Historical context: The Jackson era is a period that stretches from about 1820 to 1845, the time of his death. During this period the United States was divided into sections, which were brought on by increased manufacturing in the northeast and the transportation revolution connecting the north and west. The south’s agriculture economy remained somewhat immune to the economic cycles of the rest of the country. Slavery migrated west into the Louisiana Territory and raised new issue in Congress when Missouri applied for statehood. The Federalist Party ceased to rival the Democratic-Republican, which divided into separate political parties. When Jackson came to the White House in 1829, he was the first from the new Democratic Party that campaigned on the newly enfranchised public. Historian’s opinions are divided when measuring the impact of the Jackson Presidency on the political, social, and economic climate of the United States.

### Was Andrew Jackson a “Champion of the People” or “King Andrew”?

1832 Political Cartoon: “King Andrew the First”

**Topic: Veto power**

1. What does the cartoon suggest about Jackson’s attitude towards the Constitution?

2. Jackson used the veto twelve times, more than all presidents up to that time combined. Why do you think he was criticized for this?

3. How does this cartoon specifically show Jackson’s use of Presidential power?

Does this show Jackson as a KING or champion for the COMMON MAN?

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**Andrew Jackson’s First State of the Nation Address, 1829 (excerpt)**

**Topic: Spoils System**

“The duties (jobs) of all public officers are... so plain and simple that men of intelligence may readily qualify themselves for their performance; and I can not but believe that more is lost by the long continuance of men in office than is generally to be gained by their experience. I submit, therefore, to your consideration whether the efficiency of the Government would not be promoted and official industry and integrity better secured by a... law which limits appointments to four years...I shall endeavor to select men whose diligence and talents will insure... able and faithful cooperation...”

4. This excerpt is about Jackson’s use of what was called the “spoils system” - what does he say about government jobs/positions - how difficult are they?

5. How long does Jackson think people should stay in government jobs/positions? Why?

Does the spoils system show Jackson as a KING or champion for the COMMON MAN?
Robert V. Remini, The Life of Andrew Jackson, 1988

Topic: Spoils System

One bit of advice (Secretary of State) Van Buren offered (Jackson) concerned the appointment of the collector of the Port of New York. This was a very sensitive and important position. Some $15 million annually passed through the collector’s hands. If any post needed a man of the highest integrity it was this one. And when Van Buren learned that Jackson intended to appoint Samuel Swartwout to the office he almost collapsed. Van Buren alerted the President immediately (that Swartwout had “criminal tendencies”).

… Unfortunately, Jackson refused to listen. He liked Swartwout because he had been an early supporter…and so he went ahead with the appointment. In time, of course, Swartwout absconded with $1,222,705.09. It was monumental theft…Jackson was mortified.

When the scandal broke, Jackson’s opponents doubled over with laughter… Here, then, was the bitter fruit of rotation, hooted the President’s critics. Here the dreadful consequence of denying the government the service of an elite bureaucracy in order to serve some idealistic democratic principle.

6. Why did Jackson give Samuel Swartwout a job as collector of the Port of New York?

7. What was the result?

Does this show Jackson as a KING or champion for the COMMON MAN?

Andrew Jackson’s Veto Message. Washington, July 10, 1832

Topic: Bank of the United States

To Congress:

“…The present Bank of the United States…enjoys an exclusive privilege of banking, …almost a monopoly of the foreign and domestic exchange.

It appears that more than a fourth part of the stock is held by foreigners and the (rest) is held by a few hundred of our own citizens, chiefly of the richest class. Of the twenty-five directors of this bank five are chosen by the government and twenty by the citizen stockholders… It is easy to conceive that great evils to our country…might flow from such a concentration of power in the hands of a few men irresponsible to the people.

It is to be regretted that the rich and powerful too often bend the acts of government to their selfish purposes.”

8. What reasons does Jackson give for disliking the bank?

9. Jackson also said, to a delegation of bankers discussing the recharter of the 2nd Bank of the United States (1832), “you are a den of vipers and thieves. I intend to rout you out, and by the eternal God, I will rout you out.” How does this quote show Jackson’s tone/attitude towards the bank?

10. Jackson deposited money from the 2nd Bank of the United States into state banks that were loyal to Jackson/Democrats, which went on a lending spree that built up a speculative bubble and ended, just as Jackson left office in 1837, in a sickening crash. Does this prove Jackson as a King or champion for the Common Man?

Does the bank war show Jackson as a KING or champion for the COMMON MAN?
Daniel Webster’s Reply to Jackson’s Bank Veto Message. Washington, July 11, 1832

Topic: Bank of the United States

“A great majority of the people are satisfied with the bank as it is… and by a desire to avoid embarrassment in the… concerns of the country, to secure the safe collection and convenient transmission of public moneys… against the possible effects of a wild spirit of speculation… (President Jackson’s message) sows… the seeds of jealousy and ill-will against the government of which its author is the official head. It raises a cry that liberty is in danger, at the very moment when it puts forth claims to powers heretofore unknown and unheard of… It manifestly seeks to inflame the poor against the rich…”

11. Find 3 arguments that Daniel Webster makes against Jackson’s veto of the 2nd Bank of the United States.

Does Daniel Webster portray Jackson as a KING or champion for the COMMON MAN?

