

# U.S. Presidents: Andrew Jackson

by ReadWorks



Andrew Jackson was the seventh president of the United States. He was also the first president to be born in a log cabin. He grew up on the frontier of the Carolinas. His parents were a poor farm couple from northern Ireland. Jackson's father died before he was born. His mother died when Jackson was 14 years old, leaving him an orphan. Despite Jackson's difficult childhood, he eventually moved to Tennessee and became a lawyer and landowner.

Jackson was nicknamed "Old Hickory" because of his toughness. He became famous for his skill as a general in the War of 1812. But his resilience was apparent years earlier when he served his country during the Revolutionary War. Thirteen-year-old Jackson and his younger brother were captured by the British. When a British commander ordered Jackson to scrub his boots, he refused. He argued he had rights as a prisoner of war. The commander got angry and lashed out with his sword. Jackson tried to protect himself with his arms. Jackson's hand was cut to the bone, and he suffered a gash to the head.

Soon after, Jackson and his brother were forced to march 40 miles to a military prison. Both of them contracted smallpox in prison. Jackson survived, but his brother was not so fortunate. Eventually, Jackson's mother arranged for his freedom. Tragically, she died soon after. "I felt utterly alone," Jackson said years later about losing his family.

Jackson stayed active in the military until he reached the age of 54. Although he was not interested, his friends nominated him for president. Leading up to the election, Jackson promised to represent America's "common man." His promises appealed to many, and he was

elected president. He was a founder of the Democratic Party, and he also supported efforts to give workers more rights.

Although Jackson was liked by many Americans, his legacy is not devoid of controversy. Jackson is notorious for his support of the forceful and harsh removal of Native American tribes from their lands. In May of 1830, he signed into law the Indian Removal Act which authorized the removal of Native Americans from their lands within existing state borders. This land was then taken over by the United States government. As a result of this removal policy, 15,000 Cherokee Native Americans were displaced. Four thousand out of the 15,000 Cherokee people died due to the hunger, exhaustion, and disease they faced on their forced march from their lands to present-day Oklahoma.

Despite Jackson's incredible mistreatment of the Cherokee, he is also remembered as a champion of American workers and individual liberty. Jackson served as president for two terms from 1829 to 1837. He died in June of 1845 in Tennessee.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Andrew Jackson was the first U.S. president to be born where?
  - A. in a hospital
  - B. in a log cabin
  - C. in a brick house
  - D. in a large mansion
  
2. Which of the following events happened first?
  - A. Jackson and his brother were captured by British soldiers.
  - B. Jackson and his brother marched 40 miles.
  - C. Jackson and his brother contracted smallpox.
  - D. Jackson refused to scrub the British commander's boots.
  
3. Andrew Jackson had a difficult childhood. What evidence from the passage supports this conclusion?
  - A. Jackson grew up on the frontier of the Carolinas.
  - B. Jackson's parents were from Northern Ireland.
  - C. Jackson was born in a log cabin.
  - D. Jackson became an orphan when he was a teen.
  
4. Based on the text, what makes part of Jackson's legacy controversial?
  - A. his difficult childhood on the frontier of the Carolinas
  - B. his support of the removal of Native American tribes from their lands
  - C. his support of American workers and individual liberty
  - D. his skill as a general in the War of 1812
  
5. What is this passage mostly about?
  - A. military prisons during the Revolutionary War
  - B. how Jackson founded the Democratic Party
  - C. Andrew Jackson's life and presidency
  - D. Andrew Jackson's long military career

6. Read the following sentences: "Both of them contracted smallpox in prison. Jackson survived, but his brother was not so fortunate." As used in this sentence, what does "contracted" mean?

- A. became ill with a disease
- B. became cured of a disease
- C. learned about a subject
- D. fought an enemy

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

\_\_\_\_\_ not being interested in politics, Jackson was nominated for office.

- A. Ultimately
- B. Therefore
- C. Since
- D. Despite

8. Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act in May of 1830. What occurred as a result of this act?

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9. How did Andrew Jackson show resilience and toughness throughout his life? Support your answer with two examples from the passage.

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10. The author explains Andrew Jackson was "nicknamed 'Old Hickory' because of his

toughness." The word tough can mean strong and resilient. It can also mean harsh and severe.

Explain whether one of these definitions or both of these definitions accurately describe Andrew Jackson. Use information from the text to support your answer.

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