

#12128

GEORGE WASHINGTON

NEW DIMENSION MEDIA/QUESTAR, 2003

Grade Level: 3–8
9 Minutes



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TEACHER'S GUIDE **Grades 5 to 12**

George Washington **Our Presidents in America's History Series**

Subject Area: Social Studies, U.S. History

Synopsis: Chronicles the life of George Washington, including his leadership in the Revolutionary War, his role as chairman of the Constitutional Convention, and his terms as President of the United States. Explains how Washington, the first president in the world, helped unify the nation and set a precedent for the Presidency.

Learning Objectives:

- Objective 1)** Students will be able to discuss George Washington's role as Commander in Chief of the Continental Army in the Revolutionary War.
- Objective 2)** Students will be able to explain how George Washington unified the nation and set a lasting precedent for the Presidency.
- Objective 3)** Students will be able to describe the conflicting ideas of cabinet members, Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson, over the powers of state and federal governments.
- Objective 4)** Students will be able to discuss the Whiskey Rebellion of 1794 and explain how George Washington responded to the crisis.

Pre-Viewing Discussion and Activities:

- 1) Ask students to share what they already know about George Washington. Ask questions such as "Where was he from?" and "What did he do before he became President of the United States?"
- 2) Vocabulary: Presidency, unity, surveyor, slavery, sanction, economy, chairman, Constitutional Convention, unanimously, precedent, mediator, Constitution, U.S. Bank, U.S. Stock Exchange, cotton gin, excise tax, dispel

Post-Viewing Discussion and Activities:

- 1) Describe George Washington's leadership in the Revolutionary War. What factors made his task especially difficult? How did Washington's soldiers feel about him?
- 2) Describe the Continental Army's winter at Valley Forge. What kind of assistance was given to the Continental Army at that time?
- 3) Why was slavery important to the South's economy? How would the abolition of slavery affect the South? Could plantation owners have operated their businesses without the use of slave labor?

- 4) Why was George Washington the logical choice for the Presidency? How did his role as a military general prepare him for the office of President? What characteristics do you think the state representatives looked for in the first President of the United States? Do we look for the same characteristics in our leaders today?
- 5) How is a president different from a king? Why do you think it was decided to refer to Washington as Mr. President instead of “his highness”?
- 6) In what ways did George Washington set a precedent for all presidents to come?
- 7) Describe the conflicting views of Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson regarding the power of the federal and state governments. What are the benefits and drawbacks to having a strong central government? What are the benefits and drawbacks to spreading power across state governments?
- 8) What was the cause of the Whiskey Rebellion? How did Washington respond to the conflict?
- 9) What does it mean that Washington was “a citizen first in war, first in peace, first in the hearts of his countrymen”?

Additional Activities:

- 1) From their knowledge of the facts of George’s Washington’s presidency, ask students to create a myth about his character similar to the familiar story of the President cutting down a cherry tree in his youth.
- 2) Ask students to imagine that they have been elected as the 1st President of the United States. Ask them to write journal entries outlining their actions as President, their chosen lifestyle, and how they deal with conflicts in their cabinets.

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