

A. Victory in the News reading an historical, secondary source

What did Americans in 1812 think about the country's involvement in the war? The "News of the Week" article below was published in *The Yankee*, a Boston newspaper, on September 4, 1812 just after *Constitution's* victory over *Guerriere*. Interpret the article by answering the questions below.

The splendid naval victory gained by the *Constitution* has confirmed all that was anticipated by those who have the fullest confidence in the courage, skill and discipline of our seamen, the effectual defenders of our insulted flag and our injured rights. The eloquence of a few such broadsides as she aimed at the *Guerriere* are arguments in point and will do more to convince the sturdy John Bull that it is his interest to concede to us (if he choose to stick to his favorite phrase) the right of free passage on the high way of nations, than all the arguments of our statesmen and our newspapers for seven years past.

The Yankee, September 4, 1812

- (a) What is this writer's opinion of the battle? _____

(b) List some of the adjectives used to express the writer's opinion. _____

- According to the article and the lesson, what did the English do to deserve such a battering? _____

- Before *Constitution's* victories, many people were opposed to the war. What do you think changed people's minds? _____

B. A History Mystery writing historical fiction

While there seems to be little doubt that the nickname "Old Ironsides" originated during the battle with *Guerriere*, sources vary on whether an American or British sailor made the exclamation. This is a good example of a "history mystery" or unresolved point of fact. Use what you know about *Constitution* and the battle itself to write a short story about what "actually" happened — an historical fiction of the "true" story.