

James Monroe

“A little flattery will support a man through great fatigue.”

—James Monroe



Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. What do you know about President James Monroe?
2. How many of the first five presidents fought in the American Revolution?
3. What do you know about the Louisiana Purchase?
4. What was the Missouri Compromise?
5. Can you name three of the Founding Fathers of the United States?

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. plantation | a) to think highly of someone |
| ___ 2. admire | b) the US House of Representatives and the Senate |
| ___ 3. last | c) an elected head of state |
| ___ 4. US Congress | d) a large area where crops are planted |
| ___ 5. governor | e) to disapprove, be against |
| ___ 6. optimistic | f) to extend for a period of time |
| ___ 7. dispute | g) a feeling or act of unkindness |
| ___ 8. hostility | h) having high hopes for the future |
| ___ 9. oppose | i) to settle or solve a problem |
| ___ 10. resolve | j) to argue with or disagree with a decision |

Reading

1. James Monroe was the fifth president of the United States. He was born in Virginia in 1758 to a comfortable, middle-class family. His father owned a small **plantation**. Like the other Founding Fathers, James Monroe received a good education. When he was 16, James started his studies at William and Mary College. However, in 1776, he left school to join the Continental Army.
2. James served under General George Washington in the American Revolutionary War. He rose from lieutenant to captain, and then to major. After the war, Monroe decided to become a lawyer. He studied under Thomas Jefferson, who was the governor of Virginia at the time. Monroe loved and respected Jefferson. He learned a lot about law and government from him. Thomas Jefferson also **admired** Monroe. He once said that Monroe was “so honest that, if you turned his soul inside out, there would not be a spot on it.” The two men formed a friendship that **lasted** a lifetime.
3. James Monroe rose very quickly in the world of American politics. He was elected to **Congress** in 1783 and served until 1786. Four years later, he was elected to the Senate. In 1799, he was elected **governor** of Virginia. He served as minister to France under Washington, and minister to France and minister to England under Jefferson. In 1803, as Jefferson’s minister to France, he helped negotiate the Louisiana Purchase. During the War of 1812, Monroe also served as the secretary of state and secretary of war under James Madison. He was elected president in 1816.
4. Monroe took office during the “Era of Good Feelings.” Americans were feeling **optimistic** about the future. There were no wars or **disputes** with other countries. The United States was growing fast. A steady stream of settlers was moving west. People were buying land and houses, mostly with loans from banks. Four new states were added to the union. During this period, the US also bought Florida from Spain.
5. In 1820, Monroe was re-elected to a second term. He was still so popular that nobody ran against him. The mood of the country, however, was not as happy as in Monroe’s first term. In 1819, there had been a financial crash. People were losing their jobs, and many didn’t have the money to pay back their loans. Many banks failed during this period. There were other troubles too. **Hostility** was growing between the North and the South, especially over slavery. The South wanted to bring more slave states into the union. The North **opposed** slavery in any new state. In 1820, Monroe’s government tried to **resolve** this dispute through the Missouri Compromise, a bill that allowed one new slave state for one new free state and banned slavery north of the Missouri Compromise Line. However, conflicts over slavery would continue until the Civil War.
6. President James Monroe is remembered as an uncontroversial and extremely popular president. His major accomplishment was the Monroe Doctrine, passed in 1823, which held that European countries could not try to colonize any territory in North and South America. Monroe, who died in 1831, was the last Founding Father.

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 Monroe was the first president to come from a poor family.
- _____ 2. Like President John Adams, Monroe studied at Harvard.
- _____ 3. James Monroe held more than one rank in the American Revolutionary War.
- _____ 4. James Monroe studied law under George Washington in Virginia.
- _____ 5. Thomas Jefferson was Monroe's mentor.
- _____ 6. Monroe negotiated the Louisiana Purchase during Washington's presidency.
- _____ 7. James Monroe was a very popular president.

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 many ranks did James Monroe hold in the Continental Army?
2. What career did Monroe choose after he left the army?
3. According to the story, whom did Monroe respect and admire most?
4. Under which president did Monroe serve as secretary of state?
5. How many times was Monroe appointed minister to France?
6. Why were people optimistic during the "Era of Good Feelings"?
7. What was one reason that tension was growing between the North and the South?
8. How much new land was added to the union during Monroe's first term?
9. Who ran against Monroe in the election of 1820?
10. Did the "Era of Good Feelings" continue into Monroe's second term? Why, or why not?

Vocabulary Practice

A. Antonyms

Choose the antonym (opposite meaning) for each underlined word.

