***Instructions: Read, annotate 1-5 words. Then answer the question at the bottom.***

**Andrew Jackson, Common Man?**

Growth, expansion and social change rapidly followed the end of the War of 1812. Many an enterprising American pushed westward. In the new western states, there was a greater level of equality among the masses than in the former English colonies. Land was readily available. Frontier life required hard work. There was little tolerance for aristocrats afraid to get their hands dirty.

The west led the path by having no property requirements for voting, which the eastern states soon adopted, as well. The common man always held a special place in America, but with Jackson, he rose to the top of the American political power system. In the campaign of 1828, Jackson, known as “Old Hickory” triumphed over the aristocratic, reclusive and unpopular incumbent President John Q Adams. The first six Presidents were from the same mold: wealthy, educated, and from the east. Jackson was a self-made man who declared education an unnecessary requirement for political leadership. Indeed, Jackson launched the era when politicians would desperately try to show how poor they had been.

Jackson, the son of a recently immigrated Scots-Irish American, came from very poor upbringings, building up his on empire through his military career as well as a slaveholder in the south. Jackson had lived the American dream, transforming himself from a poor born Scots-Irish American into a wealthy, cunning leader. This idolized the idea that any man, no matter the education, upbringing, or social status, could run the country; that the common man had the power to aspire to be a leader. Also, Jackson had a profound effect on the voting system in the United States. Previously to Jackson’s campaigns, voting was mainly comprised of wealthy white plantation owners or wealthy merchants who owned land. The Jacksonian era changed this, when for the first time in history, everyday people began to cast in their ballots. Voting was no longer for the rich, but very much for the common man; any person who wished to vote would have the opportunity. Jackson told the people that he was one of them, (a common farmer), that he lived the life that they live, and that they should vote for him because he would be the defender of the common farmer. The Jacksonian era was in fact very much the era of the common man, with a leader who shared both the back ground and aspiration of the people, changing the face of American politics.

The election of 1828 was a rematch of the election of 1824 between John Quincy Adams and Jackson. In the earlier election, Jackson received more votes, but with no candidate having a majority, the House of Representatives chose Adams. Four years later the voices of the people were finally heard.

Jackson's inauguration as president in 1828 seemed to many the embodiment of "**MOB RULE**" by uneducated ruffians. Jackson rode to the White House followed by a swarm of well-wishers who were invited in. Muddy hob-nailed boots trod over new carpets, glassware and crockery were smashed, and chaos generally reigned. After a time, Jackson ordered the punch bowls moved outside to the White House lawn, and the crowd followed. Naturally, Jackson's critics were quick to point to the party as the beginning of the "reign of King Mob."

As a military hero, a frontiersman, and a Populist, Jackson enchanted the common people and alarmed the political, social and economic elite. A Man of the People would now govern the nation — America did not disintegrate into anarchy.

**How was Andrew Jackson a “man of the common people?” Explain in 3-4 sentences.**

*Instructions: Read, annotate (1-5 words), and answer the questions at the bottom*

**Andrew Jackson: The Spoils System**

When Andrew Jackson took office as President of the United States, his policy of replacing government officials with Jackson supporters was quite controversial. After one of these supporters justified Jackson’s policy by stating “to the victor belong the spoils”, this policy became known as the spoils system. Many Jackson supporters believed that rotating political appointments in and out of office was not only the right, but the duty, of winners of political elections. Jackson opponents believed that replacing offices with his own supporters was a huge abuse of power.

Jackson saw this ‘spoils system’ as clearing out the old, corrupt political families and replacing them with fresh new ideas. Jackson believed that appointing his own supporters as his new staff not only awarded those who supported him but also allowed him to rid his administration of any supporters of Jackson’s opponents. Jackson also believed this spoils system would help encourage the “common man” to participate in politics and make politicians more accountable.

He believed the “common man” should participate in the governing of the country, not just the powerful and wealthy. Many of the supporters he appointed represented the “common man” rather than the elite. These men weren’t just symbolic of the “common man;” they helped connect Washington D.C. to it’s citizens. This helped people, especially in the distant west, feel involved in the nation’s government. Besides, who wants a presidential administration full of political enemies?

Despite his good intentions, Andrew Jackson received a lot of criticism for his spoils system. His opponents argued that oftentimes, the individuals that Jackson appointed were unskilled or even incapable at their new post. Occasionally, even corrupt individuals could be placed in offices they would ultimately abuse. The spoils system also created scandals as politically motivated supports of one candidate worked hard to find (and sometimes make up) offensive stories about the other candidate and their supporters. Overall, opponents of Jackson worried that Jackson emphasized party loyalty above all other qualifications (like skills or experience).

1. Go back to the first paragraph: What does “to the victor belong the spoils” mean to Jackson and his followers?
2. Define the Spoils System, according to paragraph 2.
3. According to paragraph 3, did Jackson follow through with his “common man” promises?
4. What are the criticisms of Jackson’s Spoils system?