

## Textbook Excerpt

Political divisions in the new nation were great. No two men embodied these differences more than Hamilton and Jefferson. Hamilton believed in a strong central government led by a prosperous, educated elite of upper-class citizens. Jefferson distrusted a strong central government and the rich. He favored strong state and local governments rooted in popular participation. Hamilton believed that commerce and industry were the keys to a strong nation. Jefferson favored a society of farmer-citizens.

Overall, Hamilton's vision of America was that of a country much like Great Britain, with a strong central government, commerce, and industry. His views found more support in the North, particularly New England, whereas Jefferson's views won endorsement in the South and the West.

*Source: The Americans: Beginnings to 1914, Orlando: Holt McDougal, 2015.*

## Document A: Alexander Hamilton Letter to George Washington, 1792 (Modified)

Sir:

--I have the pleasure of your private letter on the 26<sup>th</sup> of August. I most sincerely regret the causes of the uneasy sensations you experience. It is my most anxious wish to smooth the path of your administration, and to render it prosperous and happy, though I consider myself as the deeply injured party.

I *know* that I have been an object of uniform opposition from Mr. Jefferson. I *know* from the most authentic sources, that I have been the frequent subject of the most unkind whispers and insinuations from him. I have long seen a party formed in the Legislature under his auspices, bent upon my subversion. I cannot doubt from the evidence I possess, that the *National Gazette* [a newspaper] was instituted by him for political purposes, and that one leading object of it has been to render me as odious as possible.

Nevertheless, I can truly say, that, except explanations to confidential friends, I never directly or indirectly retaliated till very lately.

But when I saw that the undoing of the funding system in particular (which would prostrate the credit and the honor of the nation) was an avowed object of the party, I considered it as a duty to resist the torrent.

Nevertheless, I pledge my honor to you, sir, that if you hereafter form a plan to reunite the members of your administration, I will not directly or indirectly say or do a thing that shall endanger a feud.

With the most affectionate and faithful attachment, etc.

A Hamilton

### **Vocabulary:**

odious – extremely unpleasant; repulsive

prostrate – weaken; overcome; devastate

*Source: This letter was written by Alexander Hamilton to President George Washington on September 9, 1792. Hamilton was Secretary of the Treasury in Washington's administration.*

## Document B: Thomas Jefferson Letter to George Washington, 1792 (Modified)

DEAR SIR,

I received your letter of August 23<sup>rd</sup>. In part of your letter you notice the internal dissentions which have taken place in our government. To no one have they given deeper concern than myself. I am so desirous that you should know the whole truth.

If it has been supposed that I have ever intrigued among the members of the legislature to defeat the plans of the Secretary of Treasury, it is contrary to all truth. I value too highly their freedom of judgment. That I have, in private conversations, disapproved of the system of the Secretary of Treasury, I acknowledge and avow. His system flowed from principles adverse to liberty, and was calculated to undermine and demolish the republic.

If our tensions cannot be avoided altogether, my regard for you will be a sufficient motive for deferring it till I become merely a private citizen. At that point, however, I reserve the right to write about the issues that concern the republic.

I will not let my retirement be clouded by the slanders of a man whose history, if history stoops to notice him, is against the liberty of the country. –Still however I repeat the hope that it will not be necessary to make such an appeal.

I trust that you know that I am not an enemy to the Republic, nor a waster of it's revenue, nor a traitor, as Hamilton has written about me.

In the mean time and ever I am with great and sincere affection & respect, dear Sir, your most obedient and most humble servant.

Th. Jefferson

### **Vocabulary:**

dissentions – disagreement; conflict; dispute

desirous – keen; eager

intrigued – plotted; schemed

avow – admit; confess

slanders – lies; false accusations

*Source: This letter was written by Thomas Jefferson to President George Washington on September 9, 1792. Jefferson was Secretary of State in Washington's administration.*

**Guiding Questions:****Name** \_\_\_\_\_

*Using BOTH letters by Hamilton and Jefferson, answer the questions below:*

1. (Sourcing) When were these letters written? What do you predict they will say?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. (Contextualization) Why are both Hamilton and Jefferson writing to George Washington? Based on both of these letters, what seems to have been happening in George Washington's administration? How can you tell?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. (Close Reading) Which letter is angrier? Find a quote to support your claim.

Write one adjective about each man's *personality* and find a quote to support your claim.

In this letter, Hamilton seems to be \_\_\_\_\_. I'm basing this claim on the following quote:

In this letter, Jefferson seems to be \_\_\_\_\_. I'm basing this claim on the following quote:

4. (Corroboration) Who do you believe "started" the fight? Based on what they wrote, whom do you trust more: Hamilton or Jefferson? Why?