

1. **Mark your confusion.**
2. **Show evidence of a close reading.**
3. **Write a 1+ page reflection.**

## **Harriet Tubman Ousts Andrew Jackson in Change for a \$20**

Source: Jackie Calmes, *New York Times*, April 20, 2016

WASHINGTON — Treasury Secretary Jacob J. Lew on Wednesday announced the most sweeping and historically symbolic makeover of American currency in a century, proposing to replace the slaveholding Andrew Jackson on the \$20 bill with Harriet Tubman, the former slave and abolitionist, and to add women and civil rights leaders to the \$5 and \$10 notes.

Mr. Lew may have reneged on a commitment he made last year to make a woman the face of the \$10 bill, opting instead to keep Alexander Hamilton, to the delight of a fan base swollen with enthusiasm over a Broadway rap musical based on the life of the first Treasury secretary.

But the broader remaking of the nation's paper currency, which President Obama welcomed on Wednesday, may well have captured a historical moment for a multicultural, multiethnic and multiracial nation moving contentiously through the early years of a new century.

Tubman, an African-American and a Union spy during the Civil War, would bump Jackson — a white man known as much for his persecution of Native Americans as for his war heroics and advocacy for the common man — to the back of the \$20, in some reduced image along with the White House. Tubman would be the first woman so honored on paper currency since Martha Washington's portrait briefly graced the \$1 silver certificate in the late 19th century.

While Hamilton would remain on the \$10, and Abraham Lincoln on the \$5, images of women would be added to the back of both — in keeping with Mr. Lew's intent "to bring to life" the national monuments depicted there.

The picture of the Treasury building on the back of the \$10 bill would be replaced with a depiction of a 1913 march in support of women's right to vote that ended at the building, along with portraits of five suffrage leaders: Lucretia Mott, Sojourner Truth, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Alice Paul and Susan B. Anthony, who in more recent years was on an unpopular \$1 coin until minting ceased.

The final redesigns will be unveiled in 2020, the centennial of the 19th Amendment establishing women's suffrage, and will not go into wide circulation until later in the decade, starting with the new \$10 note. The unexpectedly ambitious proposals reflect Mr. Lew's tortuous attempt to expedite the process and win over critics who have lodged conflicting demands, pitting mainly women's advocates against Hamiltonians newly empowered by the unlikely success of their hero's story on Broadway.

Mr. Lew's design proposals are the culmination of 10 months of often-heated public commentary that began almost immediately after he invited Americans last June to help him decide which woman from history to honor on the \$10 bill. That feel-good initiative proved to be hardly as simple as he first imagined.

Immediately an online group called Women on 20s insisted that the woman to be honored — Tubman was its choice — had to go on the more common \$20 note, displacing not the popular Hamilton but Jackson, whose place in history has suffered lately with attention to his record of forcibly relocating Native Americans, supporting slavery and — despite his prominence on currency — opposing a national banking system and paper money. But the \$10 was next in line for redesign, based on federal officials' assessment of counterfeiting threats.

Yet other women mobilized by the Girls' Lounge, a networking organization for female corporate leaders, demanded that a woman go on the \$10 note, as Mr. Lew first proposed, because they did not want to wait years for a new \$20 bill. Within the administration, Rosie Rios, who as treasurer of the United States oversees the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, was also pushing for a woman on the \$10 bill.

But nothing so roiled the debate as the phenomenon of the musical "Hamilton." Weighing in for his place on the \$10 bill were well-to-do theater patrons and teenagers rapping to the soundtrack, as well as the show's creator and star, Lin-Manuel Miranda. When Mr. Lew and his wife caught a performance last August, the Treasury secretary hinted to Mr. Miranda that Hamilton would stay. Just this week, the show won the Pulitzer Prize for drama.

## **Harriet Tubman on the \$20 bill: Not all readers are thrilled**

Source: Paul Thornton, *Los Angeles Times*, April 23, 2016

The Obama administration has announced it plans to replace President Andrew Jackson's portrait on the \$20 bill with none other than Harriet Tubman, a woman who freed herself from slavery and heroically smuggled other African Americans held as property northward — and the reviews from our letter writers are, well, mixed.

Most readers welcome the change, but a sizable portion say an image of a historically significant American Indian would be more appropriate given Jackson's views on and mistreatment of indigenous people. A few defended Jackson; some even questioned Tubman's worthiness.

Here are some of their letters.

### **Jacqueline Kerr of Los Feliz says women in other countries will take note of the new \$20 bill:**

Having a women's face, and a black woman's face no less, on the \$20 bill will lift the status of women everywhere. It's impossible to imagine how this will affect some cultures in Africa, Asia and elsewhere, especially those in places where a woman's face must be covered.

Go for it, Treasury Department: Alter civilization.

### **Los Angeles resident Mark Phillips casts Tubman as a hero of the right:**

I'm sure the administration chose Tubman because it was just so perfectly politically correct. But in bipartisan reality, Tubman is a terrific choice. She fought against tyrannical governments, was a devout Christian, carried a gun, and was a Republican. I say great choice.

### **E.A. Hankins III of Sun Valley says an American Indian deserves to replace Jackson:**

The decision to replace Jackson with Underground Railroad hero Tubman is a slap in the face by the Obama administration to American Indians who suffered from the Indian Removal Act of 1830. Jackson enforced that act to relocate Indian nations by force from the southeastern U.S. to present-day Oklahoma. Some 10,000 Indians may have perished during the forced relocations, including about 5,000 Cherokees. This forced relocation is known as the Trail of Tears by the Choctaws and Cherokees. It would only have been right to replace the image of Jackson on the \$20 bill with one of our Indian heroes from the nations affected by the Indian Relocation Act.

### **Arthur Senzy of Santa Monica defends Jackson:**

While much of the nation applauds the removal of a former president from the \$20 Federal Reserve note, I would like to point out that Jackson is the only commander in chief to ever leave office with our government debt free and out of the clutches of the central banking systems that have currently plunged our nation into its \$19-trillion debt.

### **Writing from Camden, N.J., Wayne E. Williams wants the Treasury Department to work faster:**

As an African American man, I am thrilled. These changes are long overdue.

The year 2020 for these changes to be effective makes them even longer overdue. I sure hope I am blessed to live and experience these new changes. Why does our government take so long in moving forward with progress?

### **Possible Response Questions:**

- Share your thoughts about the plans for new currency.
- Pick a passage from the article and respond to it.