

# Timeline: George Washington's Later Years



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The Stamp Act is repealed. The next year, however, the British impose the Townshend Acts on the colonies, placing duties on certain imported goods.

1766

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1767

At Mount Vernon, Washington decides to plant wheat and corn and not as much tobacco.

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The Boston Massacre takes place. British troops, who had been sent to the city, kill five colonists. The Townshend duties are repealed, except for a tax on tea.

1770

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1773

The Tea Act goes into effect, forcing the colonists to only purchase British tea. In June, Washington's stepdaughter, Patsy, dies. In December, colonists dump British tea into Boston Harbor.

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The Intolerable Acts, passed by the British Parliament, take effect. Boston's port is closed and Thomas Gage, commander of the British forces in North America, becomes royal governor of Massachusetts. Washington is one of the signers of the Fairfax Resolves. Written by patriot George Mason (after discussion with Washington), the Resolves promote the right to self-government and a boycott of British goods. It was Washington who presented the document to the House of Burgesses. From September to October, Washington is one of seven delegates from Virginia to the First Continental Congress in Philadelphia.

1774

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1775

In April battles take place in Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts, sparking the Revolutionary War. In May colonial soldiers seize Fort Ticonderoga and Crown Point in New York and take British artillery. In June, the battle at Breed's Hill in Charlestown, Massachusetts, occurs. From May to June, Washington attends the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia. In June he is unanimously elected to lead the Continental forces. That same month, he travels to Cambridge, Massachusetts, to take charge of the troops.

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Thomas Paine publishes *Common Sense*, a pamphlet advocating independence. Washington and his troops are in New York. In July, the Declaration of Independence is adopted. In August, Washington and his troops are defeated at the Battle of Long Island but are victorious four months later at the Battle of Trenton (December 25-26).

1776

## Becoming GEORGE WASHINGTON



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The Battle of Monmouth takes place with no clear winner. In December, the British capture Savannah, Georgia.

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**1777**

In January, Washington and his troops are victorious again at the Battle of Princeton in New Jersey. After the battle, they move to Morristown, New Jersey, until May. In late summer and early fall, Washington and his men are defeated at the Battles of Brandywine and Germantown in Pennsylvania. In New York, General Horatio Gates, the commander of the Northern Department, defeat the British at the Battle of Saratoga. In November the Articles of Confederation are adopted, providing a framework for the government. In December Washington and his men move to Valley Forge, where they will remain for six months.

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**1778**

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**1779**

In the winter, Washington and his troops are again in Morristown, New Jersey, where they endure incredible hardships.

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In May Charleston, South Carolina, falls to the British and three months later the British defeat Continental forces in Camden, South Carolina.

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**1780**

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**1781**

The British lose to Continental forces in Cowpens, South Carolina. In October British General Charles, Lord Cornwallis surrenders to General George Washington in Yorktown, Virginia. This is the last major battle of the Revolutionary War. The next month Washington's stepson, John Parke Custis, dies.

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The Treaty of Paris is signed on September 3. The Revolutionary War is over. In December, Washington says farewell to his officers at Fraunces Tavern in New York City and then travels to Annapolis, Maryland, to resign his commission. He is at Mount Vernon by Christmas Eve.

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**1783**

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**1787**

The Constitutional Convention is held in Philadelphia to revise the Articles of Confederation. Washington serves as president.

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New Hampshire becomes the ninth state to ratify the Constitution.

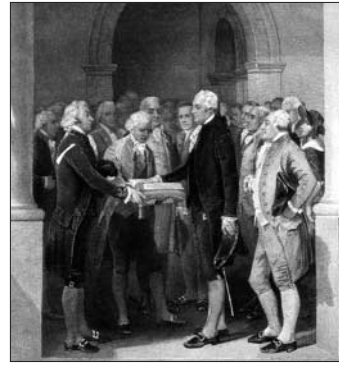
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**1788**

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Washington is unanimously elected as the country's first president. John Adams is vice president. In March, the Constitution goes into effect. On April 30, Washington takes the oath of office in New York City, the nation's capital. In the summer, Washington's mother dies. The Bill of Rights is adopted and sent to the states for ratification.

**1789**



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The Bill of Rights is ratified.

**1791**

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**1793**

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Washington moves to Philadelphia, the new capital of the United States.

France is at war with Britain and other European countries. Washington urges that the United States adopt a proclamation of neutrality.

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Great Britain and the United States sign the Jay Treaty, which settles matters left over from the Revolutionary War. The treaty deals with trade, shipping, commerce, land boundaries, and Britain's occupation of forts on the frontier.

**1794**

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**1796**

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Washington's Farewell Address is printed in a Philadelphia newspaper.

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John Adams becomes president of the United States. Thomas Jefferson is vice president. Washington and Martha return to Mount Vernon as private citizens.

