



George Washington Activity Bundle

Integrated Reading and

CRITICAL THOUGHT

Activities

For Grades 5-8

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ANSWERS

Name	Answers
George Washington RC	D, D, C, Custis, D, B, D, A, D, C
Conway Cabal RC	C, AB, C, A, BD, D, B
George Washington Myths RC	D, B, B, C, C
Mt Vernon RC	C, A, C, C, D, C, A
Battles of New York RC	B, D, A, A, C, C, C, A, D, B
Battle of Trenton RC	D, D, A, A, C, B, A, A, D, B
Battle of Monmouth Courthouse RC	D, D, B, C, A, C, B
Siege at Yorktown RC	D, D, B, C, B, D, C, D, B, B

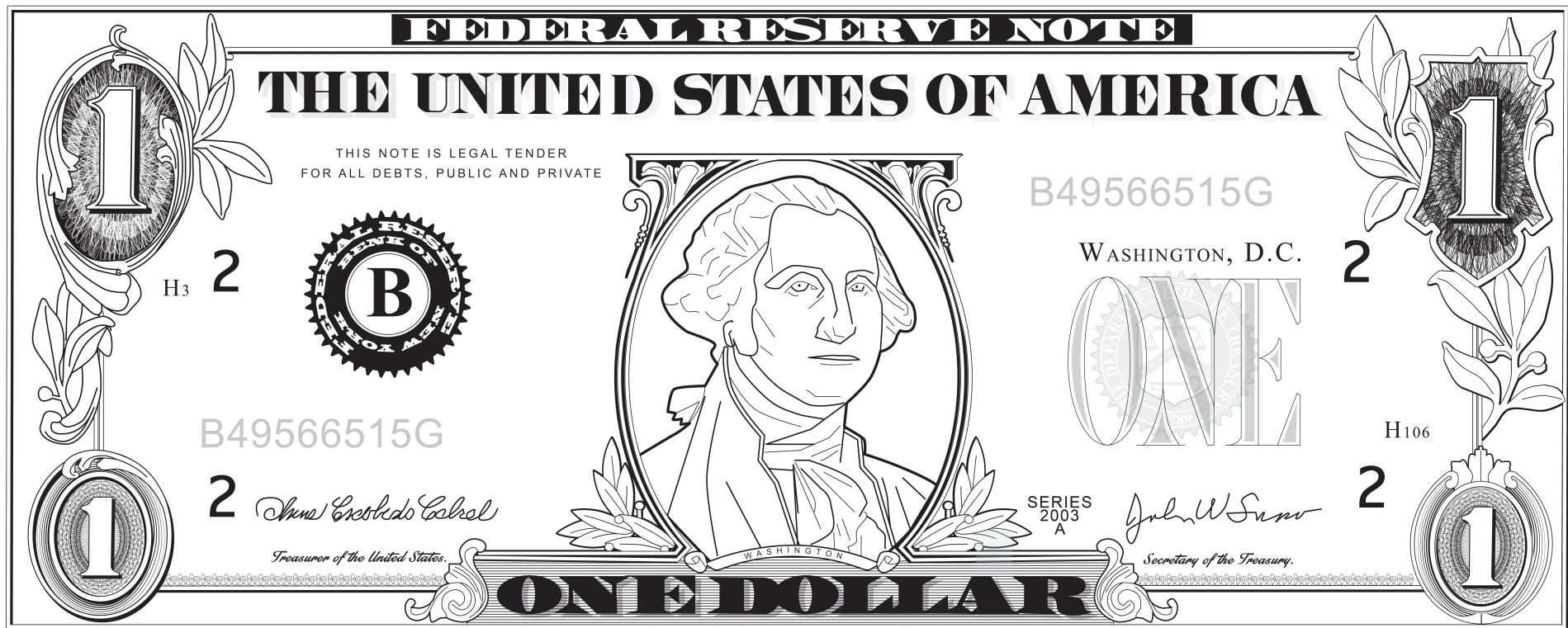
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\$ 1 Bill Coloring



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Virtual History Teacher
George Washington Test

Name: _____

Instructions: You are playing the role of a history teacher who is grading the test below. See the questions and your “student’s” answers. Grade the quality of the answers on a scale of 1-4, “1” being a poor answer and “4” being a great answer. For each answer you grade, use your knowledge of George Washington, or, reference the mrnussbaum.com online biography, to add the missing pieces.

