

## War of 1812

### The Basics

#### **SUBJECT**

US History – The War of 1812

#### **TARGETED GRADE LEVEL**

8<sup>th</sup> Grade American History

### STANDARDS

#### **Common Core Standards:**

- RH.6-8.2. 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.
- RH.6-8.1. Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- RH.6-8.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.
- RH.6-8.9. Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

#### **PA State Standards**

- 8.3.8.B. Evaluate the importance of historical **documents, artifacts** and places critical to United States history.
- 8.3.8.C. Summarize how continuity and change have impacted U.S. history.

### The Lesson

#### **Unit Overview:**

This unit is developed to consider the improbable U.S. military successes during the War of 1812. It naturally follows a similar unit on U.S. military failures during the same war. In particular these lessons focus on the battles of Baltimore and New Orleans as well as the naval encounter in which the U.S.S. Constitution defeated the HMS Guerriere. Students will consider the historical framework for these victories; how they impacted influenced Americans at the time. The songs presented act as a window onto the thoughts of the population of the United States during its first real trial since the Revolutionary War. Students will examine how the song writers and musicians chose to express their thoughts and emotions regarding the war. Each of the songs provides a unique view of the times. *The Constitution and the Guerriere* provides a glimpse of early naval success against the British fleet. *The Battle of Baltimore*, a rollicking victory song, provides an interesting comparison with the *Star Spangled Banner*, especially when it is considered that the victory in question came just after the British Capture of Washington D.C. Lastly, *The Eighth of January*, and

*The Battle of New Orleans*, which borrows the same melody, provide a picture of how important the final victory of the war was to the country.

### **Introduction:**

Each day of this lesson incorporates song activities, which push students toward the consideration of music as a historical tool. Day one ends with the students making connections between the message of a song and its use of the older and much used 'Yankee Doodle' tune. During day two students consider two songs written about the same battle, eventually forming opinions and giving evidence as to why one became the national anthem and the other was largely forgotten. The final day requires students to trace the evolution of a song from traditional tune to modern recording. All of these steps build on each other and require students to attempt to put themselves in the shoes of the writers, performers, and listeners for whom these songs were contemporary.

### **Objectives:**

- Analyze four musical pieces commemorating American victories in the War of 1812
- Compare two accounts of the Battle of Baltimore.
- Describe the successes of the United States military in the War of 1812.
- Identify characteristics that give songs longevity in popular usage.

### **Resources:**

Listening Activity Graphic Organizer ( See Below)

### Songs

- "Constitution and the Guerrier"
  - This song celebrates the victory of USS Constitution commanded by Issac Hull over the HMS Guerrier in the first year of the war. This song was widely published and performed and is set to the tune of the "Landlady of France" or "Brandy O", which was performed several times in Boston in the years leading up to the outbreak of war as part of a dramatic production. The tune goes further back to a traditional Irish song called "The Dandy O".<sup>12</sup>
  - Music from "Brandy O"<sup>3</sup>
  - Recommended Recording: "Constitution and the Guerrier" by The Lost Radio Rounders<sup>4</sup>
  - Lyrics are from the *Naval Songster*<sup>5</sup>
- "Battle of Baltimore"
  - This is a victory song set to the tune of 'Yankee Doodle'. It was written some time after the naval and land assaults on Baltimore in September of 1813 and was published in the National Songster in 1814. The song details some

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<sup>1</sup> Keller, K. (2011). *Music of the war of 1812 in America*. Annapolis, MD: The Colonial Music Institute.

<sup>2</sup> Lawrence V. B. *Music for Patriots Politicians and Presidents*. New York, NY: MacMillan Publishing Co.

