

Mt. Vernon Reading Comprehension

Name _____



Mount Vernon, located just south of Alexandria, Virginia, at the southern terminus of the famed George Washington Memorial Parkway, was the plantation home of George Washington.

The estate on which Mt. Vernon would be built was part of the Washington family estate as early as 1674. When George's father, Augustine Washington, lived on the estate, it was known as Little Hunting Creek. Augustine died in 1743, at which point, George's oldest half brother, Lawrence moved his family to the plantation, which became known as Mount Vernon, after Edward Vernon, a British military officer whom Lawrence admired. Lawrence, however, died suddenly in 1752 and left the plantation to his wife and George, who had previously taken up residence at the plantation and was likely serving as its manager. When Lawrence's widow remarried, she sold her interest in the plantation to George in 1757, who became its official sole owner in 1761 after her death.

Gardens, walkways, lanes, and outbuildings were carefully situated to create a peaceful setting that blended ingeniously with the natural beauty of the land. Up until the Revolutionary War, George worked the land of the estate and divided it into five working farms of over 8,000 acres. Each farm had its own management team of overseers and slaves, livestock, equipment, and buildings. After the war, George continued his work on the estate and grew hemp, cotton, silk, flax, and numerous fruits and vegetables. George considered himself an agriculturalist and liked to experiment with grasses, wheat, grains, and vegetables to produce seeds for his farming operation. In 1786, George planted a huge orchard which provided the estate with fresh peaches, cherries, pears, plums, and apples.

In 1797, he built a whiskey distillery nearby (next to his gristmill), which, for a short time, would become one of the nation's top whiskey producers. In 1799, the distillery produced over 11,000 gallons of rye whiskey.

Both George and Martha Washington died at the estate and are buried on the grounds. Today, Mount Vernon has been carefully restored as is a major tourist destination. The current estate features the mansions, its many outbuildings, gardens, livestock areas, and associated buildings. It features an incredible museum that details the life of George Washington and history of the American Revolution. There are numerous interactive exhibits, artifacts (such as George's dentures), works of art, and exciting films. You can learn all about the various buildings, china, and furniture of Mount Vernon, or, about George's unfortunate dental problems, the details of the last hours of his life, his religious beliefs, or, the loving relationship between him and Martha. Mount Vernon also features several gift shops (where you can buy \$5,000 china settings, rare coins and currency, as well as more modestly priced souvenirs) and a full-service restaurant. If you visit Mount Vernon in the summer, make sure you get there early. There are long lines to enter the mansion. But even if you don't tour the mansion, there is plenty to do and see.

1. The second paragraph...

- A. tells mostly about how George managed the estate.
- B. tells mostly about Mt. Vernon during the Revolutionary War.
- C. tells mostly about ownership of Mt. Vernon in its early history.
- D. tells mostly about the products harvested on the grounds of Mt. Vernon.

2. When was Mt. Vernon called Little Hunting Creek?

- A. When Augustus Washington lived there
- B. When Lawrence Washington lived there
- C. In 1757
- D. When Edward Vernon moved out of the estate

3. When was George Washington LEAST involved with Mt. Vernon?

- A. 1786
- B. 1761
- C. During the Revolutionary War
- D. After the Revolutionary War

4. What happened first?

- A. George built a whiskey distillery at Mt. Vernon
- B. George planted an orchard at Mt. Vernon
- C. George became the estate's sole owner
- D. 1780

5. Which of the following is NOT true?

- A. Washington planted many different kinds of fruit trees at Mt. Vernon
- B. Washington grew vegetables and grains at Mt. Vernon
- C. Washington grew crops such as cotton and hemp
- D. Washington did not own slaves at Mt. Vernon

6. According to the final paragraph...

- A. Mt. Vernon is best experienced at night
- B. Mt. Vernon is best experienced in the winter
- C. There is a lot to learn (and buy) at Mt. Vernon, even if you don't tour the mansion
- D. Plan your visit to Mt. Vernon, because many parts of the museum and grounds are often closed

7. Which is NOT discussed in the passage?

- A. The architecture of Mt. Vernon
- B. The history of Mt. Vernon
- C. Details of the museum exhibits at Mt. Vernon
- D. The location of Mt. Vernon