Question 1: Why was George Washington so important in the Revolutionary War?	Score:
Student Answer: George Washington won a few battles and was a good leader.	
Your Response:	

Question 2: Why was George Washington called “The Father of our Country?”	Score:
Student Answer: He was called that because he was the first president.	
Your Response:	

Question 3: What are some ways in which George Washington is honored in America today?	Score:
Student Answer: George Washington has a big monument in Washington D.C. and has a state named after him.	
Your Response:	

Possible Answers:

Question 1: Why was George Washington so important in the Revolutionary War?	Score:
Student Answer: George Washington won a few battles and was a good leader.	
Your Response: George Washington led the Continental Army, which was always low on experience, morale, supplies, and clothing. His leadership was crucial when it looked like the British would win the war. Washington led the Continental Army to victories at Trenton, Princeton, and Yorktown.	

Question 2: What were some of Amelia's accomplishments before her last flight?	Score:
Student Answer: Amelia became a famous pilot and broke a lot of records.	
Your Response: In 1927, Amelia became the first woman to fly across the Atlantic Ocean (although she did so as a passenger). She would eventually become the first woman pilot to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean. Furthermore, she would break the longest flight and highest altitude records for female pilots, as well as the record for flying across the Atlantic Ocean in the shortest amount of time.	

Question 3: What are some ways in which George Washington is honored in America today?	Score:
Student Answer: George Washington has a big monument in Washington D.C. and has a state named after him.	
Your Response: Washington is honored in countless ways. Besides the Washington Monument, the nation's capital is named after him. Besides Washington state, cities, counties, parks, highways, schools, and buildings are named for him. He appears on our currency and coins and his birthday is a holiday.	



Name _____

George Washington: Having fun with an American Legend

George Washington

George Washington was _____ in 1732. He fought in the French

past tense verb

and Indian _____, and was _____ twice. In 1775,

noun

past tense verb

he was named _____ of the _____.

noun (not place)

adjective

noun (not place)

Washington scored a major _____ at _____.

noun

place

In 1783, he _____ the British _____ and the war was

past tense verb

noun (not person)

over.



WASHINGTON

Misery at Valley Forge

To the right is a U.S. Postage stamp commemorating the 150th anniversary of the winter encampment at Valley Forge. It shows the iconic image of Commander-in-Chief George Washington praying for the soldiers forced to endure the winter under miserable and deadly conditions.



Directions: Research the winter of 1777-1778 at Valley Forge at

http://www.mrnussbaum.com/history/valley_forge.htm

Then, compose a letter to a real or make-believe loved one or friend as if you were a soldier wintering at Valley Forge. In the letter, demonstrate your knowledge of Valley Forge by describing your suffering and the suffering around you and how the morale of the army improved after the arrival of Baron Von Steuben.

Winter at Valley Forge Reading Comprehension

During the 1700s and 1800s, major fighting during wars generally ceased for the winters, and armies took up winter encampments. As winter descended upon Pennsylvania in 1777, General George Washington chose Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, some eighteen miles west of Philadelphia as site of the winter encampment of the Continental Army. The area was far enough away from the British in Philadelphia to discourage surprise attacks, and its location between high hills and the Schuylkill River made it easily defensible.

The Continental Army, however, was in bad shape. Of the 12,000 soldiers, many lacked the supplies or clothing to survive the winter, and many others were starving at this point. At Valley Forge, defense lines were built along with over 1,000 huts to provide some relief from the brutal elements. Moisture from rain and melting snow made it impossible for many soldiers to stay dry and allowed for the spread of disease. The only reliable food that the soldiers received was a mixture of flour and water known as “firecake.” Occasionally, soldiers received meat and bread. Furthermore, many soldiers had inadequate supplies of clothing and were forced to endure the winter in tatters and without blankets. Many lacked shoes. Wounded soldiers often died from exposure to the elements. Unsanitary and crowded conditions led to the proliferation of diseases and sicknesses such as typhoid and pneumonia. Over 2,000 people died from such sicknesses.

On February 23, 1778, former German General Baron von Steuben arrived at Valley Forge to train the Patriots how to march in formation, fire guns quickly, use bayonets, and become soldiers. Though von Steuben spoke little English, he developed a training manual in French that would be translated on the grounds into English. Unlike many American generals, von Steuben worked directly with the soldiers, endearing him to the thousands suffering at Valley Forge. Von Steuben’s presence did much to improve the morale of the army during the bitter winter and also helped them develop into a more tactical, effective military machine, capable of fighting the British.

On June 19, 1778, the Continental Army left Valley Forge in pursuit of the British who were moving north to New York.

1.) Why did General Washington choose Valley Forge as the site of his army's winter encampment?

- a.) Its location made it easy to defend.
- b.) It was the only place where he wouldn't be attacked.
- c.) It was warmer than any other encampments.
- d.) It was close to a source of water.

