



For Part A, Level Two use Resource Pages 1–8, 10, and Images 1–6 on the CD-ROM.

## Level Two (Grades 7-12)

### Getting Started

**1** To stimulate discussion of what students already know about George Washington—their perceptions and misconceptions—hold up a one dollar bill (and if possible display other classical images of Washington—alone and on horseback). Ask the class to imagine him as a boy, a teenager, and a young man “just starting out.” On a wall chart titled *The Young George Washington*, record their prior knowledge of Washington (both events in his life and his personality traits) before he became widely known.

**2** As background information, distribute **Resource Page 1: Timeline: Young George Washington**. Invite students to correct myths and misconceptions on the wall chart as they meet the “real” George Washington. Interested students can research the Julian calendar, used in Great Britain and the colonies until 1752. According to the Julian calendar, Washington was born on February 11th, not February 22nd.

**3** Introduce the “real” George Washington by distributing copies of **Resource Page 3: George Washington, Surveyor, 1748**. Pointing out that these are excerpts from the journals Washington began keeping as a teenager, discuss what private journals or diaries can reveal about their writer. Depending on your students’ understanding of the nature of primary sources, you may wish to review the wide range of materials in addition to formal documents that are considered primary sources. Students should understand that their own journals are primary sources on their experiences and opinions.

As background information, give students copies of **Resource Page 2: Washington as a Record Keeper**.

**4** Explain that 16-year-old George Washington wrote these journal entries about his first trip to the wilderness. Washington and others were surveying land on the Virginia frontier for Lord Fairfax, an important landowner. Ask students to read the adapted versions of the journal entries. Discuss what practical skills Washington would have gained as a surveyor. (*Learning how to determine land boundaries, how to survive in the wilderness, how to work as part of a team.*)

**5** Engage the class in a short discussion about Washington’s character traits based on these excerpts and add them to the wall chart. Have them consider whether Washington was concerned with doing a good job and impressing others. (*Elicit an understanding that this was a determined young man. Remind students that he was out working when he was about the age of a high school sophomore or junior.*) Ask students to speculate on why Washington was motivated to do a good job. What motivates *them* to succeed? Use this as a jumping off point for a discussion of the personality and drive needed to reach the professional heights Washington would achieve later in life.

**6** Point out to the class the two different versions of Washington’s journals on the handout—the original as written by Washington and an adaptation into modern English. Invite students to compare the two. Then discuss the spelling, capitalization, and “shorthand” that Washington used. Ask a volunteer to read the original entries aloud and point out that this is a good technique for figuring out what some of the “oddly spelled” words mean. If your students find the original wording and spelling fascinating, you may want to use **Resource Page 4: Spelling the Washington Way** to help them understand more about 18th-century writing.

**Part A:**  
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Making  
Connections

**Part B:**  
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An accomplished mapmaker, Washington used his surveying skills to create this map in 1753. A detail is shown here.

**7** In a Washington Resource Center, provide books, videos, or other resources about Washington, which students can consult during the study. (See the Additional Sources listed on the CD-ROM.) Encourage students to correct any misconceptions or misinformation on the wall chart as they learn more.

**8** As well as handing out individual copies, you may wish to display in the Resource Center copies of maps and pictures from the Image Gallery on the CD-ROM. Begin now with **Image 1: Map of the Virginia Colony** and **Image 2: Washington as a Young Surveyor**. These images will provide historical and geographical context and help students imagine the scenes.

**9** In addition, provide copies of **Resource Page 7: Cast of Characters** and encourage students to consult it as names come up in the discussion. Invite students to add other short biographies to the list as they do further research.

**10** To focus students' investigation, write this **Focus Question** on the chalkboard:  
***What can you learn about young George Washington's personality and ambitions by reading his journals?***

## Reading and Reflecting

### A Man of Responsibility

**1** Using the Interactive Learning Journey on the CD-ROM, explain or review the competing claims of French and British in the Ohio River Valley in the 1750s. When Robert Dinwiddie, governor of the British colony of Virginia, learned that the French were laying claim to land the British themselves claimed in the Ohio River Valley, he wanted to send a message demanding their withdrawal. George Washington volunteered to deliver the message.

