

Activity 2: A Side of Toast

Student Name _____ Date _____

Directions: Read the document below and answer the questions that follow. As you are reading, highlight or underline words that are unfamiliar to you and then look up their meaning in a dictionary.

Embargo Act of 1807: <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llsl&fileName=002/llsl002.db&recNum=488>

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That an embargo be, and hereby is laid on all ships and vessels in the ports and places within the limits or jurisdiction of the United States, cleared or not cleared, bound to any foreign port or place; and that no clearance be furnished to any ship or vessel bound to such foreign port or place, except vessels under the immediate direction of the President of the United States: and that the President be authorized to give such instructions to the officers of the revenue, and of the navy and revenue cutters of the United States, as shall appear best adapted for carrying the same into full effect: *Provided*, that nothing herein contained shall be construed to prevent the departure of any foreign ship or vessel, either in ballast, or with the goods, wares and merchandise on board of such foreign ship or vessel, when notified of this act.

SEC 2. And be it further enacted, That during the continuance of this act, no registered, or sea letter vessel, having on board goods, wares and merchandise, shall be allowed to depart from one port of the United States to any other within the same, unless the master, owner, consignee or factor of such vessel shall first give bond, with one or more sureties to the collector of the district from which she is bound to depart, in a sum of double the value of the vessel and cargo, that the said goods, wares, or merchandise shall be relanded in some port of the United States, dangers of the seas excepted, which bond, and also a certificate from the collector where the same may be relanded, shall by the collector respectively be transmitted to the Secretary of the Treasury. All armed vessels possessing public commissions from any foreign power, are not to be considered as liable to the embargo laid by this act.

Question	Answer
List how the methods of conveyance, products or cargo, and places affected by the embargo.	
What two things are necessary before loading cargo on a boat or ship plying United States' waters?	

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What is the method of enforcement for the embargo?	
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Directions (Republicans): Read the documents below and answer the questions that accompany each one. As you are reading, highlight or underline words that are unfamiliar to you and then look up their meaning in a dictionary.

Editorial from the Richmond *Enquirer*, December 10, 1808

<http://www.teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=1625>

The inhabitants of the United States appear to differ locally from the government, with respect to the efficacy of the embargo. They begin to discover that a measure, which they were taught to believe would, in the course of a few months, compel England to retract her orders in council, and France to rescind her prohibitory decrees, has not had the smallest effect upon either; that they respectively adhere to the principles they at first adopted, and there is little chance the ‘self-denying ordinance’ of the American government will be attended with the effect expected. The people are sick of the embargo. It has ruined the shipping and commercial interests, and the agriculturist has the produce of his labors rotting upon his hands. The notable expedient of converting the American sailors into husbandmen it found not to answer. The farmer will not be at the expense of growing an article for which he is not sure of a market; and the people are consequently thrown out of employment.

Question	Answer
Why are the Americans from this region “sick” of the embargo?	
What impact has the embargo had on agricultural production?	

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Editorial from the *Carthage (Tennessee) Gazette*, March 6, 1809

<http://www.teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=1632>

To the honorable the Gen. Assembly of the State of Tennessee.

The petition of a number of the people of Tennessee, Respectfully sheweth, That great distress and sacrifices of property prevails throughout the state, on account of the scarcity of circulating medium: insomuch that in many instances good horses valued at from 40 to 50 dollars have been sold by virtue of executions for less than a dollar a piece, cows for half a dollar, and other property in proportion; these evils we apprehend are occasioned by the Embargo, an act of the General Government, calculated no doubt for the general good of the nation; as these evils are occasioned by a measure of government we conceive that we have a right to expect relief from the constituted authorities: We are flattered with the idea that the Embargo is to be discontinued, but we are informed that a state of war is to ensue as the only alternative; We conceive that no benifit will result to the people of this state by such a change. Considering the evils and embarrassments under which the people of this state are labouring, and are liable still to suffer, we humbly suggest to the General Assembly, the propriety of extending that principle in our laws which authorises Magistrates to suspend the issuing of execution, a certain number of days after giving judgment, in cases under 50 dollars, so as to make it apply to all cases of debt, to any amount, and the suspension to continue till the end of the next stated session of our Legislature. In our humble opinion justices and mercy require such a measure.

Question	Answer
Are the authors of this article for or against the embargo?	
What type of financial problems are the people of Tennessee experiencing?	