2.) Which of the following words would best describe the state of the Continental Army during the winter of 1777–1778?

- a.) Powerful
- b.) Courteous
- c.) Weak
- d.) Determined

3.) Which of the following was the LEAST LIKELY threat to soldiers encamped at Valley Forge?

- a.) Disease
- b.) A British attack
- c.) Starvation
- d.) The cold weather

4.) How did soldiers get pneumonia?

- a.) From eating old firecake
- b.) From not getting enough meat
- c.) From the crowded and unsanitary conditions
- d.) From not having shoes

5.) What does the word “proliferation” mean in the following sentence:

Unsanitary and crowded conditions led to the proliferation of diseases and sicknesses such as typhoid and pneumonia.

- a.) Growth and spread
- b.) Amount
- c.) Effects
- d.) Storage

6.) Which of the following words best describes pneumonia and typhoid at Valley Forge?

- a.) Bothersome
- b.) Deadly
- c.) Tragic
- d.) Shameful

7.) Baron Von Steuben taught the colonists...

- a.) how to make better use of guns.
- b.) how to hide from the enemy better.
- c.) how to understand German.
- d.) All of the above

8.) How was Baron von Steuben different from American generals?

- a.) He never worked directly with soldiers.
- b.) He would go into battle with soldiers.
- c.) He worked directly with soldiers.
- d.) He liked the British.

9.) What was probably the most important contribution made by Baron von Steuben?

- a.) He taught the soldiers that their generals did not have to speak good English.
- b.) He taught the soldiers how to use bayonets.
- c.) He provided the soldiers with things to laugh about.
- d.) He helped transform the Continental Army into an army that could actually fight the British.

10.) What happened last?

- a.) Baron von Steuben arrived.
- b.) April 1778
- c.) The Continental Army began their pursuit of the British.
- d.) The Continental Army learned to fire guns faster and to use bayonets.

BATTLE OF TRENTON Reading Comprehension

For the most part, and with the exception of the publication of the Declaration of Independence, 1776 had been a brutal year for Patriot morale. The Continental Army, under the command of George Washington, had been more or less routed in and around New York City, suffering tremendous casualties. Morale was low and the ragtag Continental Army was forced to retreat through New Jersey to the west side of the Delaware River into Pennsylvania. On the other side of the river, in Trenton, N.J., were three regiments of Hessian soldiers (German soldiers) numbering about 1,400.

General Washington planned an attack on the Hessians from three directions to be executed on December 26, 1776, the day after Christmas. As the Continental Army prepared to cross the Delaware River on their way to Trenton, sleet and snow had begun to fall, delaying the crossing. With great effort and difficulty, the army eventually crossed the river in Durham boats, and the horses and artillery were ferried across. Two men fell overboard during the crossing, but both survived. Two other generals who were to assist Washington were delayed by the adverse weather. By 4:00 in the morning, however, the crossing was completed and the Continental Army began the nine-mile march toward Trenton. During the march, Washington continually encouraged his troops, many of whom lacked shoes and were bleeding from their feet.

The first gunfire of the battle happened about a mile north of Trenton at a Hessian outpost, where the Hessians stationed there began a desperate retreat. Once in Trenton, Washington instructed the escape route to Princeton cut off. Washington's army was soon joined by armies under the command of Generals Nathanael Greene and John Sullivan. Cannons and artillery were set up at the heads of King and Queen Streets, the two main streets running through the city, which did tremendous damage to the Hessian ranks. Hessian soldiers advancing up the streets were quickly repulsed. Elsewhere in the city, Hessian forces were being overrun. Eventually, the majority of Hessian forces would become surrounded by American forces in an orchard. They were forced to surrender. Others surrendered when their escape routes had been cut off.

In the battle, only two American soldiers were killed and five were injured, though many more died from hypothermia and disease. The Hessians suffered 83 casualties, 22 of which were fatalities. 896 Hessians were captured, though several hundred did manage to escape. All four Hessian colonels, however, were killed. Although the battle was not important tactically, it inspired the American war effort and raised the morale of the army, which seemed to be threatened with dissolution.

1.) At the time just before the Battle of Trenton, where was the Continental Army?

- a.) Delaware
- b.) New Jersey
- c.) New York
- d.) Pennsylvania

2.) What made the crossing of the Delaware River so difficult?

- a.) The depth of the current
- b.) The soldiers on the other side
- c.) The current
- d.) The weather

3.) What happened after the army crossed the Delaware River?

- a.) The nine-mile march to Trenton
- b.) The weather cleared
- c.) The Battle of Trenton
- d.) The death of two soldiers

4.) Which word best describes the crossing of the river?

