

Document #2

The XYZ Affair

When President Washington left office in 1797, relations between France and the United States were tense. With Britain and France still at war, the French began seizing U.S. ships to prevent them from trading with the British. Within the year, the French had looted more than 300 U.S. ships.

Although some Federalists called for war with France, President Adams hoped talks would restore calm. To this end, he sent Charles Pinckney, Elbridge Gerry, and John Marshall to Paris. Arriving there, they requested a meeting with the French minister of foreign affairs. For weeks, they were ignored. Then three French agents - later referred to as X, Y, and Z - took the Americans aside to tell them the minister would hold talks. However, the talks would occur only if the Americans agreed to loan France \$10 million and to pay the minister a bribe of \$250,000. The Americans refused. "No, no, not a sixpence," Pinckney shot back.

Adams received a full report of what became known as the **XYZ Affair**. After Congress and an outraged public learned of it, the press turned Pinckney's words into a popular slogan, "Millions for defense, not one cent for tribute!" In 1798, Congress canceled its treaties with France and allowed U.S. ships to seize French vessels. Congress also set aside money to expand the navy and the army.



Questions:

1) What two countries were involved in the XYZ Affair?

2) What were the French doing?

3) How did Adams deal with the situation?

4) What did France want from the U.S.?

5) What did the U.S. do because of France's actions?

6) How did the XYZ Affair affect the relationship between the United States and France? Explain your answer using relevant details from the reading passage.

Directions: Analyze the political cartoon below the answer the questions that follow.



American newspapers fueled public anger over the XYZ Affair by publishing editorials and cartoons like this one. Here the five-man group ruling France demands money at dagger point from the three Americans. The American diplomats responds. "Cease hawking, monster! We will not give you sixpence!"

1) From whose point of view is the cartoonist taking?

2) What attitude does the cartoonist have toward France's role in the affair? How can you tell?

3) How do you think the XYZ Affair showed the young United States' growing confidence?

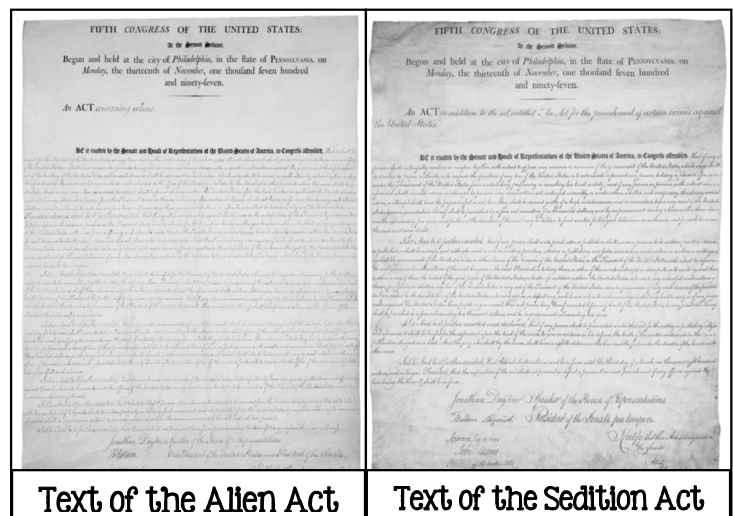
Document #3

The Alien & Sedition Acts

The conflict with France made Adams and the Federalists popular with the public. Many Democratic-Republicans, however, were sympathetic to France. One Democratic-Republican newspaper called Adams, "the blasted tyrant of America." In turn, Federalists labeled Democratic-Republicans "democrats, mobcrats, and other kinds of rats."

Angered by criticism in a time of crisis, Adams blamed the Democratic-Republican newspapers and new immigrants. Many of the immigrants were Democratic-Republicans. To silence their critics, the Federalist Congress passed the **Alien and Sedition Acts** in 1798. These acts targeted **aliens** - immigrants who were not yet citizens. One act increased the waiting period for becoming a U.S. citizen from 5 to 14 years. Other acts gave the president the power to arrest disloyal aliens or order them out of the country during wartime. A fourth act outlawed **sedition**, saying or writing anything false or harmful about the government.

With these acts, the Federalists clamped down on freedom of speech and the press. About 25 Democratic-Republican newspaper editors were charged under the act, and 10 were convicted of expressing opinions damaging to the government.



Text of the Alien Act

Text of the Sedition Act

Questions:

1) How did many Democratic-Republican editors of newspapers express their feelings towards President Adams?

2) Who did Adams blame for negative criticism?

3) What party were most new immigrants from?

4) Define **alien**.

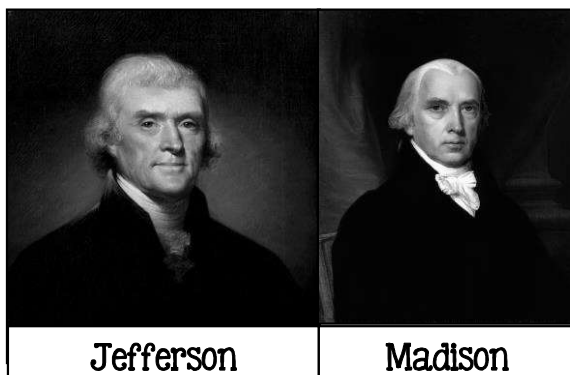
5) Define **sedition**.

6) How did the Alien Act make it dangerous being a new immigrant during this time?

Document #4

Kentucky & Virginia Resolutions

The Democratic-Republicans, led by Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, searched for a way to fight the Alien and Sedition Acts. They found it in a theory called **states' rights**. According to this theory, states had rights that the federal government could not violate. Jefferson and Madison wrote **resolutions** (statements) passed by the Kentucky and Virginia legislatures in 1798 and 1799. In the **Kentucky Resolution**, Jefferson proposed **nullification**, the idea that a state could nullify, or cancel, the federal law within the state. In the **Virginia Resolutions**, Madison said a state could interpose, or place, itself between the federal government and its citizens. *These resolutions declared that the Alien and Sedition Acts violated the Constitution.* No other states supported Kentucky and Virginia. However, within two years the Democratic-Republicans won control of Congress,



Jefferson

Madison

Questions:

1) What does it mean to “nullify?”

2) Explain the theory of states’ rights.

3) How might the theory of states’ rights undermine the federal government?

4) What did the Kentucky Resolution propose?

5) What did the Virginia Resolution propose?

6) What did both acts declare?

7) Why do you think no other state supported Kentucky and Virginia? Explain your answer using relevant examples and details.
