

# Hamilton vs. Burr

Politicians are always debating. They argue frequently, and often it is loud. While they may disagree, no harm usually comes from these debates. No one is ever in real danger. However, that can't be said for a debate from long ago in U.S. history. This debate took place between Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr. After years of arguing, these two had an infamous duel. It ended in disaster for them both.

Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr were two American politicians. Hamilton was the secretary of the treasury. Aaron Burr served as vice president during Thomas Jefferson's first term of office.

It's a fact that the two men did not like each other. They disagreed about politics. They disagreed personally, as well. This dislike lasted for years. They let it build up to a point where they felt they could no longer avoid a fight. On July 11, 1804, the two men met to duel. This duel was not with swords, but with pistols. In the end, Burr killed Hamilton.

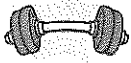
There is a debate about this historical mystery. It was tradition to show up at a duel and actually shoot at the ground or away. This showed courage because the person showed up to the duel, but didn't hurt anyone. People knew Hamilton was against dueling. Historians believe that he actually shot his pistol at a tree without the intention of hurting Burr. Was this an accident, or was he really a bad aim? Meanwhile, Burr's bullet hit Hamilton. However, some believe Burr may have been aiming away from Hamilton and accidentally hit him. Nobody knows for sure.

Years later, Burr seemed to show regret about fighting. He stated that if he had read more peaceful writers, "I should have known the world was wide enough for Hamilton and me."

The event was not just the end of the secretary of the treasury. It was also the end of Burr's political career. The public didn't approve anymore of handling disagreements in such a violent way. As a result, an anti-dueling law was soon passed.

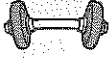
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Answer the following questions about the story "Hamilton vs. Burr." The weights show you how hard you will need to work to find each answer.



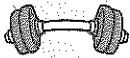
1. Based on the passage, what can you guess is the meaning of the word *infamous*?

- (A) "really well known"
- (B) "forgettable"
- (C) "not famous"
- (D) "known by a few people"



2. Alexander Hamilton was the \_\_\_\_\_.

- (A) president
- (B) secretary of state
- (C) vice president
- (D) secretary of the treasury



3. During which season was their infamous duel?

- (A) summer
- (B) fall
- (C) spring
- (D) winter



4. Why is the duel still considered a mystery in history?

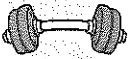
- (A) Nobody knows how Hamilton died.
- (B) Nobody knows when the duel happened.
- (C) People don't know if the two meant to fight to the death.
- (D) Nobody knows where Aaron Burr ran to after the duel.

On the lines below, write your own question based on "Hamilton vs. Burr." Circle the correct picture on the left to show the level of the question you wrote.



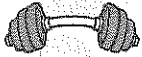
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**On a separate piece of paper . . .**

- Write a sentence that includes the word *regret*.
- Think about an argument that you have had. How did you handle the disagreement? How do you move on from an argument?