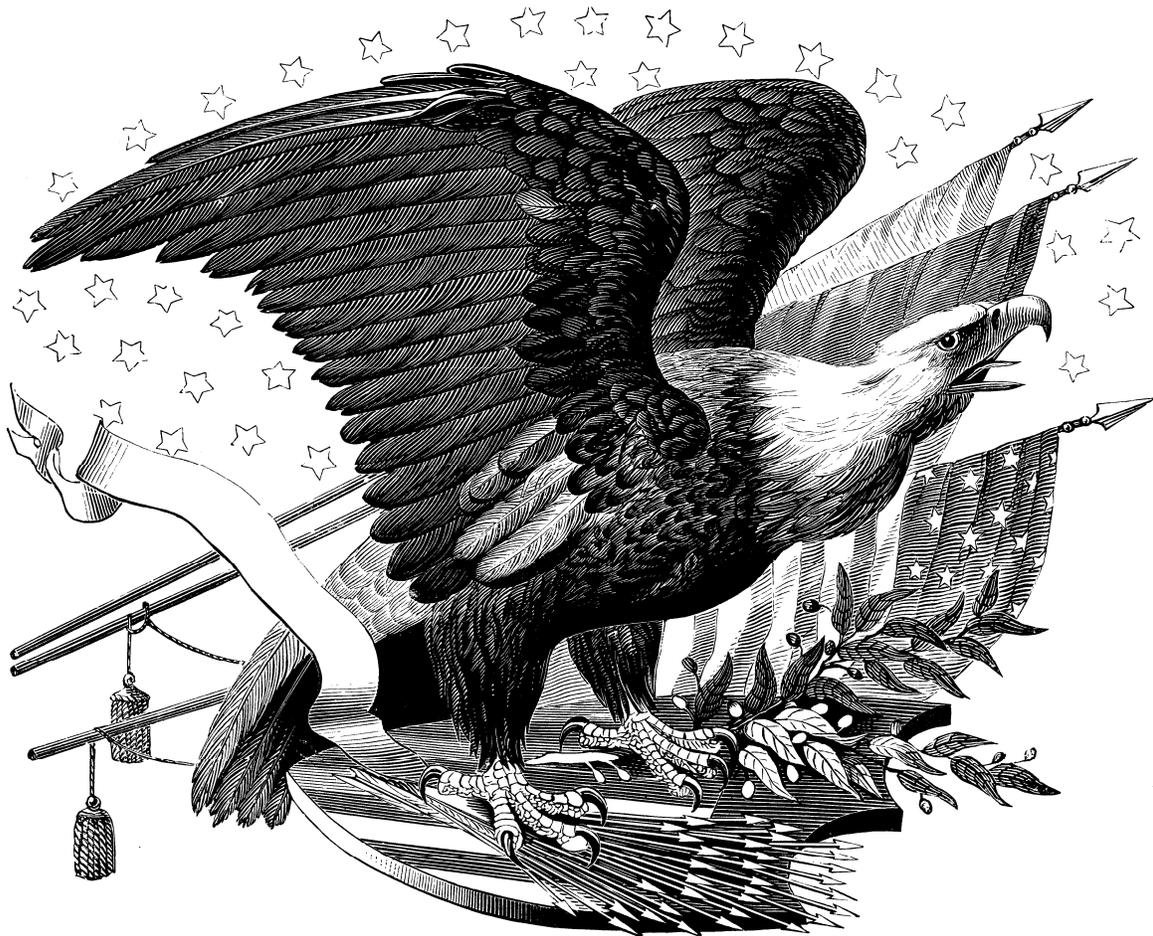


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# Decisions U.S. History 1776-1900



**Stevens & Shea Publishers**

# Teacher's Guide

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## SS93

The short descriptions of key issues are designed to encourage students to think about issues and to train students to use certain decision-making techniques. They can be used to introduce appropriate units in U.S. History courses. While the events are historical, most of them involve situations that are still issues in American life.

The readings are short and simple so that all students can be involved in the decision making process, including students who have difficulty reading. However, some of the vocabulary and concepts will require explanation.

Most of the readings carry a statement about how the issue is still important today. Students can be asked to apply the same decision-making techniques to these problems as well.

Students can compare their decisions with what actually happened.

