

THE WAR OF 1812

Directions: *Using the resources provided, please answer the questions that follow to the best of your ability.*

For The War of 1812

**Representative Felix Grundy of Kentucky,
December 1811**

For my part, I am not prepared to say that this country shall submit to have her commerce [prohibited] or regulated, by any foreign nation. Sir, I prefer war to submission.

Over and above these unjust pretensions of the British Government, for many years past they have been in the practice of impressing our seamen, from merchant vessels; this unjust and lawless invasion of personal liberty, calls loudly for the [interference] of this Government....

It cannot be believed by any man who will reflect, that the savage tribes, uninfluenced by other Powers, would think of making war on the United States. They understand too well their own weakness, and our strength. They have already felt the weight of our arms; they know they hold the very soil on which they live as tenants at sufferance. How, then sir, are we to account for their late conduct?...I therefore [conclude], that if British gold has not been employed, their baubles and trinkets, and the promise of support and a place of refuge if necessary, have had their effect....

We shall drive the British from our Continent - they will no longer have an opportunity of [plotting] with our Indian neighbors, and setting on the ruthless savage to tomahawk our women and children. That nation will lose her Canadian trade, and, by having no resting place in this country, her means of annoying us will be [lessened].

Against The War of 1812

**William Coleman, Federalist journalist, New York Evening Post,
April 21, 1812**

Citizens, if [money] is your object of going to war with England, the measure is perfect madness. You will lose millions when you will gain a cent. The expense will be enormous. It will ruin our country. Direct taxes must be resorted to. The people will have nothing to pay. We once had a revenue; that has been destroyed in the destruction of our commerce by the [trade restrictions we have placed against the warring countries]. For several years past, you have been deceived and abused by the false pretenses of a full treasury. That [ghost] of hope will soon vanish...

But to the people who must fight, if fighting must be done - who must pay if money be wanted - who must march when the trumpet sounds, and who must die when the "battle bleeds" to the people I appeal. To them the warning voice is lifted. From a war they are to expect nothing but expenses and suffering - expenses disproportionate to their means, and sufferings lasting as a life.

In our extensive shores and numerous seaports, we know not where the enemy will strike; or more properly speaking, we know they will strike when a nation is defenseless. Their fleets will hover on our coasts, and can trace our line from Maine to New Orleans in a few weeks. Gun boats cannot repel them, nor is there a fort on all our shores in which confidence can be placed. The ruin of our seaports and loss of all vessels will form an item in our list of expenses. Fortifications [forts] and garrisons [troops] numerous and strong must be added...

The conflict will be long and severe, resistance formidable, and the final result doubtful. A nation that can debar [shut out] the conqueror from Europe [Napoleon] from the sea, and resist his armies in Spain, will not surrender its provinces without a struggle. Those who advocate a British war must be perfectly aware that the whole revenue arising from all British America for the ensuing century would not repay the expenses if that war.

1. What reasons are given for going to war against Great Britain?
2. What reasons are given for *not* going to war against Great Britain?
3. Do you think the United States should have gone to war against Great Britain? Explain your answer.
4. Assess the impact of the War of 1812 on America.