Editorial from the Boston *Independent Chronicle*, 4 January 1808

<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=1903>

The same arrogance and insolence appear in the federal papers, let our political situation be what it may. The same strain to vindicate the British, and calumniate the United States, is the chorus to every Federal "ditty." When the business of the Chesapeake took place, certain papers were immediately put in requisition, by the British faction, to propagate falsehoods, and embarrass the citizens on the subject. The English ministry have been constantly urged to pursue measures in opposition to the American government, and all the difficulties we now experience are in consequence of the misrepresentations of a "contemptible minority," who reside within the United States. There has been one continued display of enmity to our own government, and every exertion to give countenance and support to the demands and impositions of the British. The faction have kept up a constant strain of defamation against all

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characters employed in the service of the country, and have as uniformly eulogized every man who has shewn a disposition to excite trouble and difficulty, either at home or abroad. The moment a man became an APOSTATE, he was immediately noticed by them as worthy of their approbation, and even Burr (who but a few years ago, was anathematized as the most profligate of mankind) of the first water.

If the embargo, or any other measures of the administration are distressing to the citizens, this faction are the sole cause of the evil. They have encouraged the British to pursue their plans in taking our seamen, and by thus urging them to persist in their outrage, they have forced the government to adopt such measures as will secure our property from capture on the high seas, and our citizen sailors from impressment. If our farmers and tradesmen are injured by these measures, they must blame those British hirelings in Boston, and elsewhere, who have been incessant in describing the country as inadequate to every means of resistance—that all the monied men were opposed to the government—that dissension and jealousy pervaded every section of the United States—that that if the British persisted in their claims, the American government must give way. In short, everything has been said to encourage the English to prosecute their infamous projects, which could be said by men BRED for the purpose. A body of lawyers could not be more zealous to plead in behalf of their clients, than a few editors have been to plead in behalf of the British. They have exhausted so effectually every plea which could be made on the subject, that we do not find one new argument offered by his sacred majesty in behalf of his sacred proclamation, nor any new motive suggested to justify a perseverance in their claims. Mr. Rose [ED.: British Envoy George H. Rose] himself so anticipated in every article of his mission.

This being a fact, how imperiously insulting must those traitors be, who now talk about the “poor farmers and tradesmen.” The embargo is the most prudent and salutary measure which could be adopted to save our property and seamen from falling into the hands of British depredations. If this commercial restriction falls hard on any class of citizens, those only are to blame who have told the British they were right in firing on the Chesapeake—that it was “justifiable homicide” to kill our seamen on *suspicion*—that they ought to treat Mr. Monroe [ED.: Minister to Britain James Monroe] with indignity and contempt, if he should apply for redress—that all the *well-disposed citizens* who held the money, who went to meeting, who taught the assemblies catechism, and believed in the christian religion, were unanimous in vindicating the British, and ready to impeach the President. What could the English government desire more to encourage them to treat our representatives with every mark of disrespect—and what could be more desirable to the “best of kings” to support his immoderate strides towards capturing as many sailors as he pleased?

The impudence of this faction exceeds, if possible, their wickedness: for they are not content to bring the country into its present difficulty, but are now shedding their crocodile tears over the unfortunate objects of their iniquity. They first urge the British to do all the mischief in their power, and then calumniate the government for attempting to avoid the evils which they have brought upon them.—They first tell the British they ought to impress our sailors, and then find fault with the constituted authorities because they wish to secure them from such lawless outrage. Laying an embargo is as natural to counteract the depredations of the English, (in consequence of advice from their friends in Boston, &c.) as the use of water to stop a conflagration which had been kindled by an incendiary. It would be as absurd to suffer our property to be exposed to capture on the high seas, under the present decrees of Britain and France, as it would be to suffer our engines and enginemen to be placed in the middle of a street which was in flames on both sides. The answer then to the question, “*why is the embargo laid?*” is simply this, “*that the BRITISH FACTION in Boston having encouraged the depredation on our commerce, and the capture of our seamen, the government is reduced to the necessity to lay an embargo to prevent a continuance of the outrage.*” If the produce of the farmer is lower, this faction must answer for it. If the tradesman is out of employ, this faction must answer for it. If bankruptcies take place in our seaports,

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this faction must answer for them, as they have created such difficulties in our commercial intercourse, that all public and private confidence is destroyed by their abominable misrepresentations. To comprise the whole of our political troubles in one comprehensive allegation, it is OLD TORYISM that is accountable to the farmer, tradesman, seaman, and merchant, for their present difficulties. Who cause the war in 1775, but the Tories? Who caused our sailors and seamen to perish on board the British guard-ships, but the Tories? Who caused Charlestown, Falmouth, &c. to be burnt to ashes, but the Tories? Who caused the Boston Port Bill, but the Tories? In short, the Tories and the Federalists are “one and indivisible,” and are now at work under this new-fangled name, to accomplish what they could not effect in the days of SAMUEL ADAMS and JOHN HANCOCK. They pretend to pity the poor farmers and tradesmen, but would sacrifice an *hundred thousand* of them to help their dear and beloved friends the English. Away with such hypocrisy, and let us baffle the enemies of our national honor by the energy of our conduct.

