

Answer in complete sentences. Your name: _____



Good Intentions, Bad Results

America turned 200 in 1976 and for its bicentennial birthday it gave itself a new president. His name was James Earl Carter, but everyone called him Jimmy. He was a Naval Academy graduate, a nuclear engineer, a peanut farmer, and the former governor of Georgia. He ran for the presidency as a Washington outsider. Since U.S. voters were pretty sick of Washington insiders, they elected him in a close race over the incumbent Jerry Ford. Carter was the first candidate since 1932 to defeat an incumbent president. He was also the first president from the Deep South since the Civil War.

1) Why was Jimmy Carter the winner in the 1976 election? What made him appealing?

Measuring misery

During the 1976 campaign, Carter added up the nation's unemployment rate and inflation level, called it a "misery index" and used it as an effective rhetorical weapon against Ford. Unfortunately for Carter, by the time he left office, the level of "misery" was higher than when he took over. The annual inflation rate — the change in the price of various consumer goods — went from 5 percent in 1970 to 14.5 percent in 1980. The price of gasoline went from about 40 cents a gallon to more than 70 cents. Part of the reason for both higher inflation and high oil prices was America's increasing dependence on foreign oil. Simply put, the country was using more oil — from running cars to making textiles — than it was producing.

2) What are two examples of the bad economy during the 1970s?

In the early '70s, Arab oil-producing countries cut off supplies to the U.S. and other Western nations as a way of pressuring Israel to give back Arab territory it had taken during a 1967 war. When the embargo was lifted in 1974, the Western countries' oil reserves had dried up and the oil-producing countries could charge pretty much whatever they wanted for their product.

3) Based on context clues, what is an "embargo"?