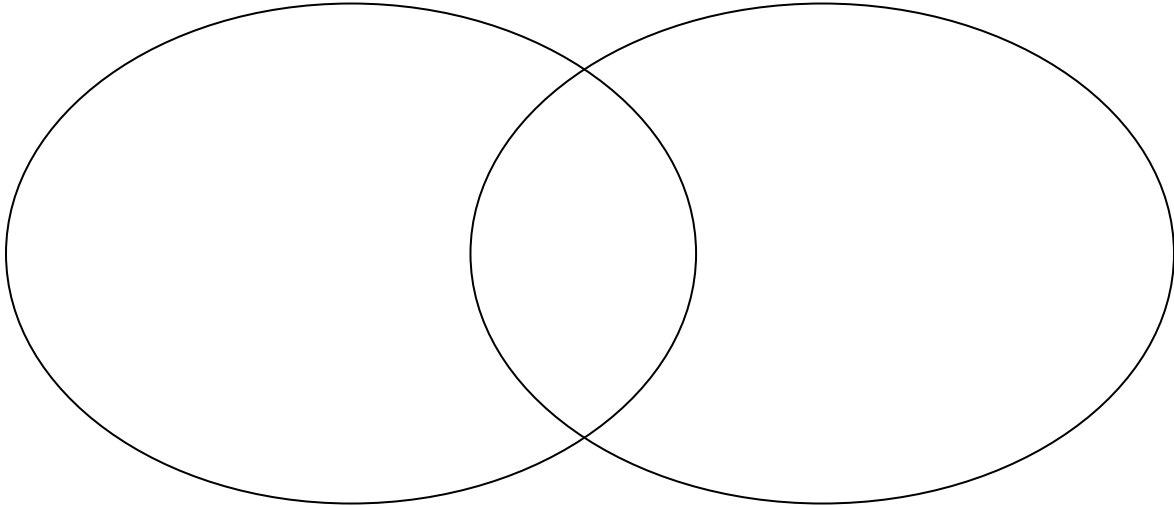


# Thomas Jefferson versus Alexander Hamilton

Read the information about Jefferson and Hamilton's differing views about government. Then fill out the Venn Diagram summarizing their likes and differences.



Washington concerned about the constitutionality of the United States Bank, asked Jefferson and Hamilton each to give their opinions on the issue.

## JEFFERSON

Presented a strict, narrow construction of the Constitution.



The Constitution says what it means and means what it says. Nowhere does it mention creating a bank. If we start reading between the lines, the federal government will usurp more and more

## HAMILTON

presented a loose, broad construction of the Constitution.



Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution allows Congress to "make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution" its stated powers and to "Provide for...the general welfare."

Now, the power to tax implies the power to create a bank to hold the tax funds—clearly a "necessary and proper" act.

Hamilton won the day: Washington signed the Bank bill. Political parties began to form around Jefferson's and Hamilton's views of the Constitution.

“Jefferson said, ‘the many!’ Hamilton said, ‘the few!’ Like opposite sides of a penny were those exalted two. If Jefferson said, ‘It’s black, sir!’ Hamilton cried, ‘It’s white!’ But, ‘twixt the two, our Constitution started working right.”  
 -Stephan Vincent Benet

**Federalist Party**

Based on



Alexander Hamilton’s Views

By the election year of 1792, Hamilton and Jefferson headed rival political parties to enact their views.

Both parties had the same goal, a free republic, but differed in means to attain it.

The political party system (continuing since 1792 to the present), at first feared divisive, has proved vital for democracy.

Why?

Parties provide for dissent and choice, the lifeblood of freedom.

**Republican Party**

(not the same as today’s Republican party)

\*also called Democratic-Republican

Based on



Thomas Jefferson’s Views

**Social**

Pessimistic View of Human Nature

Hamilton believed people are basically selfish—thus need the restraint of strong government.

Optimistic View of Human Nature

Jefferson believed people are basically good—thus capable of self-government.

**Political: Who Should Govern?**

Both Hamilton and Jefferson believed that an aristocracy should rule—but differed as to what kind:

Hamilton favored:

A rich and well-born aristocracy, based on birth, wealth, and status.

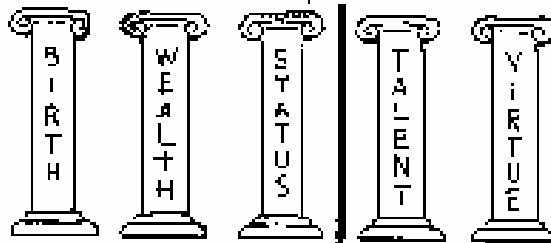
He agreed with John Jay that, “Those who own the country ought to govern it.”

They had more at stake so they would be more responsible.

Jefferson favored:

A natural aristocracy, based on talent and virtue.

He advocated rule by educated men of property, but he promoted widespread access to both education and property.



THE 5 PILLARS OF ARISTOCRACY  
 (as described by John Adams)

**Federalist Party**

**Republican Party**

- 1. Nationalist: strong central government
- 2. Loose interpretation of the Constitution.

**Government Power**

- 1. Localist, states' rights: limited central government.
- 2. Strict interpretation of the Constitution.



- 1. Industrial economy; manufacturing
- 2. Urban centered.

**Economic: How shall we eat?**

- 1. Agrarian economy; farming
- 2. Rural centered.



- 1. Modified capitalism: government aid to business—but not regulation of business.
- 2. Responsive to creditors

**Capitalistic System**

- 1. Laissez-faire (hands off) capitalism: government neither aiding nor regulating business.
- 2. Responsive to debtors.



**Pro-British**

**Foreign Affairs**

**Pro-French**



Americans cheered when the French Revolution of 1789 overthrew the French monarchy and replaced it in 1792 with the French Republic—based on liberty, equality, and fraternity. But the cheering stopped in 1793 when the French republicans beheaded King Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette, started a reign of terror against the nobles, and declared war on Britain.



Warring France and Britain violated America's neutrality by interfering with her shipping. Federalists, fearing French "mobocracy," favored Britain. Republicans, fearing monarchists, favored France.



President George Washington  
(tried to remain neutral but leaned toward the Federalists)



Vice President John Adams  
(committed Federalist leader; Federalist president 1797-1801)

**Leaders**



Congressman James Madison  
(co-leader of Republicans; Republican president, 1809-17)



Senator James Monroe  
(friend to Madison, Jefferson; Republican president 1817-25)

- 1. Northeast merchants, manufacturers, financiers
- 2. Creditors

**Voters**

- 1. Southern agrarians; northeastern workers; western pioneers.
- 2. Debtors