“South Carolina’s Exposition and Protest” (John C. Calhoun on the Tariff of 1828)

Topic: Nullification Crisis

“... [The Federal] Government is one of specific powers, and it can rightfully exercise only the powers expressly granted, and those that may be "necessary and proper" to carry them into effect; all others being reserved expressly to the States, or to the people… The advocates of the Tariff have offered no such proof [that it is necessary and proper]. It is true, that the third [sic; eighth] section of the first article of the Constitution of the United States authorizes Congress to lay and collect an impost duty, but it is granted as a tax power, for the sole purpose of revenue; a power in its nature essentially different from that of imposing protective or prohibitory duties. ... The Constitution grants to Congress the power of imposing a duty on imports for revenue; which power is abused by being converted into an instrument for rearing up the industry of one section of the country on the ruins of another. The violation then consists in using a power, granted for one object, to advance another, and that by the sacrifice of the original object. ...”

12. Remember the ELASTIC CLAUSE in the Constitution? John C. Calhoun criticizes the tariff (tax) for “rearing up” or pitting one section (Northeast) of the US against another (South). What do you think? Should Congress be able to pass a law that helps only one part of the country?

Does the Nullification Crisis portray Jackson as a KING or champion for the COMMON MAN?

The Force Bill of 1833 Sec. 5

Topic: Nullification Crisis

SEC. 5. And be it further enacted, That whenever the President of the United States shall be officially informed, by the authorities of any state, or by a judge of any circuit or district court of the United States, in the state, that, within the limits of such state, any law or laws of the United States… is obstructed by the employment of military force, or by any other unlawful means, …it shall be lawful for him, the President of the United States, … requiring all such military and other force forthwith to disperse… the President shall be, and hereby is, authorized, promptly to employ such means to suppress the same, and to cause the said laws or process to be duly executed...

13. What powers did Congress give to President Jackson to enforce South Carolina to comply with the tax?

Does the Nullification Crisis portray Jackson as a KING or champion for the COMMON MAN?
President Jackson’s 2nd Annual Address, 1833

Topic: Indian Removal

“The consequences of a speedy removal will be important to the United States, to individual States, and to the Indians themselves. The… advantages which it promises to the Government are the least of its recommendations. It puts an end to all possible danger of collision between the authorities of the General [National] and State Governments on account of the Indians. It will place a dense and civilized population in large tracts of country now occupied by a few savage hunters. By opening the whole territory between Tennessee on the north and Louisiana on the south to the settlement of the whites it will incalculably strengthen the southwestern frontier and render the adjacent States strong enough to repel future invasions without remote aid. It will relieve the whole State of Mississippi and the western part of Alabama of Indian occupancy, and enable those States to advance rapidly in population, wealth, and power. It will separate the Indians from immediate contact with settlements of whites; free them from the power of the States; enable them to pursue happiness in their own way and under their own rude institutions; will retard the progress of decay, which is lessening their numbers, and perhaps cause them gradually, under the protection of the Government and through the influence of good counsels, to cast off their savage habits and become an interesting, civilized, and Christian community.”

14. How would Americans/settlers benefit from Indian Removal?

15. How does Jackson claim Native Americans would also benefit?

16. Gold was found on Cherokee land in 1828. How do you think this complicated matters for the “civilized tribes” like the Cherokee?

Does Indian Removal show Jackson as a KING or champion for the COMMON MAN?

“Memorial of the Cherokee Nation,” as reprinted in Niles Weekly Register, Aug 21, 1830

Topic: Indian Removal

We wish to remain on the land of our fathers. We have a perfect and original right to remain without interruption or molestation...

But if we are compelled to leave our country, we see nothing but ruin before us. The country west of the Arkansas territory is unknown to us... The far greater part of that region is, beyond all controversy, badly supplied with wood and water; and no Indian tribe can live as agriculturists without these articles. All our neighbors, in case of our removal, though crowded into our near vicinity, would speak a language totally different from ours, and practice different customs.... Were the country to which we are urged much better than it is represented to be and were it free from the objections which we have made to it, still it is not the land of our birth, nor of our affections. It contains neither the scenes of our childhood, nor the graves of our fathers.

17. What do the Cherokee believe will happen if they have to move?

18. What are reasons given for why they object?

19. John Marshall believed the Cherokee Nation had “an unquestionable right” to their territory and the Supreme Court ruling reflected this belief. Jackson said, “John Marshall has made his decision; now let him enforce it.” More than ¼ of the Cherokee will die on the Trail of Tears. What does this say about Jackson?

Does Indian Removal show Jackson as a KING or champion for the COMMON MAN?