THE ELECTION OF 1800

(45 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students design campaign signs, buttons, and bumper stickers for John Adams, Federalist Party, and Thomas Jefferson, Democratic-Republican Party.

MATERIALS

Election Of 1800 handout; *Election Media* handout; overhead or blackboard

GET READY

✔ Copy the *Election Of 1800* and *Election Media* handouts for each student in your class.

✔ Make sure there are markers and rulers available for your entire class.

INSTRUCTIONS

✔ Split the class into two sections, one for each party (Federalist Party and Democratic-Republican Party). Students should be sitting in groups of four Federalists or four Democratic-Republicans as they brainstorm possible slogans and work on their buttons, signs, and posters.

✔ Distribute the *Election Of 1800* and *Election Media* handouts to your students. (Explain to your students that bumper stickers and campaign signs, etc. are most effective when they incorporate catchy slogans that succinctly celebrate or attack a specific candidate/political party.)

✔ Have your students read the *Election Of 1800* handout to get their instructions and to gain an understanding of the differing views of John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and their respective political parties.

✔ Use an overhead or blackboard to start the brainstorming of campaign slogans. Examples: "Vote Federalist: You Can Bank On it!" and "It's Adams Who's Alien to the American Way!"

✔ After students finish their *Election Media* handouts, each group should choose their best slogans and present them to the class.

✔ Share your insights on what the groups did well and what they might have wanted to do differently.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

★ *In 1800, there were probably few buttons and surely no bumper stickers. There were, of course, signs. What other campaign devices might have been used?* (Personal appearances and speeches, newspapers, flyers, songs, etc.)

★ *Would today's Democrats or today's Republicans be more likely to support: A smaller government? Higher tariffs? Additional taxation? Farming interests? Supporting foreign revolutions for liberty?*

★ *How was this election resolved?* (In the House of Representatives)

MORE!

Each party could script and film a TV commercial for the candidate. Ask groups to choose (from the list of presidential elections contained at the end of their textbooks) elections like 1800, which exemplified truly polar political philosophies. (Examples: 1860; 1932; 1964)

ELECTION OF 1800

CAMPAIGN RHETORIC: THE FIRST POLITICAL PARTIES SELL THEMSELVES IN THE ELECTION OF 1800!

Background Information: Most public officials today — whether they are at the local, state, or national level — belong to the Democratic Party or the Republican Party. Although there have been many political parties during the history of the United States, there were none at the time George Washington became president in 1789. Washington's ability and popularity made him a natural choice to become the nation's first chief executive. Since no one ran against him in the election, he was chosen by unanimous vote.

Two members of President Washington's cabinet were Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson. During the 1790s, these two developed different ideas about the power of the national government. They also differed on many issues having to do with domestic and foreign policy. The followers of Hamilton called themselves the Federalists. Those who sided with Jefferson were known as Democratic-Republicans. These were the first two political parties in the United States.

George Washington served as president from 1789 to 1797. John Adams, a Federalist, succeeded him to office. When Adams ran for reelection in 1800, he was opposed by Thomas Jefferson of the Democratic-Republican Party. The political parties to which these men belonged had different ideas on how the government should be run. (Information about the Federalist and the Democratic-Republican parties is given below.)

Instructions: Pretend it is 1800 and you are a party member who is helping to make campaign signs and buttons. The class will be divided in half so that each party has a group of workers. Write the name of your candidate and his party (ADAMS: FEDERALIST or JEFFERSON: DEMOCRATIC-REPUBLICAN) on the top of this page. Whichever group is yours, you must read the information provided below about both parties, and then design:
1) A CAMPAIGN SIGN
2) A BUTTON
3) A BUMPER STICKER

Put your designs on the *Election Media* handout. Each sign and button must:
1) Mention the name of your party and your candidate
2) Include information about what your candidate and party believe in or want to do; or attack what the other side believes in or wants to do. (Refer to the information below.)

Candidate-Political Party Information:

FEDERALIST PARTY CANDIDATE: John Adams
- Party supporters were the rich and well-born, the old aristocratic families, large landowners, and wealthy businessmen; the party was strong in the New England states.
- The party favored a strong central government and weaker state governments.
- The party thought the government should be controlled by the rich because they were better educated and therefore better prepared to run the government.