**1797**

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**1798**

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The United States fears war with France. Washington is commissioned as lieutenant general and commander in chief of the army, but a land war never takes place.

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Washington dies at Mount Vernon. He is 67. In his will, Washington frees his slaves, the only Founding Father to do so. Three years later, Martha Washington dies and is buried with her husband in the family vault at Mount Vernon.

**1799**

### **Becoming GEORGE WASHINGTON**

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*Text credit: Adapted from George Washington: The Writer, compiled and edited by Carolyn P. Yoder, Honesdale, PA: Boyds Mills Press, 2003.*

*Image credit: Mount Vernon Ladies' Association*

# The Young George Washington Retires

After the Braddock campaign Washington was put in charge of Virginia's troops. He served in this position for three years, resigning his commission in 1758. Washington and his troops had just taken over the site of Fort Duquesne from the French, and he was in poor health.

Upon his retirement, Washington's officers composed a farewell to him. They did not want him to retire. Washington replied to them in January 1759. The following excerpt from the "Remarks" deals with their farewell address and Washington's reaction.

## Original

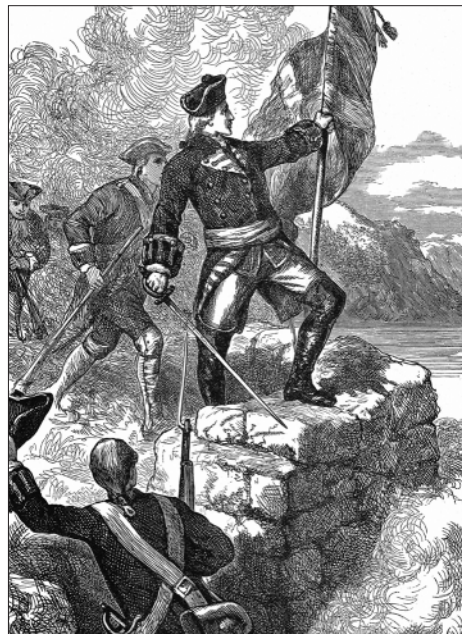
*The solicitation of the Troops which he commanded to Continue—their Affecte farewell address—to him, when they found the Situation of his health and other circumstances would not allow it affected him exceedingly and in grateful sensibility he expressed the warmth of his attachmt to them on that, and his inclination to serve them on every other future occasion.*

## Adaptation

In their affectionate farewell address, the troops asked him to continue to command, but they realized that his health and other circumstances would not allow it. This affected him greatly. He was grateful and expressed his warm attachment to them and told them that he would be inclined to help them in the future.

## Scaffolding Questions

- 1 How did Washington feel about the men who served under him?
- 2 How would this affect his success later in life?



Text credit: French and Indian War 250, Inc. gives special thanks to the Fort Ligonier Association for permission to reprint portions of the "Remarks" manuscript, which was generously donated to Fort Ligonier by the Laurel Foundation, Suzy and Jim Broadhurst, and Diane and Glen Meakem.

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# Washington Takes Command

*Address to the Continental Congress, June 16, 1775*

After the Braddock campaign, Washington went on to command all of Virginia troops and to serve in Virginia's House of Burgesses. When the British started taxing the colonies in the mid-1760s—to pay for the soldiers now stationed in former French forts won during the French and Indian War—tensions between colonists and “mother country” increased. Washington had resigned from the military by this time and was now a family man, farmer, and local politician. He became caught up in the tensions, however. In the 1770s, Washington traveled to Philadelphia to serve as a delegate to the first two Continental Congresses. During the second congress, he was unanimously chosen as commander of the Continental Army.

## Original

*Mr President, Tho' I am truly sensible of the high Honour done me in this Appointment, yet I feel great distress, from a consciousness that my abilities & Military experience may not be equal to the extensive & important Trust: However, as the Congress desire I <t> I will enter upon the momentous duty, & exert every power I Possess In their service & for the Support of the glorious Cause: I beg they will accept my most cordial thanks for this distinguished testimony of their Approbation.*

## Adaptation

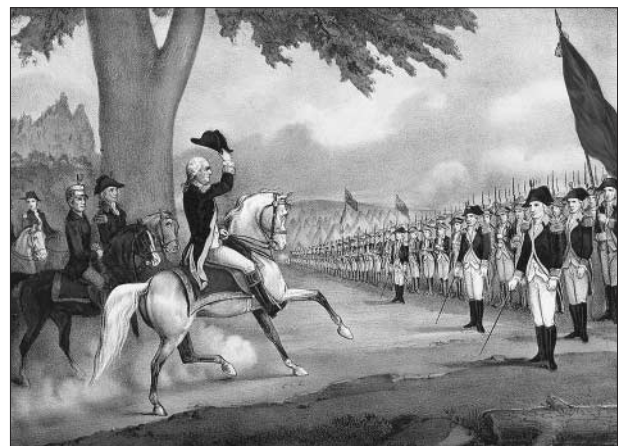
Mr. President, though I am truly aware of the high honor of this appointment, yet I am a little uneasy because I know my abilities and my military experience might not make me the right person for this position. However, as the congress desires it, I will take on this important position and exert every power I possess in the service and support of this glorious cause [independence]. I hope you accept my thanks for your belief in me.

