

Name _____



George Washington

1732 – 1799

George Washington was born in Westmoreland County, Virginia on February 22, 1732. His father was Augustine Washington, a wealthy farmer and his mother's name was Mary Ball. He studied algebra, geometry and the classics. When his father died, George went to live with his half brother, Lawrence at his Mt. Vernon estate. George began to study surveying and read the book *The Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior in Company and Conversation*. He grew to become a very mannerly gentleman and believed in clean language and courteous behavior despite a lifelong struggle to control his temper. George was well known as a skilled horseman. George was appointed the official surveyor of Culpeper County. After Lawrence died, George inherited the Mt. Vernon estate. While surveying parts of the frontier, Washington encountered Indians and engaged in several small skirmishes that were the first combat events of the French and Indian War. In 1758, Washington returned to Mt. Vernon to tend to his estate and his new family. He married Martha Custis in 1759 who was previously widowed and had two young children.

Washington was elected to serve as a delegate in the Virginia House of Burgesses from 1759 – 1774. He spoke out opposing British rule on the colonies. He went on to become a delegate for the 1st and 2nd Continental Congress in 1774 and 1775.

In 1775, George was once again on the battlefield, this time for the Revolutionary War. He was elected Commander in Chief of the Continental Army. He took command of the colonial troops surrounding Boston on July 3rd, 1775 and spent the next several months training the nearly



14,000 man army. George, being the gentleman that he was, expected his soldiers to be mannerly and use clean language on and off the battlefield. He also inspired them to stay true to the cause no matter what the hardships. He arranged for supplies and reviewed military tactics. One well known victory occurred on Christmas Eve of 1776. George brilliantly crossed the icy Delaware

River to attack the Hessians in Trenton, New Jersey. The Hessians were celebrating the Christmas holiday and never expected a surprise winter attack. George's army faced three very severe winters during the Revolutionary War. They relied on two winter encampment sites, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania and Jockey Hollow in Morristown, New Jersey. When comparing

George to other United States' Military Generals, he has not been described as the most skilled General.

In 1783, George returned to his Mt. Vernon estate but was elected presiding officer of the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1787. Following the ratification of the Constitution in 1789, Washington was elected the first President of the United States under the new constitution. Washington took office on April 30th, 1789. The first thing George wanted to do as President was to secure the office of President of the United States for future candidates. He toured the new nation and attempted to prevent it from dividing over differences in ideas. Washington served two terms as President and established The Cabinet, which was an appointed group of advisors to the President. Refusing a third term as President, George delivered a farewell address in March of 1797. Washington spent his last few years at his Mt. Vernon estate. George Washington, "The Father of the United States" died on December 14, 1799.

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Discussion Questions:

1. What school subjects aided Washington to become a surveyor? Why do you think these concepts were helpful to him?
2. In what war did Washington serve as Commander in Chief? What did he expect of the soldiers under his command?
3. What famous victory during the Revolutionary War is Washington well known for?
4. For what characteristic was Washington widely respected? Did you think this had anything to do with why he was unanimously chosen as the first President of the United States?
5. What benefits would creating a Presidential advisory group such as the Cabinet provide?

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Discussion Questions:

1. What school subjects aided Washington to become a surveyor? Why do you think these concepts were helpful to him?

A) *Algebra and geometry*

2. In what war did Washington serve as Commander in Chief? What did he expect of the soldiers under his command?

A) *Revolutionary War, he expected them to mind their manners and use clean language.*

3. What famous victory during the Revolutionary War is Washington well known for?

A) *Battle of Trenton*

4. For what characteristic was Washington widely respected? Did you think this had anything to do with why he was unanimously chosen as the first President of the United States?

A) *mannerly (although he struggled with a bad temper), true to the cause, willing to give up power (he did it twice!)*

5. What benefits would creating a Presidential advisory group such as the Cabinet provide?

A) *Able to receive advice from experts in their departments, different perspectives*