<sup>3</sup> G.E. Blake (c. 1810) Philadelphia reprinted in Keller (2011)

<sup>4</sup> Lidsay, T. (Performer), & Eck, M. (Performer) (2012). *Constitution and the guerrier* [Web]. Retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=07mCv35ByWc>

<sup>5</sup> M.E. Bargis, 1814. Fredericktown MD reprinted at <http://www.contemplator.com/america/constitutn.html>

portions of the battle and calls on Americans to fight with the same spirit exhibited in the defense of Baltimore.<sup>6</sup>

- Printed music can be found in *Music of the War of 1812 in America*<sup>7</sup>
- Recommended Recording: “The Battle of Baltimore” by David Hildebrand from *Music of the War of 1812*<sup>8</sup>
- Lyrics are from *National Songster*<sup>9</sup> and reprinted in *Music of the War of 1812 in America*.
- “Star Spangled Banner”
- “The Eighth of January”
  - Originally titled “Jackson’s Victory” this traditional fiddle tune celebrates Andrew Jackson’s victory over the British at the Battle of New Orleans on the 8<sup>th</sup> of January in 1815. Although there is no known author or lyrics the melody had significant staying power and was recorded in FSA camps in 1941 with variety of lyrics having been grafted on. The tune suggests a dance atmosphere and continued to be popular for square dances through the 1940’s.<sup>10</sup>
  - Several variations in the music exist. One variant can be found at thesession.org (<http://thesession.org/tunes/1306>)
  - Recommended Recording: “The Eighth of January” by Patrick McCauley and Barbara Stevens<sup>11</sup>
- “The Battle of New Orleans”
  - Written in 1936 by Jimmy Driftwood to the tune from “The Eighth of January” this song made it onto the top of the Billboard’s country music charts when it was recorded by Johnny Horton in 1959. The song was subsequently covered by The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band in 1975. The song tells the story of the Battle of New Orleans from the perspective of soldiers in Andrew Jackson’s army defending the city. Specifically noted in the lyrics is the use of cotton bales as defenses for Jackson’s troops.<sup>12</sup>
  - Recommended Recordings: “Battle of New Orleans” by Johnny Horton<sup>13</sup> and “Battle of New Orleans” by The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band<sup>14</sup>

## References:

1. Keller, K. (2011). *Music of the war of 1812 in America*. Annapolis, MD: The Colonial Music Institute.
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<sup>7</sup> Keller, (2011)

<sup>8</sup> Hildebrand, D. (2012). *Music of the war of 1812* [CD].

<sup>9</sup> *National Songster* (1814). J. Gruber & D. May (Eds.) Hagers-town

<sup>10</sup> Library of Congress. *Battle of new orleans*. (2010, Oct 13). Retrieved from <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/today/jan08.html>

<sup>11</sup> McCauley, P. (Performer), & Stevens, B. (Performer) (2008). *The eighth of january* [Web]. Retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=54HJ6Pj9StA>

<sup>12</sup> *Billboard charts - johnny horton*. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.billboard.com/artist/305073/johnny-horton/biography>

<sup>13</sup> Horton, J. (Performer) (1959). *The battle of new orleans* [Web]. Retrieved from [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9CnPv\\_1SVh0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9CnPv_1SVh0)

<sup>14</sup> McCauley, P. (Performer), Fadden, J. (Performer), Hanna, J. (Performer), & Ibbotson, J. (Performer) (1975). *Symphonion dream* [CD]. Available from [http://www.nittygritty.com/music.html?dd\\_id=38](http://www.nittygritty.com/music.html?dd_id=38)

3. G.E. Blake (c. 1810) Philadelphia reprinted in Keller (2011)
4. Lidsay, T. (Performer), & Eck, M. (Performer) (2012). *Constitution and the guerrier* [Web]. Retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=07mCv35ByWc>
5. M.E. Bargis, 1814. Fredericktown MD reprinted at <http://www.contemplator.com/america/constitutn.html>
6. Hildebrant, D. (2012). *Music of the war of 1812* [CD].
7. *National Songster* (1814). J. Gruber & D. May (Eds.) Hagers-town
8. Library of Congress. *Battle of New Orleans*. (2010, Oct 13). Retrieved from <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/today/jan08.html>
9. McCauley, P. (Performer), & Stevens, B. (Performer) (2008). *The Eighth of January* [Web]. Retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=54HJ6Pj9StA>
10. *Billboard charts - johnny horton*. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.billboard.com/artist/305073/johnny-horton/biography>
11. Horton, J. (Performer) (1959). *The Battle of New Orleans*[Web]. Retrieved from [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9CnPv\\_1SVh0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9CnPv_1SVh0)
12. McEuen, J. (Performer), Fadden, J. (Performer), Hanna, J. (Performer), & Ibbotson, J. (Performer) (1975). *Symphonion Dream* [CD]. Available from [http://www.nittygritty.com/music.html?dd\\_id=38](http://www.nittygritty.com/music.html?dd_id=38)