- a.) dangerous
- b.) comfortable
- c.) splendid
- d.) outrageous

5.) Which of the following was NOT true about the crossing of the Delaware River?

- a.) It occurred on the day after Christmas.
- b.) The cannons were carried across on a ferry.
- c.) Two men died.
- d.) The soldiers crossed in Durham boats.

6.) Where were the first shots fired?

- a.) south of Trenton
- b.) north of Trenton
- c.) on the Delaware River
- d.) in Trenton

7.) What does the word “repulsed” mean in the following sentence:

Hessian soldiers advancing up the streets were quickly repulsed.

- a.) turned back
- b.) fooled
- c.) destroyed
- d.) none of the above

8.) Which of the following would accurately describe the Americans after the battle?

- a.) Few died in battle; many died of the cold and of disease.
- b.) Many died in battle; few died of the cold and of disease.
- c.) Few died in battle; few died of the cold and of disease.
- d.) Many died in battle; many died of the cold and of disease.

9.) Which best describes the Battle of Trenton?

- a.) It was the turning point in the war.
- b.) Completely unimportant
- c.) Tactically important
- d.) It raised the morale of the army.

10.) What happened first?

- a.) The capture of 896 Hessian soldiers.
- b.) Christmas 1776
- c.) The Battle of Trenton
- d.) Washington and his men crossed the Delaware River.

George Washington Myths

Name _____

The Cherry Tree Myth

The cherry tree myth is one of the most popular and enduring George Washington legends. In the story, George's father confronts the six-- year-- old future hero after discovering his favorite cherry tree was nearly cut down. According to the legend, George replied, "I cannot tell a lie, I did cut the cherry tree with my hatchet." Struck by his son's magnanimous honesty, George's father embraced him rather than punish him.

The cherry tree legend was first told by one of Washington's biographers, Mason Locke Weems. Weems, who deeply admired Washington, wanted to illustrate that Washington's incredible accomplishments were rooted in his values. Furthermore, since Washington was the subject of several biographies soon to hit bookshelves, Locke wanted to make his stand out with new and original information about George's life.

The Silver Dollar Myth

Did George Washington throw a silver dollar across the Potomac River?

In popular culture, Washington was said to have thrown a silver dollar across the Potomac or Delaware River. The myth likely persisted to illustrate the first president as superhuman. According to George Washington's grandson, George Washington Parke Custis, the myth is partially true even though it is likely to disappoint those who liken Washington to a super hero. The river in question was not the Potomac, nor was it the Delaware, but rather the Rappahannock, near George's childhood home. At certain points near the Washington homestead, the Rappahannock narrows to a width of about 250 feet, where it might be possible to throw a round object across. Because the first American silver dollar was produced in 1794, when Washington was 62 years-old, the "silver dollar" may have been a rock or piece of slate.

1. What does “enduring” mean as used in the first sentence?

The cherry tree myth is one of the most popular and enduring George Washington legends.

- A. Boring
- B. Long-lasting
- C. newest
- D. incredible

2. Which of the following best describes the origin of the cherry tree myth?

- A. The author wanted to include truthful information from Washington's childhood
- B. The author wanted to include information that other biographies would not have
- C. The author wanted to make sure people wouldn't compare George Washington to his father
- D. The origins of the cherry tree myth remain unclear

3. Which of the following best describes why the silver dollar myth became so popular?

- A. Because the river in question was actually the Rappahannock river
- B. Because the myth was supposedly told by George Washington's grandson
- C. Because it was so difficult to throw a silver dollar across a river
- D. Because people wanted to believe that George Washington was like a superhero

4. Which of the following is a legitimate question about the silver dollar myth?

- A. Who really was George Washington's grandson?
- B. What did George Washington actually throw across the river?
- C. How narrow was the Rappahannock River?
- D. How old was Washington when he threw the silver dollar?

5. According to the cherry tree myth, why did Washington's father decide against punishing him?

- A. His father was surprised at how strong he was
- B. His father was unsure of how to handle the situation
- C. His father was proud of his son for being so honest
- D. His father was being magnanimous

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 re-married, 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 he 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 to 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

GEORGE WASHINGTON Reading Comprehension

George Washington was born on February 22, 1732, in Westmoreland County, Virginia, although he grew up near Fredericksburg. In his childhood and adolescence, he studied math and surveying. When he was 16, he went to live with his brother, Lawrence, in Mount Vernon.

George was scarred with smallpox before the age of 20 but inherited his brother's land (including Mount Vernon) when Lawrence died in 1752.

