

## TEACHER ANSWER KEY

### Document A: Paraphrase of James McHenry's letter to William Laughton Smith

As we think about the President's speech recommending taking defensive measures against France, we should think about what France has to worry about regarding the U.S. should we go to war:

France has four things to be worried about in a war with the U.S.:

1. France will lose the supplies that the country has been receiving from the U.S.;
2. France's allies (Spain and the Netherlands) will not support measures against the U.S. Such measures would hurt those countries, too.
3. Spain will not want to be dragged into a war with the U.S., since that war would threaten Spain's holdings in Florida and Louisiana. Spain's possessions in North America require them to stay on good terms with the U.S.;
4. France would lose possession of the West Indies in a war with the U.S., since those possessions would fall into the hands of Great Britain.

What, on the other hand does the U.S. have to worry about in a war with France?

The French navy does not have the resources to threaten the U.S. France cannot defend the West Indies, so France can hardly have the resources to attack the U.S. mainland. If the French were to try, the British would intercept that fleet before it could threaten the U.S. without the U.S. having to become involved.

That is the situation of the U.S. and France at the moment. We hope that France will attempt peace through negotiation once they see that we are preparing for war.

**Who is the author of this letter?**

Secretary of War James McHenry

**When was it written?**

May 21, 1797

**In the second paragraph, the author lists four reasons that the French will not be a strong in a war with the Americans as they might seem. See if you can find them and list them below:**

1. France has been receiving supplies from the U.S. If they provoke a war with the U.S., they will have to give up those supplies—something they may be reluctant to do.
2. France has allies in Spain and the Netherlands. Those countries derive benefits from trade with the U.S., too, and they will not support a French war against the U.S. because such a war would hurt them, too.
3. Spain will not want to be dragged into a war with the U.S. A war with the U.S. would threaten Spain's holdings in Florida and Louisiana. If Spain wants to maintain their possessions in North America, they need to stay on good terms with the U.S.—and as a result, they will pressure their ally France not to seek war with the U.S.
4. France cannot hope to maintain their possession of the West Indies if they went to war with the U.S. And they would not simply lose those islands—the British would seize them, which would be a double loss for the French. They would lose the islands and their most hated rival would take possession of them.

**What is confusing about the letter? What else do you need to know to make sense of it?**

## **Document B: The U.S. Constitution, Article I, Section 8**

The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts **and provide for the common Defense and general Welfare of the United States;** but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;

To borrow Money on the credit of the United States;

**To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations,** and among the several states, and with the Indian Tribes;

To establish an uniform Rule of Naturalization, and uniform Laws on the subject of Bankruptcies throughout the United States;

To coin Money, regulate the Value thereof, and of foreign Coin, and fix the Standard of Weights and Measures;

To provide for the Punishment of counterfeiting the Securities and current Coin of the United States;

To establish Post Offices and post Roads;

To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries;

To constitute Tribunals inferior to the supreme Court;

**To define and punish Piracies and Felonies committed on the high Seas, and Offences against the Law of Nations;**

**To declare War, grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal, and make Rules concerning Captures on Land and Water;**

**To raise and support Armies, but no Appropriation of Money to that Use shall be for a longer Term than two Years;**

**To provide and maintain a Navy;**

**To make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces;**

To provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions;

To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the Militia, and for governing such Part of them as may be employed in the Service of the United States, reserving to the States respectively, the Appointment of the Officers, and the Authority of training the Militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress;

To exercise exclusive Legislation in all Cases whatsoever, over such District (not exceeding ten Miles square) as may, by Cession of particular States, and the Acceptance of Congress, become the Seat of the Government of the United States, and to exercise like Authority over all Places purchased by the Consent of the Legislature of the State in which the Same shall be, for the Erection of Forts, Magazines, Arsenals, dock-Yards, and other needful Buildings;—And

To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.