

DBQ 5: GROWTH OF POLITICAL PARTIES

Historical Context

Today, most people associate the American political system with the ongoing conflict of political parties. Republican Party leaders and Democratic Party leaders carry on a seemingly nonstop debate as they compete for the support and votes of the American public. But in the early days of the American republic political parties did not exist, and our early leaders were generally glad of it. Most of them, including President Washington, feared that the existence of political parties would split the young country into warring groups, undermine our fragile national unity, and weaken public support for the new Constitution. Yet, though Washington and others tried to resist them, political parties nonetheless began to form, and they gradually developed into the party system of today.

■ **Directions:** The following question is based on the accompanying documents (1–7). As you analyze the documents, take into account both the source of each document and the author's point of view. Be sure to

1. Carefully read the document-based question. Consider what you already know about this topic. How would you answer the question if you had no documents to examine?
2. Now, read each document carefully, underlining key phrases and words that address the document-based question. You may also wish to use the margin to make brief notes. Answer the questions that follow each document.
3. Based on your own knowledge and on the information found in the documents, formulate a thesis that directly answers the question.
4. Organize supportive and relevant information into a brief outline.
5. Write a well-organized essay proving your thesis. The essay should be logically presented and should include information both from the documents and from your own knowledge outside of the documents.

Question: What led to the rise of political parties in the 1790s?

DBQ 5: GROWTH OF POLITICAL PARTIES, *CONTINUED***PART
A**

The following documents deal with the rise of political parties during the 1790s. Examine each document carefully, and answer the question or questions that follow.

Document 1

This excerpt is from a memo written by Thomas Jefferson in 1790, but published years later.

... Hamilton was not only a monarchist, but [in support] of a monarchy [based upon] corruption.

What did Jefferson think of Hamilton? _____

Document 2

These excerpts are from a letter written by Alexander Hamilton to a friend in 1792.

... Mr. Madison, co-operating with Mr. Jefferson, is at the head of a faction, decidedly hostile to me, and my administration; and actuated [motivated] by views ... subversive of the principles of good government, and dangerous to the Union. ... Mr. Jefferson ... [displays] his dislike of ... funding [the] debt. ... In respect to our foreign politics, the views of these gentlemen [Jefferson and his supporters] are ... unsound, and dangerous. They have a womanish attachment to France, and a womanish resentment against Great Britain.

Why did Hamilton distrust Madison, Jefferson, and their faction (party) and feel that they were dangerous to America's government?

(continued)

DBQ 5: GROWTH OF POLITICAL PARTIES, *CONTINUED***Document 3**

This excerpt is from a letter written by Thomas Jefferson in December of 1794.

The excise tax is an infernal [hellish] one . . . [the public's] detestation [hatred] of the excise tax is universal, and has now associated to it a detestation of the government. . . .

What did Jefferson think of Hamilton's excise tax? _____

Document 4

These excerpts are from "The Farewell Address," which President Washington released to the newspapers in September of 1796, six months before his retirement from the presidency. The primary purpose of this "farewell" was to announce his decision not to run for a third term as president. But Washington also saw it as an opportunity to provide some valuable advice to the American people.

Let me . . . warn you in the most solemn manner against the baneful [evil] effects of the spirit of party. . . . It serves always to distract the public councils and enfeeble the public administration. It agitates the community with ill-founded jealousies and false alarms; kindles the animosity of one part against another; foment[s] [stirs up] . . . riot and insurrection [rebellion].

Why did Washington oppose political parties? _____

From your viewpoint, two centuries later, do you agree with Washington's warning?

Explain. _____

Document 5

This excerpt is from a letter from Vice President Thomas Jefferson to John Wise in 1798.

Two political Sects [parties] have arisen within the United States; the one . . . called Federalists, sometimes Aristocrats or monocrats & sometimes Tories . . . the [other] are . . . republicans, whigs . . .

(continued)

DBQ 5: GROWTH OF POLITICAL PARTIES, CONTINUED

What did Jefferson think of Hamilton's political sect? _____

Document 6

This excerpt is from a statement by Federalist Congressman John Allen, of Connecticut, in support of the Sedition Act of 1798. (From *Annals of Congress*, Fifth Congress, Second Session, July 5, 1798.)

If ever there was a nation which required a law of this kind, it is this. . . . look at certain papers printed in this city and elsewhere [which print] the most shameless falsehoods against the representatives of the people. . . . The freedom of the press and opinions was never understood to give the right of publishing falsehoods and slanders, nor of exciting sedition, insurrection, and slaughter. . . .

How did Congressman Allen defend the Sedition Act? _____

How do you suppose Jefferson, Madison, and their supporters viewed this law?

Document 7

This excerpt is from *An Essay on the Liberty of the Press*, by George Hay (Philadelphia, 1799). Hay was a member of the Virginia State Legislature.

The freedom of the press . . . means the total exemption of the press from any kind of legislative control, and consequently the Sedition Bill . . . is an abridgement [reduction] of its liberty, and expressly forbidden by the constitution.

Do you suppose that Hay was a Federalist, or a supporter of Jefferson? What makes you believe this? _____

**PART
B**

What led to the rise of political parties in the 1790s?