Washington's military career began in 1753, when he was sent into Ohio country. In 1754, he battled the French and was forced to surrender Fort Necessity (near present-day Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania). He continued as an officer in Ohio country and served under the British general Edward Braddock when their army was ambushed by the French in 1755. Once again, Washington tasted defeat after their surrender of Fort Duquesne to French forces. Washington helped take Fort Duquesne back in 1758.

Washington was married to Martha Custis in 1759. Washington managed the family and estate until he took command of the Virginia troops just before the American Revolution. He was made commander of the Continental Army on June 15, 1775.

Washington proved himself an excellent leader and won several decisive battles during the Revolution. As an advocate of a federal government, Washington became chairman of the Constitutional Convention and helped in getting the Constitution ratified. In 1789, he was inaugurated as America's first president.

Washington was re-elected in 1792, but refused a third term. On December 14, 1799, 17 days before the new century, Washington died of acute laryngitis.

1.) When was George Washington born?

- a.) after February 24
- b.) before February 20
- c.) after February 26
- d.) before February 23

6.) What does advocate mean?

- a.) opponent
- b.) supporter
- c.) creator
- d.) player

2.) George Washington couldn't be scarred with smallpox at which age?

- a.) 16
- b.) 17
- c.) 19
- d.) 21

7.) Which of the following was George Washington not involved in?

- a.) Surrender of Fort Duquense
- b.) Constitutional Convention
- c.) Revolutionary War
- d.) Boston Tea Party

3.) In which of the following years was George Washington successful in battle?

- a.) 1750
- b.) 1753
- c.) 1758
- d.) 1755

8.) Washington became chairman of what?

- a.) Constitutional Convention
- b.) American Revolution
- c.) Virginia
- d.) French forces

9.) What happened last?

- a.) Washington was inaugurated as first president.
- b.) Washington refused a third term.
- c.) 1794
- d.) The new century

10.) Which of the following is not true?

- a.) Washington was an excellent leader.
- b.) Washington won several decisive battles during the American Revolution.
- c.) Washington died after the new century.
- d.) Washington died before the new century.

4.) George Washington married Martha _____.

5.) What happened first?

- a.) George Washington inherited his brother's land.
- b.) Washington's military career began.
- c.) Washington was married.
- d.) He went to live with Lawrence.

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Mount Rushmore

The Freemasons Reading Comprehension

Name _____

With members as influential as Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and Mark Twain, it is easy to see how Freemasonry came to be the most significant fraternal organization in the world. Freemasonry was thought to have originated from stonemasons who built castles in medieval Europe. The early history of freemasonry is recorded in mysterious and cryptic manuscripts which date back to 1425. The first document, known as the Regius Poem, recounts how the art of masonry came to England. It also contains instructions, rules, and warnings for craftsmen and for worksite construction. Later manuscripts contain additions and amendments to the Regius Poem. Records show that the first Grand Lodge, which is a governing body of the freemasons, was established in 1717 in London. Many other lodges exist worldwide, which serve as places for Freemasons to gather.

Freemasonry is not affiliated with politics or religion, although some religions consider freemasonry a cult or secret society incompatible with religious doctrine. That said, Freemasonry prides itself on its devotion to many charitable causes and gathering together men of good moral character. The organization donates more than \$38 million per year to different global, community, and individual organizations. Requirements of becoming a Freemason include being of sound reputation and character, being at least eighteen years old, and believing in God. Also, since it is a fraternal organization, women are prohibited from joining; however, an order of women Freemasons now exists.

Participation in freemasonry involves attending meetings and ceremonies. Ceremonies take place for inducting new members, as well as when existing members fulfill the requirements for the three "degrees." Each degree signifies a new step to achieving higher knowledge. The three degrees are: Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft, and Master Mason. The Masonic square and compass is the symbol of the Freemasons. These represent architectural tools and are used as emblems to teach symbolic lessons.

While Freemasonry has its roots in England, there is significant membership within the United States. In fact, fourteen US presidents have been members of the organization! Though membership has gone down significantly, there are still over one million American members, largely based out of Pennsylvania and Ohio.

1. Which of the following was described in the Regius Poem?

- a. Rules for determining who would be excluded from freemasonry
- b. Where the governing bodies would be located
- c. How masonry would spread from England
- d. How masonry came to England

2. Which is NOT true about freemasonry?

- a. It has political affiliations
- b. Some religions consider it a secret society or cult
- c. Members must be at least eighteen years of age
- d. Members must acknowledge the existence of God

3. Which best describes the recorded history of freemasonry prior to 1717?

- a. Detailed records present a very clear history
- b. There are no records of freemasonry before 1717
- c. The history of freemasonry before 1717 is unclear and confusing
- d. Freemasonry dates back thousands of years before 1717

4. Which best describes membership in freemasonry over time?

- a. It has increased significantly
- b. It has increased slightly
- c. It has decreased significantly
- d. It has decreased slightly

5. What are “amendments” as used in the following sentence?

Later manuscripts contain additions and amendments to the Regius Poem.

