**Debating the War of 1812**

**Arguments from Kentucky Representative Henry Clay, 1812:**

“Let war therefore be forthwith proclaimed against England. With her there can be no motive for delay. Any further discussion, any new attempt at negotiation, would be as fruitless as it would be dishonorable… The great question on which the United States have to decide, is, whether they will relinquish the ground which they now hold, or maintain it with the firmness and vigor becoming freemen. That the sense of the nation favors the latter course, is proved by a series of important and solemn facts, which speak a language not to be misunderstood.”

1. What is Clay’s stance on the war (for or against going to war)? How do you know?
2. What is Clay referencing when he proclaims what the great question is?

**Arguments from New York Senator Obadiah German, 1812:**

“I will first call the attention of the Senate to the ability and strength of the nation we are about, by this bill, to declare war against. Gentlemen ought to recollect, that Great Britain has been almost constantly engaged in war for twenty years past against one of the most powerful nations that ever existed…Is Great Britain less powerful now, than she was twenty years ago? No, sir, the constant warfare has increased her powers instead of diminishing them.”

1. What is German’s stance on the war (for or against going to war)? How do you know?
2. What is German’s biggest concern about Britain?

**Statement by President James Madison, 1812:**

“British cruisers (ships) have been in the practice of violating the rights and the peace of our coasts…Our commerce has been plundered (taken) in every sea, the great staples of our country have been cut off from our legitimate markets and a destructive blow aimed at our agricultural and maritime interest and now we behold…on the side of Great Britain a state of war against the United States.”

1. What is Madison’s stance on the war (for or against going to war)? How do you know?
2. What does Madison argue about Britain and their approach to the potential war?