

# James Madison

*“The truth is that all men having power ought to be mistrusted.”*

—James Madison



## Pre-Reading

### A. Warm-Up Questions

1. Who is called the Father of the Constitution?
2. What do you know about the Bill of Rights?
3. What do you know about the War of 1812?
4. Who fought in the Battle of New Orleans?
5. What does the term “Founding Father” mean?

### B. Vocabulary Preview

Match as many meanings and words as you can before you read.  
Check this exercise again after seeing the words in context on page 2.

- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| ___ 1. prosperous  | a) well-known   |
| ___ 2. prominent   | b) a part of a main thing   |
| ___ 3. patriot     | c) a change or addition to a document                               |
| ___ 4. branch      | d) wealthy  |
| ___ 5. legislative | e) cheerful, energetic, and attractive (usually describing a woman) |
| ___ 6. amendment   | f) a person who supported US independence in favor of British rule  |
| ___ 7. vivacious   | g) to suddenly take or take back                                    |
| ___ 8. reserved    | h) to discuss in order to come to an agreement                      |
| ___ 9. seize       | i) relating to laws   |
| ___ 10. negotiate  | j) disorganized and without a good reputation                       |
| ___ 11. ragtag     | k) one’s inner self (character and emotions)                        |
| ___ 12. spirit     | l) quiet and shy  |

## Reading

1. James Madison was the fourth president of the United States. He was born in 1751 to a **prosperous** Virginia family. James's father was a successful landowner. His mother came from a **prominent** family from Virginia. Throughout his youth, James was an excellent student. When he was 18, he began his first year at the College of New Jersey, now known as Princeton. He finished college in two years.
2. After James left Princeton, he still hadn't decided on a career. He did, however, become heavily involved in politics. He was a supporter of the **patriot** cause. Like the other Founding Fathers, Madison resented the unfair taxes and laws that the British government imposed on the American colonists. He also resented a government that refused to listen to the people.
3. Madison started his political career in the Virginia Assembly. There, he helped to draft the Virginia Plan. In 1787, Madison and other delegates met at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia. Before the convention, Madison had drafted a plan, based on the Virginia Plan, for a new constitution. After debate and certain changes, the new plan was accepted. The new constitution provided for a strong central government with three **branches**—legislative, executive, and judicial. Two bodies, the Senate and the House of Representatives, were created to form the **legislative** branch, which represents the people. James Madison also wrote the Bill of Rights, the first ten **amendments** to the Constitution.
4. In September of 1794, James married Dolley Madison, a beautiful widow. Dolley was 25 years old, and James was a bachelor of 43. Dolley and James were opposites in personality. Dolley was **vivacious** and outgoing. James was quiet and **reserved**. Both, however, loved politics.
5. In 1801, President Thomas Jefferson chose Madison to serve as his secretary of state. In 1809, Madison ran for president and won. At the time, the British were kidnapping American sailors and forcing them to serve on British ships. The British were also **seizing** the ships' cargoes. Because of these and other violations, President Madison asked Congress to declare war on Britain in 1812.
6. The War of 1812 continued for two years with no clear winner. In August 1814, the British invaded Washington, DC. British troops burned the White House and other buildings to the ground. In December 1814, Madison sent James Monroe to **negotiate** a peace treaty with the British. The news of the end of the war, however, hadn't reached the US in time to stop the Battle of New Orleans. British troops attacked, and General Andrew Jackson responded with a **ragtag** army of pirates, slaves and ex-slaves, and anyone else who would fight. Even though they were not well trained, Jackson's troops defeated the British, and the battle became a symbol of American independence and **spirit**.
7. James Madison died in Virginia in 1836. He is honored in American history as the "Father of the Constitution" and as the author of the Bill of Rights.

# Comprehension

## A. True or False?

Read the statements below.

If the statement is true, write T beside the sentence.

If it is false, write F and correct the information in your notebook.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. James Madison came from a wealthy family.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Madison didn't like the way that the British treated the colonists.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Madison was involved in politics, but he was not interested in the patriot cause.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Madison believed that states should be stronger than the central government.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The Constitution included three branches of government.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. James Madison and his wife, Dolley, had the same type of personality.

## B. Ask & Answer

Practice asking and answering the following questions with your partner.

Then write your answers in complete sentences in your notebook.

- 1. How long did it take James to finish college?
- 2. Why did Madison resent the British colonial government?
- 3. What are the three branches of government in the Constitution called?
- 4. What are the two bodies in the US Congress that represent the people?
- 5. How many amendments are there in the Bill of Rights?
- 6. Under whom did Madison serve as secretary of sState?
- 7. Why did Madison ask Congress to declare war on Britain?
- 8. Describe the soldiers in General Jackson's army at the Battle of New Orleans.
- 9. According to the story, why is James Madison called "The Father of the Constitution"?

# Vocabulary Practice

## A. The Same Meaning

Read each sentence. Decide which answer use the same meaning for the underlined word as the first sentence.

