

# Primary Source Activity



## Growth and Expansion

### Lesson 3 *Unity and Sectionalism*

## Why We Need a Protective Tariff

Before the War of 1812, the United States was dependent on other countries, especially Great Britain, for manufactured goods. The war cut off the supply of British goods and helped stimulate American manufacturing. After the war, the British again began offering inexpensive manufactured goods. As a result, new American companies cried out for protection against European competition. The following newspaper editorial from the Niles Weekly Register supports a protective tariff and predicts what will happen to American factories without tariff protection.

**Directions** Read the editorial and answer the questions that follow.

The Waltham [Massachusetts] **manufactory**<sup>1</sup> is the largest, and probably, the most prosperous in the United States. . . . When foreign . . . writers tell us, your country is not fit for manufactures, we can, with pride, tell them—look at Waltham. . . .

It would give me much pleasure to seat myself on an **eminence**<sup>2</sup> near Waltham with some honest anti-tariffite, and for one day watch the motions of all the in-comers and out-goers at the village and factory;—to take a note of what they brought in and took out—to ask the passing farmer what he took to market, the price he obtained, what he brought home in exchange; to ask the fond mother who had been to see her children, whether their habits were **industrious**,<sup>3</sup> **frugal**,<sup>4</sup> moral—and how much of their earnings went to the comforts of their aged parents? I would ask one of the worthy mercantile proprietors, what effect it had on his commercial pursuits:—and I would cheerfully agree to give up all my tariff doctrines, if the answers of all would not be as I could wish. If my anti-tariff friend would not be convinced, I would put him this case—Suppose this fine factory should be destroyed by fire, and the proprietors should not rebuild it—we will suppose ourselves sitting on this same hill one year after the [factory was] in ruins, and the same farmer, the same mother and the same merchant, should all join us, and we should join in conversation, comparing the past with the present, the farmer’s market, the mother’s children, the merchant’s business. . . . Every man of this description ought to go to Waltham, or some other manufactory, and

<sup>1</sup>manufactory: factory

<sup>2</sup>eminence: hill

# Primary Source Activity *Cont.*



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imagine to himself the difference between a *factory at work* and a *factory burnt*. This is the mode of settling questions of political economy and national policy. . . . When [people] see the practical difference between a factory stopped and a factory active, the nation will cease to be divided and congress to be indifferent.

**Source:** *Niles Weekly Register*; June 23, 1821.

### Analyzing Primary Sources

**1. Identifying** In what ways does the author show how a protective tariff will benefit people in his town?

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**2. Expressing** How does the author illustrate that the town would be negatively affected if the factory was to close?

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**3. Describing** According to the editorial, what is the proper method for setting questions of economic and national policy?

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**4. Making Connections** Why might a modern autoworker employed by an American manufacturer favor a protective tariff today? Why might American consumers oppose such a tariff?

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### Critical Thinking

**5. Making Inferences** What is the purpose of the author's opening paragraph?

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