Question	Answer
Are the authors of this article for or against the embargo?	
Who is the “contemptible minority?”	
How has the “contemptible minority” portrayed America to the British?	
What is the author’s answer to “why is the embargo laid?”	
Describe the larger political conspiracy presented by this author.	

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Directions (Federalists): Read the documents below and answer the questions that accompany each one. As you are reading, highlight or underline words that are unfamiliar to you and then look up their meaning in a dictionary.

Federalist

Baltimore *Federal Republican*, July 6, 1808

<http://www.teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=1627>

"If we attempt to circumscribe the means which have enabled us to arrive at the summit of commercial prosperity, shall we not endanger our constitution by rashly drying up the sources which swelled the tide, and gave rapidity to the current of our commercial importance and national revenue."

Thus exclaimed an eloquent and prophetic statesman ... But the enlightened politicians which compose the prevailing party, adopt a different policy. Whatever damps the ardor of commercial enterprise and paralyses her industry, is eagerly grasped at as a mean to accomplish the favourite scheme of its annihilation... The ensuing year will furnish us experience. We will find the sources which swell the tide of our prosperity, so far dried up by the Embargo, that the revenue of the country will not defray one-fourth of the ordinary expenses of government.

Question	Answer
Is the author of this article for or against the embargo?	
What impact will the embargo have on the nation's future prosperity?	

Editorial from the *New York Evening Post*, 2 February 1808:

<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=1904>

Embargo.—The eight years of Mr. Jefferson's administration are about to expire. He came to the presidency, by affecting to rely upon the *intelligence* of the people. He endeavours to retain their good opinion, by keeping them in *darkness!* He affects to wish for what his friend Tom Paine would call an age of *reason*—*political reason*, and he demands a blind *confidence!* Unable to justify his measures, he asks of the nation to be governed by an implicit *faith* in the propriety of an Act, which ruins many, and distresses all! "A republican government should have no secrets," was once his doctrine. The people *shall know nothing* is now his practice. The miserable wretch who is led to the gibbet is permitted to know his crime—but the nation is to be led hoodwinked to its destruction. When the sufferers—the

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unhappy victims ask, and it is impossible for them to avoid asking, why is this vial of wrath poured upon us, “*He is a Tory—under British influence*”—“settle your accounts and be ruined” is the reply. Yes, it requires all the confidence—all the faith, of which a stupid party bigotry is capable to approve of this terrible desolation.—The justification of this dreadful butchery of the political body, requires indeed the sacrifice of all the pride, and all the liberty, and all the good sense of the nation.

Question	Answer
Is the author of this article for or against the embargo?	
How does the author suggest that President Jefferson is a hypocrite?	

Editorial from the *Boston Gazette*, 18 January 1808:

<http://www.teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=1906>

AN EMBARGO WITHOUT OBJECT!!

Embargoes have been heretofore in all countries laid for some *good* cause, but we have improved upon the wisdom of others, we lay one for *no cause* at all.—Let us see if it is not so.

Sometimes an embargo is laid to catch and impress the Sailors to man a fleet.—This is manifestly not our case.

Sometimes to prevent information being given to an enemy of a projected expedition.—This is also so far from being our case that we let our *enemies* go away to carry the *news*.

But America *once* and *once only* laid an embargo, (1794) to prevent our merchant vessels *falling* into the hands of an enemy.—This was foolish policy *then*, because notice to our merchants would have been sufficient, and if with this notice they chose to proceed to sea, the evil from occasional capture would be infinitely less than the *certain ruin of an Embargo*.

His Excellency the Governor of Massachusetts [ed.: James Sullivan, a Republican] intimates that the motive of laying the embargo, was to prevent our vessels falling into the hands of the *French* and *English*.

Taking this to be the *real motive*, of which I suppose his Excellency has *private* advice, I say the measure is an *absurd one*, on the face of it.

