

GEORGE WASHINGTON

A P R E S I D E N T ' S V I S I O N

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES, ASSIGNMENTS, AND FURTHER RESOURCES

POSTER PROJECT

Ask students what they would change if they could redesign the poster. Pose questions such as: What portraits of Washington would you choose? What issues or events during Washington's presidency would you represent and why? What paintings, drawings, or primary sources would you choose to reflect the issues?

Divide students into teams and have each team develop a new poster on Washington to be included in the *President's Vision* series. Use the class textbook, the *President's Vision* website, and other outside sources to find images and primary sources to create the new poster.

DEBATE

Divide the class into two groups and have opposing sides develop arguments for a debate over the following statement:

“President Washington's vision successfully transformed the nation and addressed the country's most pressing problems.”

One side should research and argue the affirmative. The other side should research and argue the negative. In addition to the primary sources and items on the poster, students should use the class textbook, the President's Vision website, and outside resources to prepare their arguments.

CURATING A MUSEUM EXHIBITION

Divide class into groups of four or five students. Have each group prepare a museum exhibition using the primary sources available on the *President's Vision* website and on the poster.

The exhibition should focus on Washington's time in office. It should examine the ways in which his ideas and values influenced the nation's development, using selected quotes from speeches, letters, and other sources, as well as images.

Groups can present their exhibitions as PowerPoint presentations or by printing images to create physical exhibitions.

ASSIGNMENT PROMPTS

- Outline the poster's three-paragraph narrative. What point about Washington is made in each paragraph? To what extent do the ideas presented in this narrative match the issue expressed in the featured quotation?
- Looking back at the images and text on the Washington poster, write a short essay describing Washington's presidential vision and how it sought to address the problems the nation faced when he became president.
- Consider Washington's personal history as well as the decades during which he matured and established his political career. List at least three personal and/or societal factors that shaped the development of his presidential vision. Explain your answer.

For related educational resources, visit www.presidentsvision.org



Humanities Texas

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- A number of artists painted representations of George Washington, including Gilbert Stuart, John Vanderlyn, Edward Savage, and Charles Wilson Peale. Using your textbook, the web, and the image gallery on the *President's Vision* website, find additional representations of George Washington. Compare the images you found with those featured on the poster. What new or different information do these representations reveal about Washington as politician and leader?
- Identify an issue or an event significant to Washington's presidency that you feel the poster should have addressed, but did not. Why should this issue or event have been included on a poster addressing Washington's presidential vision? Use your textbook or the web as a resource to find an image that best represents this particular issue or event. Provide a brief description of the image and explain why you chose this particular image.
- Federal-style architecture dominated during George Washington's presidency. Federal Hall in New York City, the nation's first capitol building and the site of Washington's inauguration, is an example of this style. Describe Federal Hall using the image that appears on the poster. What major architectural characteristics does the building feature? Does this style seem familiar? If so, where have you seen it before? Why do you think the new nation chose a style associated with Greek and Roman architecture?
- How, if at all, did President Washington's exercise of executive leadership establish the United States as a new nation? Describe the goals and issues that influenced his leadership. Using one specific case, evaluate the effectiveness of his leadership. What principles were reflected in his leadership?
- George Washington was keenly aware that everything he did was a precedent for future presidents. Identify three elements of Washington's style or actions as president that have influenced recent presidents.
- In his eulogy of Washington, Henry "Light-Horse Harry" Lee, Continental Congress cavalry officer, governor of Virginia, and Virginia representative to the U.S. Congress, characterized Washington in words that have echoed across the centuries:

First in war, first in peace and first in the hearts of his countrymen, he was second to none in the humble and endearing scenes of private life. Pious, just, humane, temperate and sincere—uniform, dignified and commanding—his example was as edifying to all around him as were the effects of that example lasting. . . . Correct throughout, vice shuddered in his presence and virtue always felt his fostering hand. The purity of his private character gave effulgence to his public virtues. . . . Such was the man for whom our nation mourns.

To what extent are Lee's words unique to Washington? Identify other national leaders whom these sentiments might accurately portray.

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FURTHER RESOURCES

Washington's inauguration

- The Library of Congress's American Memory collection has Washington's diary online, including passages concerning the period leading up to the inauguration:
<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/gwhtml/gwintro>

The Lansdowne Portrait of Washington

- The Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery has prepared teaching resources on the painting:
<http://www.georgewashington.si.edu/portrait/non-flash.html>
- Details about the books featured in the portrait:
<http://www.georgewashington.si.edu/portrait/books.html>

The Farewell Address

- The complete text of Washington's Farewell Address, along with related educational resources, are available at the George Washington Papers at the University of Virginia:
<http://gwpapers.virginia.edu/documents/farewell/transcript.html>

The L'Enfant Map

- Biographical information on L'Enfant and an online version of his original map are available from the Library of Congress: <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/tri001.html>
- A computer-assisted reproduction of L'Enfant's 1791 manuscript plan for the city of Washington can be found in the American Memory Collection of the Library of Congress:
<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3850.ct000091>

Additional online resources

- PBS, Rediscovering George Washington: <http://www.pbs.org/georgewashington/>
- The Papers of George Washington exhibition on responses to his death:
<http://gwpapers.virginia.edu/project/exhibit/mourning/response.html>

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