



YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2012 Volume III: The American Presidency

The First Twenty Years: Whiskey, Aliens... and Shopping!

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The overall goal of this curriculum unit is to help students access, comprehend and analyze historical information and relate it to our current circumstances. A more specific goal is to help them develop a genuine interest towards America's historical past, its politics and the developing role of the presidency. The unit consists of two parts: A) In *New Nation, New Government*, we start with a short review of the American Revolution and the Articles of Confederation; most of the unit focuses on how the creation of the Constitution offered Americans a strong, balanced central government in addition to safeguards against the possibility of a tyrannical leader. B) In *Lifeskills and the Presidencies of Washington, Adams and Jefferson*, we study the presidencies of Washington, Adams and Jefferson, and examine if a tyrant government could have risen; we learn how the Constitution, the form of government, and the presidents themselves contributed to keeping democracy in place. The students will also determine how these presidents used Lifeskills in their role as leaders of the nation, especially during the following key events of their administration: the Whiskey Rebellion in 1794, the Alien and Sedition Acts in 1798, and the Louisiana Purchase in 1803.

(Developed for Social Studies/History, grade 5; recommended for Social Studies/History, grade 5, and American History, Middle School grades)

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