- a. changes
- b. conditions
- c. placeholders
- d. notes

6. Which of the following might be used as evidence by freemasons against those who claim freemasonry is “incompatible with religious doctrine”?

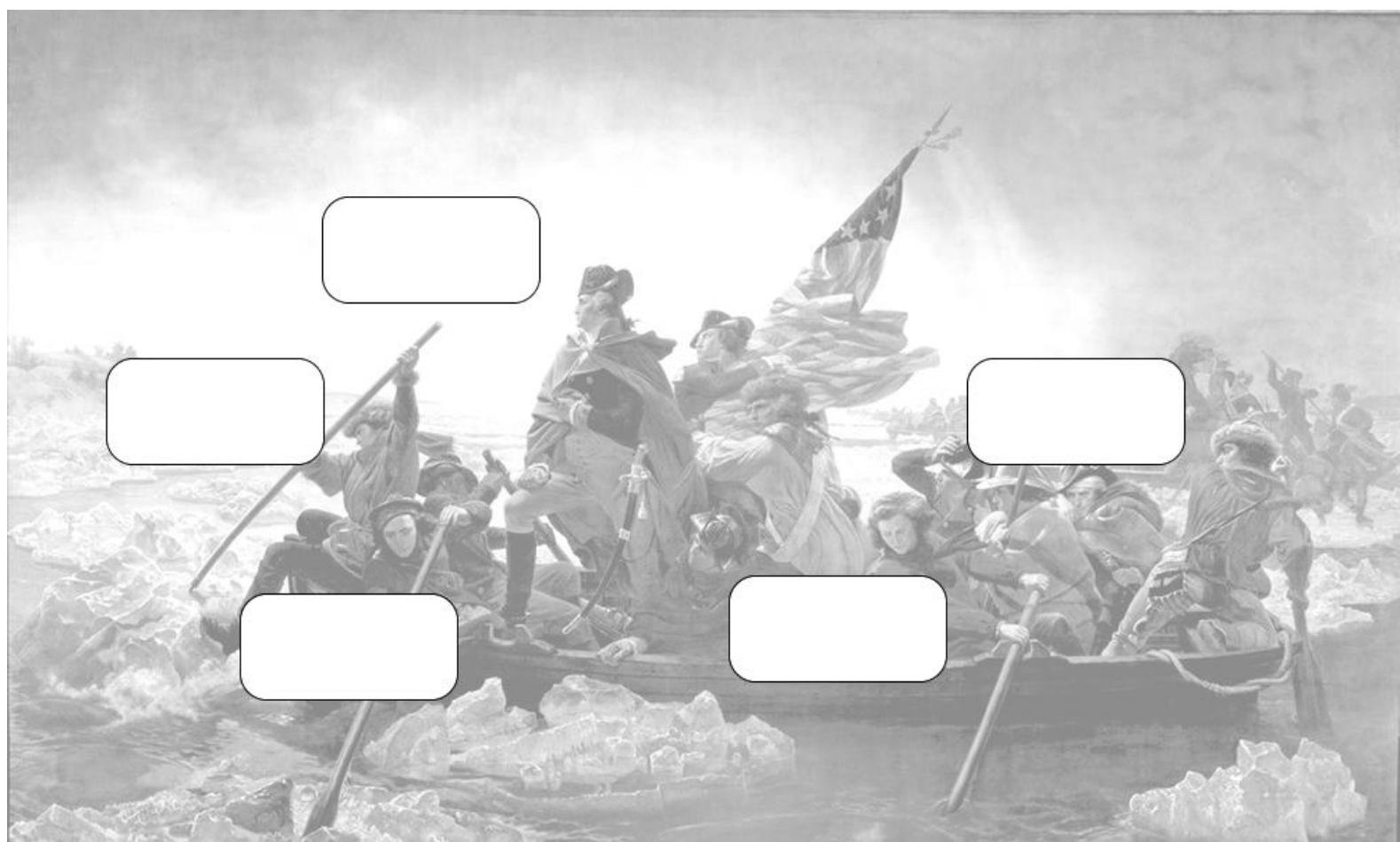
- a. Fourteen presidents were freemasons
- b. Belief in God is required for membership
- c. George Washington was a freemason
- d. Freemasons have to achieve three degrees to complete membership

7. To which of the following questions would “fellowcraft” be the answer?

- a. What is the highest “degree” of achievement amongst freemasons?
- b. What is the first “degree” of achievement amongst freemasons?
- c. What is one of the three “degrees” of achievement amongst freemasons?
- d. What does the Masonic square and compass represent?