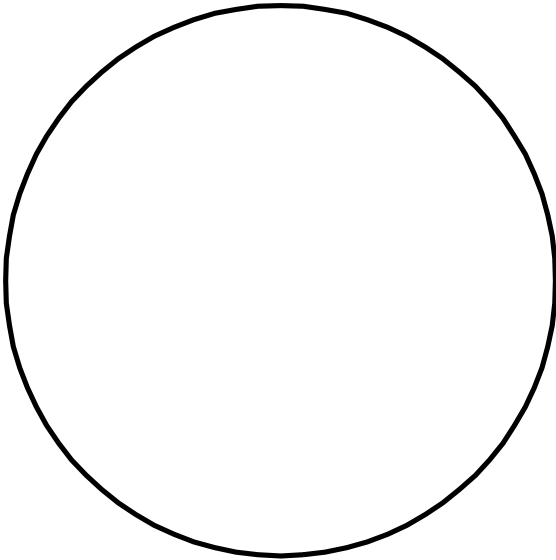*DEMOCRATIC-REPUBLICAN PARTY CANDIDATE: Thomas Jefferson*
- Party supporters were farmers, the poor, small businessmen, city workers, and Southern plantation owners; the party was the strongest in the South.
- The party favored a weak central government and stronger state governments and rights of states.
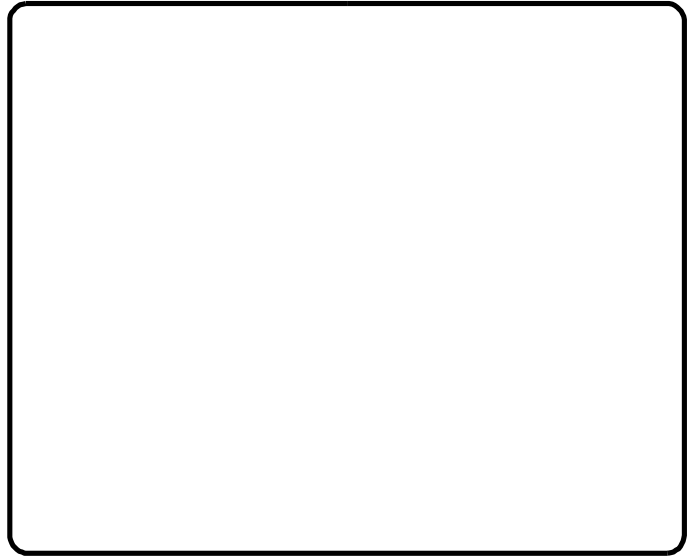- The party thought the government should be controlled by the "common man."

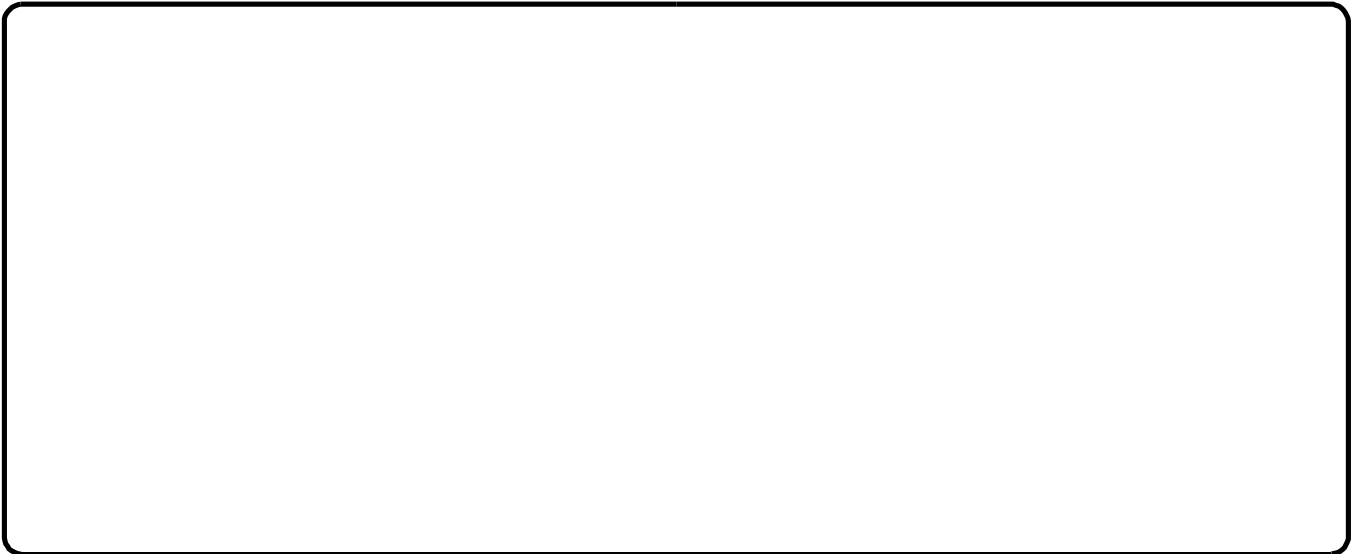# ELECTION MEDIA

Vote for _____ in the Election of 1800!

BUTTON

CAMPAIGN SIGN

BUMPER STICKER

Campaign worker's name: _____