

Fact or Fiction?

Name: _____

Below is a biography on James Madison. On the following page is a chart with ten statements. Indicate whether each statement is fact or fiction.

Father of the Constitution

James Madison was born on March 16, 1751, in King George County, Virginia. He graduated from Princeton University at the age of 20 in 1771. He served in the Virginia Constitutional Convention in 1776. In 1780, Madison served as a delegate to the Second Continental Congress. Madison served as the chief recorder at the Constitutional Convention in 1787. He is regarded as the "Father of the Constitution" for his ambitious Virginia Plan, which proposed that representation in both houses of Congress should be proportionate to a state's population. Later in 1787, Madison teamed with Alexander Hamilton (and to a small extent, John Jay) to write the Federalist Papers, a series of persuasive essays designed to convince the states to ratify the Constitution. Written under the pen name "Publius," the Federalist Papers is considered one of the most important documents in American history.

The Democratic Party

In 1789, Madison was elected to the House of Representatives, where he helped draft the Bill of Rights and fought against passage of the Alien and Sedition Acts. Madison married Dolley Payne Todd in 1794. He helped found the Democratic Party and was chosen as Jefferson's secretary of state in 1801. As a leader of the Democrats, Madison believed that power should be invested in the states rather than a central government, and that the nation's economy should ultimately be powered by agriculture. In contrast to the Federalists, Madison believed in forging diplomatic and economic relationships with France rather than England.

Presidency and War of 1812

Madison was elected as America's fourth president in 1808. George Clinton was appointed vice president but died in office in 1812. Madison's first term was plagued by tensions with Great Britain, and his foreign policy was widely criticized. Despite the problems that characterized his first term, Madison was reelected in 1812 for a second term. Elbridge Gerry was appointed vice president, but he too died in office in 1814. During Madison's second term, he guided the nation through The War of 1812 with Great Britain, which many called the second American Revolution. Unfortunately, the peace treaty signed between the two countries ultimately settled few of the issues between the countries.

Later Years

Madison served two terms in office. Following his presidency, he retired to his home in Virginia, Montpelier. He died in 1836, at the age of 85.

	FACT	FICTION
James Madison was the “Father of Virginia’s Constitution.”		
James Madison was one of the authors of the Federalist Papers.		
There were three authors of the Federalist Papers.		
Madison got married after he was elected to the House of Representatives.		
Madison believed the power should lie with a central government rather than with the states.		
Madison also believed that the national economy should be powered by agriculture.		
Madison believed that America should forge trade relations with England instead of France.		
James Madison would become president after Thomas Jefferson.		
Much of Madison’s presidency was plagued with problems between American and England.		
James Madison ultimately served two terms in office.		
The War of 1812 was between America and France.		

Answers:

	FACT	FICTION
James Madison was the “Father of Virginia’s Constitution.”		X
James Madison was one of the authors of the Federalist Papers.	X	
There were three authors of the Federalist Papers.	X	
Madison got married after he was elected to the House of Representatives.	X	
Madison believed the power should lie with a central government rather than with the states.		X
Madison also believed that the national economy should be powered by agriculture.	X	
Madison believed that America should forge trade relations with England instead of France.		X
James Madison would become president after Thomas Jefferson.	X	
Much of Madison’s presidency was plagued with problems between American and England.		X
James Madison ultimately served two terms in office.	X	
The War of 1812 was between America and France.		X