### **Discussion Questions and Vocabulary:**

#### **Day 1:**

“Constitution and the Guerrier”

Vocabulary:

Flog - Beat with a whip or stick to punish or torture

Tars - Sailors

Rammer – Warship

Weather-gage - A nautical term used to describe the advantageous position of a sailing ship being upwind of another and thus being able to initiate or break off from combat.

Score – Older term for the number twenty

Mizzen – Short for mizzenmast; third mast from the bow in a vessel having three or more masts

Broadside - A nearly simultaneous firing of all the guns from one side of a warship.

Ensign - A flag or standard, esp. a military or naval one indicating nationality.

Discussion Questions:

- *What effect would these victories have had on the navy, the military in general, or the nation as a whole?*
- *Imagine this song when it was originally performed. What is the scene? Who is there?*
- *What is happening while the song is being performed? What might happen after it is over?*

- *What does the use of the Yankee Doodle tune add to the message of the song?*

## **Day 2**

### “The Star Spangled Banner”

Vocabulary:

Spangled – To cover with spangles or other small sparkling objects

Gallantly - Brave, spirited, noble-minded, or chivalrous

### “The Battle of Baltimore”

Vocabulary:

Federal City – Washington D.C.

Batteries - Fortified emplacements for heavy guns

Discussion Questions:

- *How do these songs compare in message and in style?*
- *From whose perspective is each of these songs being sung?*
- *What attitude or tone is each conveying?*
- *Why did one become the national anthem and the other fade into relative obscurity?*

## **Day 3**

Vocabulary:

Nigh - Near

Old Hickory – Nickname soldiers gave to Andrew Jackson.

Squirrel guns – Long rifles, used by many of Jackson’s troops because they were accurate and good for hunting.

Brambles - Any rough, prickly vine or shrub.

Discussion Questions:

- *What emotions does this piece bring to mind?*
- *Where might this have been played?*
- *Why did the creator of this piece not add lyrics?*

## **Procedures:**

### **Day 1 – Success at Sea**

- Ask the class to reflect on what they already know about the naval conflicts of the War of 1812. Particularly draw out comments on the victories of Oliver Hazard Perry on Lake Erie and Issac Hull captain of the USS Constitution.

- *What effect would these victories have had on the navy, the military in general, or the nation as a whole?*
- Before listening ask the class to note anything they find important, interesting, or confusing about the lyrics, the music or the song in general.
- Have the class listen to the *Constitution and the Guerriere* without any introduction or lyrics to reference. After listening ask the following questions before playing the song again.
  - *Imagine this song when it was originally performed. What is the scene? Who is there?*
  - *What is happening while the song is being performed? What might happen after it is over?*
- After the song ends give 10min for each student write a description of what they imagined the performance experience to be.
- Discuss the various stories written by the class, keeping track of the places and scenarios mentioned. In addition ask students to name the tune (Yankee Doodle) and question them about why the author of the later song chose to use the same tune.
  - *What does the use of the Yankee Doodle tune add to the message of the song?*

Homework: Students will write a brief journal entry or letter describing their experience in hearing an original performance of the *Constitution and the Guerriere*.