1. Two bodies were created in the legislative branch to represent the people.
  - a) The detective examined the body before it was taken to the morgue.
  - b) Ruth was elected president of the student body.
  - c) The history student's body of knowledge was impressive.
2. Madison came to the convention with a draft of a plan that became the US Constitution.
  - a) I wrote the first draft of the article in an hour.
  - b) In the old days, a man could avoid the draft by paying someone to fight in his place.
  - c) There's always a chilly draft in the school library.
3. James Madison was quiet and reserved in public, while his wife was sociable and talkative.
  - a) We reserve the right to ask you to leave if you make too much noise.
  - b) Those seats are reserved for our special guests.
  - c) It's hard to get to know her because she's a little reserved.
4. In 1801, President Thomas Jefferson chose Madison to serve as his secretary of state.
  - a) The First Lady served non-alcoholic drinks at the White House dinner.
  - b) She served on several important committees when she was a senator.
  - c) His talent for drawing will serve him well in his career as a fashion designer.
5. James Madison decided to run for president.
  - a) My brother and sister-in-law run a marathon every year.
  - b) More women are running for Congress than ever before.
  - c) When the governor is present, his office runs smoothly.
6. The United States has three branches of government: the executive, the legislative, and the judicial.
  - a) Some judges are appointed by the federal branch of the government.
  - b) The windstorm left branches, leaves, and twigs around the federal courthouse.
  - c) The library is branching out into book, movie, and cooking clubs.
7. James Madison became heavily involved in politics.
  - a) She walked heavily through the deep snow.
  - b) They couldn't pay their bills and ended up heavily in debt.
  - c) He was breathing heavily after he ran ten laps.

## Vocabulary Practice cont.

### B. Matching

Find the antonym for each word on the left.

- |       |               |                            |
|-------|---------------|----------------------------|
| _____ | 1. be born    | a) a married man           |
| _____ | 2. prosperous | b) unimportant, ordinary   |
| _____ | 3. youth      | c) to lose                 |
| _____ | 4. passionate | d) to die                  |
| _____ | 5. resent     | e) shy                     |
| _____ | 6. refuse     | f) adulthood, old age      |
| _____ | 7. bachelor   | g) to accept               |
| _____ | 8. vivacious  | h) boring, dull            |
| _____ | 9. outgoing   | i) neat, well-dressed      |
| _____ | 10. ragtag    | j) poor                    |
| _____ | 11. defeat    | k) indifferent, uncaring   |
| _____ | 12. prominent | l) to like, be happy about |

## Discussion

1. What is the difference between the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution?
2. What is the difference between the Constitution and the Bill of Rights?
3. How does the Constitution limit the power of the central government? What does separation of powers mean?
4. James Madison said, "It is universally admitted that a well-instructed people alone can be permanently a free people." "Everyone believes that only people who are informed can be free." What did he mean by that? Do you agree? Why or why not?

# Answer Key

## LESSON DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson, students read a biography about the fourth president of the United States. They learn about the War of 1812 and discuss the separation of powers in the US government.

**LEVEL:** Int – Adv

**TIME:** 1–2 hours

**TAGS:** James Madison, American presidents, president, US, politics, government, Bill of Rights, Founding Father, War of 1812

## Pre-Reading

### A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

Answers will vary.

1. James Madison is called the “Father of the Constitution.”
2. The Bill of Rights is the first ten amendments to the Constitution. It was added to protect certain rights of citizens such as the right to free speech, the right to bear arms, and freedom of religion.
3. The War of 1812 was fought between the United States and Britain because the British were kidnapping American sailors and stealing cargo, among other things.
4. The British fought General Andrew Jackson’s ragtag army in the Battle of New Orleans. The Americans won the battle.
5. The term “Founding Father” means a leader who helps to establish a new country.

### B. VOCABULARY PREVIEW

- |      |      |      |      |       |       |
|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|
| 1. d | 3. f | 5. i | 7. e | 9. g  | 11. j |
| 2. a | 4. b | 6. c | 8. l | 10. h | 12. k |

## Comprehension

### A. TRUE OR FALSE?

1. T
2. T
3. F – Madison supported the patriot cause.
4. F – Madison believed the central government should be strong.
5. T
6. F – James and Dolly had opposite personalities.

### B. ASK & ANSWER

1. He finished college at Princeton in two years.
2. The British colonial government imposed unfair taxes, regulations, and laws on the American colonists.
3. The legislative, executive, and judicial branches are the three branches of government.
4. The two bodies that represent the people are the Senate and the House of Representatives.
5. There are 10 amendments in the Bill of Rights.
6. Madison was President Thomas Jefferson’s secretary of state.
7. Among other violations, the British were kidnapping American sailors and forcing them to serve on British ships.
8. The soldiers in General Jackson’s ragtag army were pirates, slaves and ex-slaves, and anyone else who would fight. They were not, for the most part, experienced or well-trained soldiers.
9. James Madison wrote the first draft of the Constitution and was active in developing and defending it.

*(continued on the next page...)*

# Answer Key cont.

## Vocabulary Practice

### A. THE SAME MEANING

1. b    2. a    3. c    4. b    5. b    6. a    7. b

### B. MATCHING

1. d    3. f    5. l    7. a    9. e    11. c  
2. j    4. k    6. g    8. h    10. i    12. b

## Discussion

Use these questions for writing or speaking practice. For writing practice, you can assign one to each student or allow students to choose one. For speaking practice, discuss in groups or as a class.

### SPELLING NOTE:

This lesson shows the American spelling of the words *Favor* and *Practice*. Most other English-speaking countries spell these words this way: *Favour* and *Practise* (when used as a verb; *Practice* when used as a noun). Make it a challenge for your students to find these words in the lesson and see if they know the alternate spellings.