

**Context and Background:** From reading this chapter, you should recognize that from 1789 to 1820, white men organized themselves into political parties divided on the question of which was more important: societal order or individual liberty. In this activity you will demonstrate your understanding of the origins of American politics by planning and carrying out a mock political convention to nominate candidates for the **election of 1808** (so the first presidential nominating convention was not actually held for half a century later, BIG DEAL!).

**Learning Objectives:** In carrying out this activity, you will:

- pay tribute to the founders of your assigned political party, Federalists or Republicans
- present speeches extolling the virtues of your party and its accomplishments
- design campaign buttons, posters, and slogans for your "ideal" candidate

**Criteria for Assessment:** Your group's convention will be graded based on:

- Do the speeches and platform accurately reflect the philosophy and program of the party?
- Do the campaign buttons, slogans, and posters depict the events of the time?
- Are the convention plans informative and engaging to the audience?

**Summary of assignments to be completed:**

1. As a group select an ideal name for the "prototype" Jeffersonian Republican / Hamiltonian Federalist candidate which your group will support for the 1808 Presidential nomination of your party (creativity / humor is encouraged, but try to embody the values and beliefs of the party in the name of your candidate).
2. As a group, from chapter 6, draw up a list of domestic and foreign policies previously promoted by your party (1790 - 1808 - also use of chapter 5, section 4 by Federalists).  
Exs: Jeff. Repubs - cut taxes in 1800, Embargo of 1807, etc.  
Ham. Feds - passed 1791 excise tax on whiskey, negotiated the Jay Treaty, etc.
3. As a group compile a list of at least three questions which, based on the views and beliefs of your party, challenges or puts on the spot the party you oppose.  
Exs: Jeff Repubs - "In 1798, your party enacted the Alien and Sedition Act which...How do you justify this tyrannical use of federal power and squashing of individual liberties?"  
Ham. Feds. - "You had the nerve to support the French Revolution and you see how that turned out. And you want these types of democratic excesses to exist in our nation?"
4. Draft a Party Platform speech which gives your party's history, explains broadly what it believes in (views of human nature, interpretation of the Constitution, proper role of the federal government), and introduces your candidate to the convention.
5. Draft a convention speech to be given by your nominee to be presented to the convention which
  - a. gives a brief biographical background of yourself in the proper "Jeffersonian" or "Hamiltonian" mold (fictionalization, if in character, is fine - just not too outrageous!)
  - b. explains to the convention the specific initiatives and policies pursued by your party when it has had control of the White House (during the 1790 to 1808 period)
  - c. as the next president, lays out your vision of "future America" under the guidance and leadership of yourself and the party you represent
6. Design a campaign button (copies for all to wear?) or poster which uses visual content / slogans to support your candidate and party platform and/or negatively portray the opposing party (remember how ugly the Election of 1800 was?) You may want to include a brief press-release which summarizes your candidate to be handed out to the audience so they remember what he is all about.

## Recommended Roles Within The Group:

- 1) Master of Ceremonies (Responsible for Assignments 1, 2, 3, 4)
- 2) Candidate (Responsible for Assignments 1, 2, 3, 5)
- 3) Campaign Worker / Public Relations Person (Responsible for Assignments 1, 2, 3, 6) and if a "4 man group"
- 4) Utility Man who helps out where needed with any and all tasks (the candidate's right hand man)

## Itinerary for the "Live Convention"

### I) The Hamiltonian Federalist Party Nominating Convention A) Group I

1. Distribution of leaflets, campaign badges
2. MC briefly summarizes party history and platform / Introduces candidate (Welcome...It is my pleasure to introduce to you...)
3. Candidate gives his campaign speech

B) other Hamiltonian Federalist Party groups proceed in same format as group 1

C) Hamiltonian Federalists vote in primary for "the man with a plan"

### II) The Jeffersonian Republican Nominating Convention (same procedures as above)

III) The two primary election winners entertain "challenge" questions from the opposition party

IV) And the winner of the 1808 election is...

**GOOD LUCK!**