- Monroe left school to join the army.
 - stayed in
 - quit
 - went away from
- Monroe and Jefferson admired each other.
 - liked and respected
 - knew and visited
 - disliked and despised
- People felt optimistic about the country's future.
 - realistic
 - pessimistic
 - opportunistic
- During the "Era of Good Feelings," there were no major disputes or wars.
 - arguments
 - agreements
 - disagreements
- Monroe and Jefferson's friendship lasted a lifetime.
 - continued for
 - stopped for
 - took
- Many banks failed during the financial crash of 1819.
 - succeeded
 - struggled
 - closed
- The North opposed slavery.
 - proposed
 - supposed
 - supported
- Monroe's administration tried to resolve the dispute between the slave and free states.
 - question
 - settle
 - resent

Vocabulary Practice cont.

B. Matching

Find another definition for each word on the left.

- | | | | | |
|-------|-----|-------------------------------|----|---------------------------------------|
| _____ | 1. | stream: a small river | a) | a law |
| _____ | 2. | run: to jog | b) | to wait on |
| _____ | 3. | major: important | c) | to increase |
| _____ | 4. | serve: to work | d) | a system breakdown |
| _____ | 5. | join: to put together | e) | to compete for political office |
| _____ | 6. | hold: to maintain | f) | to become a member |
| _____ | 7. | spot: to see something | g) | to liberate |
| _____ | 8. | free: no charge | h) | an army officer |
| _____ | 9. | grow: to cultivate | i) | a type of something |
| _____ | 10. | bill: to charge | j) | a stain |
| _____ | 11. | form: to shape | k) | to grasp in one's hand |
| _____ | 12. | crash: a car accident | l) | a constant flow (of people or events) |

Discussion

- Monroe is described as an uncontroversial president.
Do you think any of his administration's decisions were controversial?
If so, which decisions were controversial? If not, why not?
- How were conditions in the country different in Monroe's second term?
- What was the purpose of the Monroe Doctrine?
- James Monroe said, "The right of self defense never ceases. It is among the most sacred, and alike necessary to nations and to individuals..."

George Washington said, "Firearms are second only to the Constitution in importance; they are the peoples' liberty's teeth."

Do you agree or disagree with these statements? How do you think these Founding Fathers would feel about gun control today?

Answer Key

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson, students read a biography about the fifth president of the United States. They learn about the “Era of Good Feelings” and discuss early notions of gun control.

LEVEL: Int – Adv

TIME: 1–2 hours

TAGS: James Monroe, American Presidents, fifth president, Founding Father, gun control, slavery, government

Pre-Reading

A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

2. Two. Presidents George Washington and James Monroe were soldiers in the American Revolutionary War.
3. President Thomas Jefferson bought the Louisiana Territory from France. This purchase doubled the size of the United States. James Monroe, as minister to France under Jefferson, helped to negotiate the purchase.
4. The Missouri Compromise was a bill that attempted to ease tensions between the North and the South over slavery. The Compromise allowed Missouri into the US as a slave state and Maine into the US as a free state, creating a temporary balance between the number of slave and free states.
5. Possible answers: George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe

B. VOCABULARY PREVIEW

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

Comprehension

A. TRUE OR FALSE?

1. F – He was from a middle-class family and was educated like the other Founding Fathers.
2. F – He attended William and Mary College.
3. T
4. F – He studied under Thomas Jefferson.
5. T

6. F – He helped negotiate the Louisiana Purchase under Thomas Jefferson.
7. T

B. ASK & ANSWER

1. Three. He was a lieutenant, captain, and major in the American Revolutionary War.
2. He wanted to become a lawyer.
3. Monroe admired Thomas Jefferson most.
4. Monroe served as secretary of state under President James Madison.
5. Twice. Monroe served as minister to France under Presidents Washington and Jefferson.
6. There were no wars or disputes with other countries. Also, the United States was growing fast. During this time, a steady stream of settlers was moving west. People were taking out loans to buy land and houses.
7. One reason for the growing tension was that the South was for slavery and the North was against slavery.
8. Four new states were added to the union during Monroe’s first term. The United States also bought Florida from Spain during this period.
9. President Monroe was so popular that no one ran against him in the election for his second term.
10. The “Era of Good Feelings” did not continue into Monroe’s second term. The economy was not good, and people were losing their jobs and homes. In addition, hostility was growing between the North and the South.

(continued on the next page...)

Answer Key cont.

Vocabulary Practice

A. ANTONYMS

- | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|
| 1. a | 3. b | 5. b | 7. c |
| 2. c | 4. b | 6. a | 8. a |

B. MATCHING

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

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