For, 1stly. Every merchant knows, and every Farmer may know if he will enquire, that *France* cannot take more than 2 or 3 ships in one hundred.—We could therefore have carried on in spite of Bonaparte, one half of all our Trade, (say 50 millions a year).—This part too was the *most important*, because it would embrace chiefly our own produce.

2dly. It is *yet uncertain*, notwithstanding his Excellency’s authority, whether Great Britain will take our ships bound to France. None have yet been taken—and should her decree of blockade pass, it will certainly provide some remedy for vessels which sailed before notice of it—So far the most willful

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advocates for a British war will confide in her justice.—She will not condemn as France does, the *unwary, involuntary* offender!

The Embargo then is premature! France only threatens as yet to take our ships, and she *cannot take* them.

Question	Answer
Is the author of this article for or against the embargo?	
State some of the reasons that the author suggests embargoes have been issued in the past. How is this one different?	
What points does the author make to show that this embargo is premature?	
Who would the author like to see America trade with? Why?	

Directions: Read the documents below and answer the questions that accompany each one. As you are reading, highlight or underline words that are unfamiliar to you and then look up their meaning in a dictionary.

Fourth of July Toasts, published in the Richmond (Virginia) *Enquirer* July 5, 1808:

<http://www.teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=1631>

1. The day we celebrate . . . May it never return unless to find us independent.
2. The memory of Gen. Washington & May his spirit be upon us in this crisis of our destiny.
3. The President of the United States: who never shrunk from asserting the interests of his country.
4. American Independence. . . may every annual revolution bring it to greater perfection , till time shall be no more!
5. The United States . . . May their government always be administered, as at present, by enlightened, honest, and patriotic statesmen.

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6. The State of Virginia . . . She was the first to propose; she will be the last to surrender American Independence.
7. The Patriot Heroes, who died to give us the liberty we celebrate.
8. The revolutionary heroes who still survive . . . May the guardian angels of heaven watch around them.
9. The Spirit of '76 . . . Our forefathers have taught us how to deny ourselves, and to be free.
10. Domestic Manufactures . . . The injustice of G. Britain made us *politically* independent: — of Britain and France shall make us *morally* so.
11. Union and Energy . . . The mouldering monarchies of Europe, may tumble at the tyrant's touch — our republic in the vigor of youth, shall defy his thunders.
12. Our brethren of Massachusetts . . . We have not forgotten where the war of liberty began — let them not forget where it ended.
13. May our differences with foreign powers be happily settled, but not with a sacrifice of national honor.
14. Peace, if to be preserved with honor; if not, war.
15. Illumination to the minds of those who cannot see the wisdom of the measures of the present administration.
16. An *eternal* Embargo, rather than a *moment's submission to any power on earth*.
17. *The American Fair; though last, not least.*

Question	Answer
Are the authors of this toast for or against the embargo?	
What historical event is being spoken of in points one through nine?	
How do points ten through seventeen address the current crisis with France and Great Britain?	

Toasts for Independence, Massachusetts 1808:

<http://memorialhall.mass.edu/collection/itempage.jsp?itemid=17744&img=0&level=advanced&transcription=1>

- 1 The Day we celebrate) May it burst the Clouds which envelope it and shine forth with redoubled splendor.
- 2 The President of the United States)- May his Contemplated retirement be as glorious as the setting sun!

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- 3 The Constitution of the United States, the bulwark of our safety) May it remain unimpaired.
- 4 The People of the United States) May their eyes be open to their best Interest.
- 5 Commerce) Though almost annihilated may it revive and flourish.
- 6 The Navy of the United States) Though much reduced, may It soon recover strength, and exceed its former Vigor.
- 7 The next President) may He unite All Hearts.
- 8 The Militia of the United States the defence of our Country) May they receive that Support and encouragement which they deserve.
- 9 The memory of Washington.) May we Honor it by an imitation of his Virtues, and adherence to His Counsel.

Question	Answer
Are the authors of this toast for or against the embargo?	
Which specific points can show the authors support or contempt for the embargo?	

Toast from *New York Evening Post*, 6 July 1808:

<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=1905>

Toast.—A gentleman just from Canada says the standing toast there is “Long life to Jefferson and the Embargo.”

Question	Answer
Why would the author of this toast wish “long life” to President Jefferson?	

Directions: You and your group will write a “toast” that reflects the viewpoint of your political party (Republican or Federalist). You will present your toast in the original spirit by electing one to deliver the first couple of points and then assigning to other members new points to deliver to the class. After the entire toast is delivered any other member of the class may add their own points to the toast if the “spirit” moves you.

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TOAST