Washington Crosses the Delaware River

Below is one of the most famous paintings of the Revolutionary War and of American history. Painted by Emanuel Leutze in 1851, it depicts George Washington leading his soldiers through the treacherous and icy waters of the Delaware River on Christmas night 1776 to their eventual victory and capture of 800 Hessian Troops at Trenton, New Jersey. The victory at Trenton was a significant morale boost for the beleaguered Continental Army and came on the heels of devastating defeats in and around New York City and the near collapse of the Patriot effort. One of the little known facts about this iconic painting is that a wounded James Monroe, America's 5th president, is holding the Patriot flag behind George Washington. What do you think the soldiers were thinking, crossing the river with little protection from the cold on that fateful Christmas night? Fill in the blurb next to General Washington and the three soldiers. Feel free to use some humor and to color the painting.



Continental Army Printable Reading Comprehension

Name _____

For its first 160 years of existence, the colonies that made up England's North American empire acted more as individual nations than as united colonies. Hence, when tensions with England increased, and the onset of war seemed more and more likely, there was hardly a "national" army to fight the British. At the time, individual colonies relied on their local militias for defense. These militias consisted of citizens, farmers, and laborers who doubled as "soldiers" with weapons. Such militias had little formal military training.

Following the Battles of Lexington and Concord in 1775, a colonial army consisting of 26 regiments was formed on orders from the Massachusetts Provincial Congress. Smaller forces were raised throughout New England and New York. The Continental Congress authorized the creation of the Continental Army with these regiments on June 14, 1775. The next day, Congress appointed George Washington as Commander-in-Chief of the army. Although many disliked the idea of a permanent national army, it was deemed necessary in the wake of the British threat.

Throughout the war the Continental Army experienced major problems. Not only were the soldiers in the army inexperienced, but they lacked adequate weaponry, clothes, shoes, and food. Not surprisingly, desertions were frequent and morale was extremely low. Disease, starvation, and hypothermia plagued the Continental Army at its winter quarters at Morristown in early 1777, and at Valley Forge during the winter of 1777-1778. Nearly one in six soldiers wintering at Valley Forge died of Typhoid, Dysentery, and Pneumonia because of the unsanitary conditions and contaminated food. Nutrition was non-existent and the only food that many soldiers ate for months at a time was known as firecake - a simple mixture of flour and water cooked over a fire until it became solid.

Despite the dreadful conditions and desertions, the Continental Army remained relatively intact under the leadership of George Washington. With the arrival of Baron von Steuben at Valley Forge in 1778, the army learned military tactics, formations, training, and discipline, and gradually became a military force that could effectively fight the British in combat. In its first action after Valley Forge, the vastly improved army fought the British to a draw at the Battle of Monmouth Courthouse. Combined with French forces, the Continental Army would stage a successful siege of the British at Yorktown in 1781, which would prove the last major battle of the war.

- 1. Prior to the Revolutionary War, England's North American colonies...**
 - A. were united.
 - B. acted in each other's best interests.
 - C. acted more like individual nations than as a single unit.
 - D. raised a national army.
- 2. Which of the following best describes “soldiers” prior to the Revolutionary War?**
 - A. Most of the soldiers were just farmers and laborers with weapons
 - B. Most of the soldiers were well-trained and had military experience
 - C. Most of the soldiers had experience with the Continental Army
 - D. Most of the soldiers were in well-trained militias that had experience fighting in wars
- 3. When was George Washington appointed Commander-in-Chief?**
 - A. Before Congress authorized the Continental Army
 - B. The day after the Battle of Lexington and Concord
 - C. June 14, 1775
 - D. The day after Congress authorized the Continental Army
- 4. If the third paragraph served as the entire passage, which of the following could be its title?**
 - A. The Growth of the Continental Army
 - B. George Washington: America's Greatest Leader
 - C. The Continental Army: Methods of Survival at Valley Forge
 - D. The Dreadful Suffering of the Continental Army
- 5. At Valley Forge... (Select all that are true)**
 - A. the Continental Army was trained by Baron von Steuben.
 - B. the British attacked the Continental Army.
 - C. nearly one in six soldiers died of disease.
 - D. some soldiers had nothing to eat but firecake.

6. Which of the following best describes the Continental Army after the winter of 1777-1778?

- A. The army was weakened from the dreadful winter and was not strong enough to continue
- B. The army was significantly improved and defeated the British at the Battle of Monmouth Courthouse
- C. The army was significantly improved and fought the British to a draw at the Siege of Yorktown
- D. The army was significantly improved and fought the British to a draw at the Battle of Monmouth Courthouse.

