significant problem for John Adams.

Washington signed the "Jay Treaty" to keep peace between Britain and the United States. This treaty, however, angered France. The French navy began attacking American merchant ships bound for Britain. Many Federalists called for President Adams to declare war while the Republicans wanted Adams to **negotiate** (talk) with France. Adams needed to decide whether to agree with his own party and declare war or side with the Republicans and try to negotiate with France.

If we were Adams, we would...because...

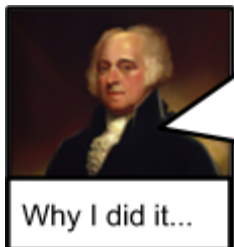


John Adams decided to **defy** (go against) his own party, the Federalists, by negotiating with France. John Adams sent **diplomats** (negotiators) to France with the goal of creating a peace treaty. Upon arrival, three French ambassadors, nicknamed "X", "Y", and "Z", greeted the American diplomats. They asked for **bribes** (money) in order to start negotiations. The American diplomats gave them bribes but France still refused to negotiate. Instead, they kept attacking The United States.

This embarrassing story eventually made its way back to the American public. Angry Federalists wrote letters to Adams, pushing for war while angry Republicans thought Adams was a fool for giving France bribes. Adams **persisted** (kept trying) with negotiations even though France kept attacking American ships. Over the next two years, the United States was in a "**Quasi War**" (half war) with France because Adams did not fight back to French attacks.

If Adams had declared war, he could have increased his popularity with his own Federalist party. However, Adams thought this could ruin the nation. By siding with Jefferson, Adams' popularity decreased and he eventually lost re election.

Analysis: Did Adams pick his party over his country? Explain.



Why I did it...

The Alien & Sedition Acts

At first, President Adams tried to work closely with Vice President Jefferson. However, "party violence," Adams said, made such efforts "useless." Jefferson had begun printing fake news about Adams to make him look bad. When Adams found out, he wrote that Jefferson's "soul [was] poisoned with **ambition** [desire of power]." The two broke off their friendship for many years.

Adams was also worried about how easily manipulated Americans were by foreign diplomats. Many Americans had rioted in the streets against the respected George Washington simply because a French diplomat named "Citizen Genet" convinced them to. As a result, John Adams and the Federalist Congress decided that something must be done to limit the influence of foreign diplomats and fake news.

If we were Adams, we would...because...



The Federalist Congress and John Adams signed "The Alien and Sedition Acts" into law. The Sedition Act made **sedition**—encouraging rebellion against the government—a crime. Its definition of sedition included "printing, writing, or speaking in a scandalous or **malicious** [hateful] way against the government ... or the President." In reality, however, John Adams used this law to imprison journalists. Some of these journalists had printed fake news but many were simply critical of Adams without lying. Many Americans were outraged and saw this as a horrible violation of the first amendment.

The Alien Acts were aimed at **aliens** (noncitizen immigrants), like "Citizen Genet" and did two major things. First, it allowed the president to **deport** (remove) immigrants who were suspected of stirring up trouble. Second, it increased the time it took for an immigrant to become a **citizen** (someone who can vote). Usually it would take 5 years for an immigrant to become a voting citizen. Instead, The Alien Acts made immigrants wait 14 years before they were allowed to cast a ballot and vote. Coincidentally, most immigrants supported Republicans. By lengthening the time it took for immigrants to be allowed to vote, Adams tried to take potential votes away from Jefferson in the next election.

Analysis: Did Adams pick his party over his country? Explain



Why I did it...

Cooldown: Was John Adams a good president? Why or why not?

From : John Adams

To: Thomas Jefferson

Year: 1819

“Washington ... is too **illiterate** [can’t read], **unlearned** [not smart], **unread** [not educated] for his **station** [president] ... [However,] he [was] indeed a Thoughtful Man”

From : John Adams

To: Benjamin Rush

Year: 1806

"Alexander Hamilton’s **projects** [work] ... all **arose** [came] from a **superabundance** [a lot] of **secretions** [poop]...”

From : John Adams

To: James Warren

Year: 1783

"[Benjamin Franklin’s] whole Life has been one continued Insult to good Manners and Decency.”

From : John Adams

To: Benjamin Rush

Year: 1806

“Yet I lose all Patience, when I think of [Hamilton,] a **bastard brat** [fatherless, unbehaved child] of a **Scotch Peddler** [drug dealer] ...”

From : John Adams

To: Abigail Adams

Year: 1776

“We know better than to **repeal** [stop] our **Masculine systems** [sexism]. Altho they are in full Force, you know they are little more than Theory ... [Men] have only the Name of Masters, and rather than give up this, which would completely subject Us to the **Despotism** [tyranny] of the **Petticoat** [dress].”

From : John Adams

To: James Sullivan

Year: 1776

“Shall we say, that every individual of the community, old and young, male and female, as well as rich and poor, must **consent** [agree]... to every act of **legislation** [making laws]? This is impossible.”

From : John Adams

To: Readers of his book

Year: 1787

“The **proposition** [idea], that the people are the best **keepers** [protectors] of their own **liberties** [freedom], is not true; they are the worst conceivable; they are no keepers at all; they can neither judge, act, think, or will, as a political body.”

From : John Adams

To: Massachusetts Militia

Year: 1798

“We have no government ... capable of **contending** [dealing] with human passions ... Our Constitution was made only for a **moral** [good] and religious people. It is **inadequate** [unable] to ... any other.”

