

Press Conference: Founding Brothers

Date: October 2-3, 1800

Historical Roles

Thomas Jefferson
James Madison
John Adams
Alexander Hamilton
George Washington (we are imagining he lived until 1800)
Abigail Adams
Aaron Burr
Benjamin Franklin
John Jay

Journalists

Federalist
Democratic-Republican

The Conference

Each of you will act as BOTH an historical figure AND a journalist. We will have a series of “conferences” on a few issues: Hamilton’s financial plan, the national bank, and major domestic issues (slavery, the location of the capital, the role of the President), foreign relations, and the election of 1800 (be sure to bring up the Alien and Sedition Acts). You will be an historical figure for one of the conferences and a journalist for the others. If you are a Federalist historical figure, you will be a Federalist journalist and if you are a Democratic-Republican historical figure, you will be a Democratic-Republican journalist.

When you are an historical figure, you must make a one minute opening statement on the issues AND you must be prepared to answer the journalists’ questions. The journalists must write three questions for each of the conferences for which they will be a journalist. The journalists are partisan (just as they were at the time) and their questions should either make the members of their party look good OR they should seek to point out the weaknesses of the other side. The journalists’ questions should be directed at specific historical figures. Make this clear at the beginning of the question.

Listed below are the historical figures for each conference:

Hamilton’s Financial Plan, the National Bank, and other domestic issues:

Alexander Hamilton	Thomas Jefferson
James Madison	George Washington

Foreign Relations:

George Washington	John Adams
Thomas Jefferson	John Jay

The Election of 1800:

John Adams	Thomas Jefferson
Abigail Adams	Aaron Burr
James Madison	

Your Grade

You will be graded on the level and quality of your participation in the press conference. At the end of the conference, you will turn in your questions and the opening statements. These will be part of your grade. The conference will be worth 70 points (written speech 10, written questions 10, oral presentation—content and style—at conference 50).

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