7. What question is not answered in the passage?

- A. What was the last major battle of the Revolutionary War?
- B. How did soldiers make firecake?
- C. Why did some oppose the formation of a permanent army?
- D. Where was the Continental Army in the winter months of 1777?

The Conway Cabal Printable Reading Comprehension

Name _____

The Conway Cabal was the only major political threat to George Washington during the Revolutionary War. The “cabal,” or secret political group, consisted of several senior military officers who aimed to supplant George Washington as Commander-in-Chief. Thomas Conway, for whom the group is named, wrote several letters to the Second Continental Congress and others criticizing George Washington.

In late 1776 and 1777, the Continental Army had experienced a series of significant setbacks, first in disastrous battles in and around New York City, and later at Brandywine Creek and Germantown near Philadelphia. Following the Battle of Brandywine Creek, British forces occupied Philadelphia, causing Congress to flee west to York, Pennsylvania. As Washington took up winter quarters with the Continental Army at Valley Forge, and as conditions there deteriorated for the army, some members of Congress began questioning whether Washington was fit for Commander-in-Chief. Some pointed to Horatio Gates, who took credit for the Patriot victory at Saratoga, as a possible replacement.

Thomas Conway, who served as the army’s inspector general at the time, and who served under Washington in the Philadelphia campaign, wrote a letter to Congress criticizing Washington and lobbying for his own promotion. Washington opposed the promotion of the Irish-born Conway, whom he considered arrogant. He also thought Conway’s promotion would anger those within his ranks that had served longer. In addition, Conway wrote a letter to Horatio Gates that alluded to Washington as a poor general and that it would be better served with Gates in charge. Washington received word of the letter, which caused him to believe his subordinate generals were seeking to supplant him. Washington became so famously annoyed by the sniping and letters that he threatened to resign from the army if it continued. Much to Washington’s chagrin, Congress would actually promote both Conway and Gates to the Board of War. Gates was named president of the Board of War and Washington’s relationship with both men took turns for the worse.

Eventually, however, because most of Washington’s contemporaries fully supported him, Congress reluctantly was forced to give full public support for Washington, short-circuiting any plots to remove Washington from command.

In the end, Conway resigned from the army and was later injured in a duel by a Washington supporter. Horatio Gates remained in the army, but his reputation was permanently marred. Gates would nearly be charged with cowardice after the Battle of Camden, which effectively ended his military career.

1. Which of the following best describes the Conway Cabal?

- A. A group of military officers who wanted promotions
- B. A group of military officers who favored the British
- C. A group of military officers who favored the removal of George Washington
- D. A group of military officers who were arrogant

2. What was the effect(s) of the Patriot defeat at the Battle of Brandywine Creek? Select all that apply.

- A. Congress fled west to York
- B. The British were able to occupy Philadelphia
- C. The Continental Army spent the winter at Valley Forge
- D. George Washington was replaced as Commander-in-Chief

3. Why did some members of Congress begin questioning Washington's leadership?

- A. Because of the brutal winter of 1777-1778 at Valley Forge
- B. Because Horatio Gates claimed victory at Saratoga
- C. Because of a disastrous series of battles in New York and near Philadelphia
- D. Because they thought George Washington would serve better elsewhere

4. Why did Washington oppose the promotion of Thomas Conway?

- A. He thought it would anger officers that had served longer
- B. He thought Conway to be a poor leader
- C. He thought he was a better military officer than Conway
- D. He preferred Horatio Gates

5. Select all of the following that are true.

- A. Thomas Conway was nearly charged with cowardice after the Battle of Camden
- B. Washington believed that the letters he learned about represented an attempt to supplant him
- C. Horatio Gates wrote a letter suggesting Conway would be better as Commander-in-Chief
- D. Despite their feelings about George Washington, both Horatio Gates and Thomas Conway were promoted to the Board of War

6. Which of the following is another way to say the sentence below without losing meaning?

Much to Washington's chagrin, Congress would actually promote both Conway and Gates to the Board of War.

- A. Washington was pleased that Congress promoted Conway and Gates to the Board of War.
- B. Washington wanted to discuss the promotion of Conway and Gates to the Board of War.
- C. Washington was jealous of the promotion of Conway and Gates to the Board of War.
- D. Washington opposed the promotion of Conway and Gates to the Board of War.

7. What was the effect of the Conway Cabal?

- A. The Continental Army was ultimately weakened by the controversy
- B. The only real effect were the negative outcomes for Conway and Gates
- C. George Washington became a member of the Continental Congress
- D. The military career of Horatio Gates ended