From : John Adams

To: Abigail Adams

Year: 1791

“My country has in its ‘wisdom’ **contrived** [created] for me the most **insignificant office** [The Vice Presidency] “

From : John Adams

To: Readers of his book

Year: 1787

“The right ... to kill a tyrant ... can no more be doubted, than to hang a robber, or kill a flea. But killing one tyrant only makes way for worse, unless the people have sense, spirit and honesty enough to establish and support a constitution guarded at all points against the tyranny of the one, the few, and the many.”

From : John Adams

To: Abigail Adams

Year: 1776

“There are few people in this world with whom I can **converse** [talk to].”

From : John Adams

To: Readers of his book

Year: 1787

“Children should be educated and instructed in the principles of freedom.”

From : John Adams

To: Edmund Jenings

Year: 1782

“Thanks be to God, that he gave me Stubbornness, when I know I am right.”

From : John Adams

To: John Quincy Adams

Year: 1781

“You will never be alone with a poet in your pocket.”

From : John Adams

To: Thomas Jefferson

Year: 1817

“Without religion this world would be something not fit to be mentioned in polite company, I mean Hell.”

From : John Adams

To: John Quincy Adams

Year: 1816

“Let the human mind loose. It must be loose. It will be loose.”

From : John Adams

To: Diary

Year: 1755 - 1804

“Tyranny can **scarcely** [rarely] be practised upon a **virtuous** [good] and wise people.”

From : John Adams

To: Benjamin Rush

Year: 1808

“Our obligations to our country never **cease** [end] but with our lives.”

From : John Adams

To: Thomas Jefferson

Year: 1813

“You and I ought not to die before we have explained ourselves to each other.”

From : John Adams

To: Benjamin Rush

Year: 1790

“The History of our Revolution will be one continued [lie] ... That Dr. Franklins electrical Rod, smote the Earth and out sprung General Washington. That Franklin electrified him with his rod—and thence forward these two **conducted** [were in charge of] all the **Policy** [decisions], Negotiations, and War.”

From : John Adams

To: William Tudor

Year: 1819

“Slavery is an evil of **Colossal** [large] **Magnitude** [size].”

From : John Adams

To: Thomas Jefferson

Year: 1814

“As long as Property exists, it will **accumulate** [grow] in ... Families. As long as Marriage exists, Knowledge, Property and Influence will accumulate in Families.”

From : John Adams

To: Abigail Adams

Year: 1775

“Liberty, once lost, is lost forever.”

From : John Adams

To: His readers

Year: 1798-90

“Rivalries must be controlled, or they will throw all things into confusion; and there is nothing but despotism or a balance of power which can control them.”

From : John Adams

To: Diary

Year: 1796

“The Christian religion is, above all religions that ever existed, the religion of wisdom, **virtue** [goodness], **equity** [equality], and humanity...”

From : John Adams

To: John Quincy Adams

Year: 1790

“Avoid as much as possible a [political] Party Spirit... your Country should be your only **Object** [goal].”

From : John Adams

To: Jonathan Jackson

Year: 1780

“There is nothing which I **dread** [fear] so much as a division of the republic into two [political] parties...”

From : John Adams

To: Diary

Year: 1755-56

“I set out with a firm **resolution** [goal] ... never to commit any meanness or injustice...”

From : John Adams

To: Thomas Jefferson

Year: 1815

“We may appeal to every page of history ... that the [common] people, when they have been **unchecked** [uncontrolled], have been as unjust, tyrannical, brutal, **barbarous** [savage] and cruel as any king ...”

From : John Adams

To: His readers

Year: 1798-99

"He who never learns his ABC Forever will a blockhead be."

From : James Callender

To: The Public

Year: 1800

“[Adams is] a hideous **hermaphroditical** [both female and male] character which has neither the force and firmness of a man, nor the gentleness and sensibility of a woman.”

From : Benjamin Rush

To: Congress

Year: 1790

“[Adams] saw the whole of a subject at a single glance...”

From : Thomas Jefferson

To: James Madison

Year: 1787

“[Adams] is **vain** [self-absorbed], **irritable** [angry], and a **bad calculator of** [doesn't understand] ... men. This is all the **ill** [bad] which can possibly be said of him. He is **profound** [intelligent] in his views and accurate in his judgment ... He is so **amiable** [likable] that ... you will love him...”

From : John Adams

To: Abigail Smith [Adams], his wife

Year: 1764

"My Dear **Diana** [Abigail's nickname]...

... Oh my dear Girl, I thank Heaven that another **Fortnight** [2 weeks] will **restore** [bring] you to me -- after so long a separation. My soul and Body have both been thrown into Disorder, by your Absence, and a Month of two more would make me the most insufferable **Cynick** [grumpy person], in the World. I see nothing but **Faults, Follies, Frailties and Defects** [bad things] in [everybody], lately.

But you who have always softened and warmed my Heart, shall restore my **Benevolence** [kindness] as well as my Health and **Tranquility** [peacefulness] of mind. You shall polish and **refine** [fix] my **sentiments** [feelings] of Life, banish all the unsocial and ill natured Particles in my Composition, and form me to that happy Temper, that can reconcile a quick **Discernment** [judgement] with a perfect **Candour** [honesty]. Believe me, now & ever yr. Faithful”