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## U.S. Decisions, Set 1 1776-1900

### Contents

- 1 Whiskey Rebellion (Washington)
- 2 Avoid Foreign Entanglements ( Washington)
- 3 XYZ Affair (Adams)
- 4 Louisiana Purchase (Jefferson)
- 5 Go to War with England (Madison)
- 6 Bonus Bill (Madison)
- 7 Monroe Doctrine (Monroe)
- 8 Public Improvement (Adams)
- 9 End Central Banking (Jackson)
- 10 Indian Removal (Jackson)
- 11 Nullification (Jackson)
- 12 War With Mexico (Polk)
- 13 Compromise of 1850 (Fillmore)
- 14 Japan (Fillmore)
- 15 Kansas-Nebraska Act (Buchanan)
- 16 Secession (Buchanan)
- 17 Preserve the Union (Lincoln)
- 18 Emancipation (Lincoln)
- 19 Reconstruction (Johnson)
- 20 Preserve the Presidency (Johnson)
- 21 End Reconstruction (Hayes)
- 22 Civil Service (Arthur)
- 23 Sherman Silver Purchase Act (Cleveland)
- 24 Cuba (McKinley)
- 25 Paine Aldrich Tariff (Taft)

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## Decisions in U.S. History, Set 1

by Lawrence Stevens

ISBN: 0-89550-135-X

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## Procedure

The issue summaries are short and take little time to read. More time should be spent on the decision-making process. Students should make their initial decision individually. Then they should be put in small groups of four or five to compare decisions and make a collective decision. The small groups should then present their ideas to the whole class and the entire class should come to a consensus about what is the best course of action.

Students should be asked to apply certain techniques to making a decision. The techniques should be taught at the beginning. Students should apply each of the techniques for practice. They can do this individually, in small groups or as an entire class. The teacher can reproduce the class contributions on the blackboard or overhead.

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## A brief description of the techniques

1. Good points/bad points. Students can list the good points and bad points of each choice.
2. Consequences. Students can list the possible consequences of each choice.
3. Evaluation matrix. Solutions to problems can be evaluated according to agreed upon criteria. In short, the criteria are goals; what you want to accomplish by taking an action.
4. Benefits/Losses. In political decisions who benefits and who loses in a decision is an important calculation made by political leaders. Students could list the groups that would benefit and be harmed by a choice.
5. Characteristics lists. Students can break the problem down and list the parts. They then can discuss how the parts connect together.

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## Decisions: U.S. History Set 2 (1900-1981)

Grade 7 & Up

Students must make key decisions faced by presidents, from Teddy Roosevelt to Jimmy Carter. These are decisions that shaped American history. A brief text describes the problem and a lists possible courses of action. Each decision is on one reproducible page. These are useful introductions to American history units. Students can compare their decisions with what actually happened. The Teacher's Guide includes a variety of decision making techniques. 25 decisions. **SS92**

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## **The Whiskey Rebellion**

Alexander Hamilton, the first secretary of the treasury, had a number of difficult problems to deal with. In the beginning the United States had very little money and many debts to repay. Hamilton needed a tax to raise money. In 1791 Congress passed a tax on whiskey: 25% of the net price for a gallon of whiskey.

Farmers in western Pennsylvania did not like the tax. They thought it was unfair. They claimed that the government should raise money by taxing imports. Hamilton did not want to do this because he did not want anything to interfere with trade with other countries. A tax on imports would hurt businessmen and manufacturers in the eastern states. The farmers thought Hamilton was “playing favorites.”

The farmers grew grain. It was too expensive to move it long distances. The farmers converted their grain to whiskey which was much easier to move. In addition, whiskey was used as money in their part of the country. The farmers refused to pay the tax.

Farmers beat up tax collectors. They forced the small number of U.S. soldiers in the area to surrender. George Washington had to decide what to do.



### **Decision**

If you were Washington, what action would you take?

- A.** Ask Congress to repeal the whiskey tax.
- B.** Work out a compromise with the farmers, reducing the whiskey tax and increasing the tax on imported goods.
- C.** Send an army to the area and force the farmers to pay the tax.

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### **Current Issue**

The issue of taxation is always a problem in the United States. Today we rely upon the income tax to support the Federal government. Who should be taxed and how much should they be taxed? Should the rich pay a higher percentage of their income in taxes? Should everyone pay the same percentage? Should the poor pay any tax at all? Should corporations pay taxes on the money they make?

What do you think is a fair system of taxation?