



George Washington | Lesson Plan

How did George Washington's leadership and character shape the United States during its founding era?

Students will understand how George Washington's leadership and character played a crucial role in the founding of the United States. They will explore his military and political career, his contributions to the creation of the U.S. government, and his legacy as a leader who put the nation's needs above his own.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify the key life events of George Washington.
- Explain how George Washington's leadership helped win the American Revolution and establish the United States government.
- Compare the key hardships and key achievements of George Washington that shaped his presidency and legacy.
- Evaluate George Washington's leadership skills and decisions, which set important precedents for future U.S. presidents.

Key Vocabulary:

- **Continental Army:** The army led by George Washington that fought for American independence from Britain.
- **Commander-in-Chief:** The person who is the top leader of an army or military branch.
- **Constitutional Convention:** The 1787 meeting at which delegates drafted the U.S. Constitution, with Washington presiding over the convention.
- **Federalist:** A member of the first political party in the U.S. that supported a strong central government.
- **Precedent:** An action or decision that serves as an example for future situations.
- **Bill of Rights:** The first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution guaranteeing essential freedoms and rights to Americans.
- **Republic:** A system of government in which power ultimately comes from the people. The power of the government in a republic is limited and exists to protect the rights of the people.

Educational Standards: CCRA.R.1, CCRA.R.2, CCRA.R.7, CCRA.W.2, CCRA.W.4, CCRA.W.9, CCRA.L.1, CCRA.L.2, CCRA.L.4, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.2

Academic Subject Areas: Biography, U.S. Presidents, American Revolution, U.S. Government

What You'll Need

- Video: *Guess or Mess: George Washington* (Watch [Here](#))
- Worksheet: *Guess or Mess: George Washington* (Click [Here](#))
- PragerU Kids biographical book: *George Washington* (Download [Here](#))

Scan to watch episode:



- Large paper or poster board for each group, along with markers

Lesson Plan: Read and Discuss (60 minutes)

Introduction to George Washington: (5 minutes)

1. Begin with a brief discussion about U.S. presidents who have had a lasting impact on the country. Ask students if they know any presidents who were also military leaders.
2. Display the George Washington digital book using an electronic device. Briefly highlight Washington's significance as the first president, his leadership during the American Revolution, and his role in establishing the new U.S. government. Show images from the digital book to give a visual overview of his life and accomplishments.

Washington History Huddle: (25 minutes)

1. Read the "Meet George Washington" section on page 2 together as a class, with the teacher leading this page to model fluent reading and set the tone for the lesson.
2. After completing the teacher-led reading, explain that students will now explore other key aspects of Washington's life in small groups.
3. Split the class into small groups and assign each group a different section of the digital book to explore:
 - Group 1: *Young Warrior, Interesting Facts* (page 4)
 - Group 2: *The American Revolution* (pages 5-6)
 - Group 3: *American Revolution, Command of the Continental Army* (pages 4-5)
 - Group 4: *Victory and Independence, Returning to Civilian Life* (pages 5-6)
 - Group 5: *Constitutional Convention, First Presidency* (pages 7-8)
 - Group 6: *Legacy, Retirement, and Farewell Address* (pages 9-10)
4. Allow time for each group to read their assigned section, taking turns reading aloud. As students read, they should discuss the main ideas.
5. Provide each group with a large piece of paper or a poster board and markers to write down key points and any interesting facts or quotes they find.
6. Allow each group one to two minutes to present their findings to the class. After each presentation, provide time for classmates to ask questions and discuss the content.

Worksheet Workshop: (15 minutes)

1. Hand out individual copies of the worksheet to each student. Explain how to fill out each section of the worksheet with these instructions:
 1. **Timeline:** Students should select key dates and events mentioned throughout the digital book. The following are recommendations, but the teacher and students can use many other dates mentioned in the book:
 - 1732 - Birth of George Washington
 - 1775 - Appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army
 - 1781 - Victory at Yorktown, End of the American Revolution
 - 1789 - Elected as the First President of the United States

- 1797 - Retirement from the presidency
 - 1799 - Death of George Washington
2. **Interesting Quote:** Have students choose a meaningful quote from the book to fill in the quote section on their worksheet.
 3. **Interesting Fact:** Ask students to select an interesting fact about George Washington that stood out to them and write it in the space provided.
 4. **Vocabulary Builder:** Instruct students to choose a word from the Glossary on page 15 that they find interesting and use it in a sentence that conveys its meaning.
 5. **Multiple Choice:** Explain that students should complete the multiple-choice section of the worksheet individually. (Note: The multiple-choice section corresponds to the *Guess or Mess* episode about George Washington and can also be used to play along while watching. See “Extension Activity” below.)

Reflection Round-Up: (10 minutes)

1. Briefly summarize the key points covered about George Washington, focusing on his life, presidency, and legacy.
2. **Think-Pair-Share:** Ask students to recall one fact about George Washington and share it with a partner. Encourage them to discuss why that fact was significant.
3. Give each student a sticky note or index card and ask them to answer one of these three sample reflection questions:
 - What did you find most interesting about George Washington?
 - How do you think his leadership influenced the United States?
 - Can you think of a modern issue that relates to something Washington dealt with?
4. **Bonus Activities:** If time allows, allow students to complete the puzzle on page 2 by finding hidden letters throughout the book. They can also explore and engage with the other interactive activities included in the book.

Extension Activity: (20 minutes) Guess or Mess Trivia Show: After the lesson, students can participate in the "Guess or Mess" trivia show for George Washington—direct students to the multiple-choice section of the worksheet. Students can play along with the contestants to see if they can answer the trivia questions correctly.