## Scaffolding Questions

- 1 Why was Washington uneasy about accepting this position?
- 2 How would this attitude affect Washington's success?

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Text credit: From The Papers of George Washington: Revolutionary War Series I: June-September 1775. Courtesy of University Press of Virginia, 1985.

Image credit: Mount Vernon Ladies' Association

# Washington in Command

*Circular to the New England States, January 5, 1781*

Commanding the Continental Army was no easy task. Washington had to deal with undisciplined troops, lack of supplies, desertion, harsh weather, defeat, money issues, and a sometimes-unresponsive Congress. In this excerpt, Washington has been at war for almost six years. He has been reminding Congress about his troops' poor conditions since the war began and decides now to approach the individual states without the "authority of Congress" for adequate supplies and reimbursement.

## Original

*It is not within the sphere of my duty to make requisitions, without the Authority of Congress, from individual States: but at such a crisis, and circumstanced as we are, my own heart will acquit me, when once for all I give it decidedly as my opinion, that it is in vain to think an Army can be kept together much longer, under such a variety of sufferings as ours has experienced: and that unless some immediate and spirited measures are adopted to furnish at least three Months pay to the Troops in Money that will be of some value to them; And at the same time ways and means are devised to cloath and feed them better (more regularly I mean) than they have been, the worst that can befall us may be expected.*

## Adaptation

I am not supposed to make recommendations to the states without the authority of congress. But at such a crisis and with the circumstances we are in, my own heart will acquit me. I feel strongly that it is wrong to think that the Army can be kept together much longer after all we have experienced. Unless some immediate and powerful measures are adapted to provide at least three months pay to the troops that will have some value to them. And at the same time if some ways and means are not devised to clothe and feed them better—more regularly—than they have been, then the worse will definitely happen to us.

## Scaffolding Questions

- 1 Why do you think Washington felt an obligation to his troops?
- 2 How would this sense of responsibility affect Washington's success?



Image credit: Mount Vernon Ladies' Association

## Becoming GEORGE WASHINGTON

# President Washington

*Second Inaugural Address, March 4, 1793*



Less than four years after he returned home from the war, Washington traveled to Philadelphia where he led the Constitutional Convention. Two years later, he was unanimously selected as the nation's first president, choosing to serve only two terms (1789-97) The portrait on Student Resource Page 20 was painted in 1796. The next year, in March 1797, George and Martha Washington retired to Mount Vernon.

## Original

*Fellow-Citizens: I am again called upon by the voice of my Country to execute the function of its Chief Magistrate. When the occasion proper for it shall arrive, I shall endeavour to express the high sense I entertain of this distinguished honor, and of the confidence which has been reposed in me by the people of United America.*

*Previous to the execution of any official act of the President, the Constitution requires an Oath of Office. This Oath I am now about to take, and in your presence, that if it shall be found during my administration of the Government I have in any instance violated willingly, or knowingly, the injunction thereof, I may (besides incurring Constitutional punishment) be subject to the upbraidings of all who are now witnesses of the present solemn Ceremony.”*

## Adaptation

Fellow- Citizens I am again called upon by my country to serve as chief magistrate [president]. When the proper time comes I shall attempt to express how deeply I feel about this distinguished honor and of the confidence the people of the United States have placed on me.

Before the President officially takes office, the Constitution requires an oath of office. This oath I am now about to take in your presence. But if it is found during my administration that I willingly or knowingly ever broke the oath, I should (besides bringing about constitutional punishment) be subject to the criticism of everyone who witnesses this important ceremony.

## Scaffolding Questions

- 1 How did Washington view the position of president?
- 2 How would his view affect his success?



Image credits: Mount Vernon Ladies' Association

## Becoming GEORGE WASHINGTON

# “George Washington” by Gilbert Stuart

In 1796 well-known American artist Gilbert Stuart painted President George Washington for Senator William Bingham and his wife, Anne, The Binghams wanted to give the painting to British Lord Lansdowne, a friend to the Patriot cause. The original painting and copies made by Stuart are known as “the Lansdowne portraits.”



## Scaffolding Questions

- 1 What does Stuart’s painting tell you about Washington and the way he chose to be portrayed?
- 2 What does this say about Washington’s success?

### Becoming GEORGE WASHINGTON



**Image 12**

# George Washington, 1796

*"George Washington" by Gilbert Stuart*



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