## **Day 2 – The Battle of Baltimore**

- As a warm up and review activity from the previous discussion have students write a short statement explaining what effect music has on the message contained in a song’s lyrics. Collect these written responses.
- Explain that the class will listen to two songs written about the Battle of Baltimore in which the U.S. forces successfully defended the city from both naval and land attack. Their task will be to make notes comparing the two songs musically, lyrically, and in terms of message.
  - *How do these songs compare in message and in style?*
- Play the *Star Spangled Banner* and after a short discussion/reminder of the history of the national anthem follow up with by the *Battle of Baltimore*.
- Divide the class into pairs and provide each group with a copy of the Song Comparison graphic organizer as well as lyrics for each song. Play each song again and give the groups ten minutes to finish the graphic organizers.
- Form the pairs into groups of four to share their observations and insights, and instruct each group to choose a spokesperson to provide an overview of the group’s findings to the entire class.
- Discuss the differences reported by each group and pose the question; *From whose perspective is each of these songs being sung; What attitude or tone is each conveying?*
  - *Why did one become the national anthem and the other fade into relative obscurity?*

## **Day 3 (Two days later) – Closure - Jackson’s Victory/The Eighth of January**

- As the class enters have *The Eighth of January* playing and as they listen give them the Listening Activity graphic organizer
- Have the students discuss in groups of three discuss their observations on the music.
  - Give the groups background on the piece.
    - It was created after the Battle of New Orleans in commemoration of Gen. Jackson's victory over the British. The creator is unknown.
  - Direct the groups to answer these questions:
    - *What emotions does this piece bring to mind?*
    - *Where might this have been played?*
    - *Why did the creator of this piece not add lyrics?*
    - *Come up with lyrics that would fit the music and the purpose of the piece.*
  - If time allows, permit any group or individual that wishes to perform their lyrics while the song plays in the background.
- Discuss as a class which song (of the four presented in this lesson) has the most entertainment value and staying power.
- Play for the class Jimmy Driftwood's *Battle of New Orleans* (sung by Johnny Horton) followed by the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band's cover of the same song.
- Allow students to read the lyrics and discuss why this song as opposed to the others lasted for nearly 150 years.
- Provide each student with a blank outline map of the U.S. during the war of 1812 as well as the lyrics of each song used in each of the past three days. Instruct students to work with a partner and use classroom resources (atlases and encyclopedias) in plotting all the locations mentioned in these musical pieces.
  - Collect these maps to informally assess the students map reading and research abilities.

### **Evaluation:**

- Students will each write a one-page essay answering the questions posed above; *Why did 'The Eighth of January' and 'The Star Spangled Banner' have staying power that other songs of the period lacked? What might this tell us about the people who have listened to these songs over the years?*
  - Students should draw on all the information presented in class as well as the music and text from the other songs presented in this lesson.

### **Extension:**

- "The Hunters of Kentucky"
- Have the students examine the lyrics to this song and respond briefly to the questions below.
  - *Who is speaking in the song?*
  - *Why might this song have been used as a campaign aid during Jackson's run for the presidency?*

- *What makes this a good/bad campaign song?*
- *What can this song tell us about people who would have supported Jackson for president?*
- Using these answers as a jumping off point lead the class in a discussion of what Jackson represented as the first president from the west and from a state other than Virginia or Massachusetts. Encourage the class to consider what people would have supported Jackson and why as well as who would have been against his becoming president. This can lead into a discussion of the era of Jacksonian Democracy and the formation of the modern Democratic Party.
- Have students design campaign posters or pamphlets for or against Jackson, keeping in mind the song and what segment of the country's population is supporting Jackson.

**Reflection:**

The War of 1812 has been called America's 'forgotten war'. This lesson was written with the express purpose of rectifying, in a small way, that misconception. The War of 1812, far from being forgotten, was the impetus for actions political and cultural that would continue to shape the country right up to modern day. The hope is for students to realize the longevity of the war's effects from the United States' national anthem, to its oldest commissioned warship, to pieces of musical culture that have remained for nearly two centuries. In addition this lesson could easily be adapted to include the rise of Jacksonian Democracy and its lasting effects. This lesson attempts to place students in the mindset of the people who lived the war and for whom it was a matter of utmost concern, jubilation, pride, and sorrow.



## Appendix A: Listening Activity Graphic Organizer

Instruments	Rhythm/Tempo	Tone/Mood
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Message</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Based on what you wrote in the categories above what do you think the overall purpose of this piece of music is?)</p>		