Explain to students that Washington was just 21 years old and intent on making a name for himself. This was almost one year after Washington had become an officer in one of Virginia's militia districts and six months before the start of the French and Indian War. To set the stage for reading Washington's journal, give students **Resource Page 5: Washington's Journey to Fort LeBoeuf** and copies of **Image 3: Map of the Journey to Fort LeBoeuf**. Have students locate key places on the map. For further information about the organization of the Virginia troops, students can consult **Resource Page 10: All Kinds of Soldiers**.

**2** Hand out **Resource Page 6: Return from Fort LeBoeuf, 1753** and tell students that this excerpt deals with one event in the long and dangerous trip back to Virginia with guide Christopher Gist. Have the students read the adapted version of the excerpt to themselves first. (Ambitious students may wish to begin with the original.) You may want to invite students to work in pairs to answer the Guided Reading Questions on the handout. Ask students why Washington found himself in this situation. (*He had to get the message back to Dinwiddie and was determined to push ahead.*) Students should understand that Washington easily could have died in the frigid river.



**Like other militias, the Virginia militia was made up of ordinary citizens rather than professional military officers.**

**Explain to the class that Noah Webster did not publish his first dictionary of the American language until 1828. Interested students can begin a "dictionary" of 18th century terms and spellings based on Washington's journals.**



**Tell students that artist John Buxton recreated the Allegheny crossing on a handmade raft before he painted “Washington’s Crossing, 1753” (Image 4b).**

**Ask students to speculate on how Washington was able to create a map (Image 5) so accurate that it was used to plan modern roads. How would his surveying skills have helped him?**

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Show students the three images in the **Image 4** file, suggesting that they imagine themselves in each of the three scenes. Have students identify the “three nations” shown in **Image 4a: “Domain of Three Nations”** by John Buxton (*British, French, and American Indians*). Discuss why the artist would have shown the American Indians as shadows on the floor (*because they were “outside” of the negotiations*).

**3** Then hand out **Resource Page 8: Seeking Promotion, 1754**. Explain to students that this letter was written about two weeks after Washington’s return from the Ohio River Valley. Almost immediately upon his return, Washington had been given more military duties and told to prepare to return to the Ohio River Valley to attack the French and drive them from lands claimed by the British. Washington wrote this letter to Richard Corbin, who was an influential figure in Virginia politics, in charge of the colony’s revenues. (Students should read about him on **Resource Page 7: Cast of Characters**.)

**4** Have the students read the adapted version of the excerpt to themselves first and then answer the Guided Reading Questions on the handout. Ask students what this letter reveals about Washington’s personality and ambitions. (*Washington was confident enough to write to this influential person and to describe his qualifications for advancement. He appeared eager, ambitious, somewhat proud, realistic, and concerned, most importantly, with his reputation.*)

Tell students that shortly after writing this letter, Washington’s journal from his first trip to the Ohio River Valley was published in Williamsburg, Virginia, and in London, making Washington a celebrity. (**Image 5: Historic Map of the Ohio River Valley** shows a map Washington drew on the journey and **Image 6: Washington’s Journal of 1754** shows a copy of the book.) He was given the

promotion he requested and from now on will remain in the public eye. This is a major turning point in his life.

**5** In order to answer the following questions, students will need to cite evidence from the documents. They will also need to keep in mind the Focus Question about ambition.

~What do you think Washington’s motivations were for writing each piece? (*1753: on an important assignment, recording every detail, sense of duty, Washington as main character. 1754: seeking a higher rank in military, relying on connections, reviewing his qualifications, emphasizing his sense of duty and capabilities. Washington’s motive in both pieces was to prove himself.*)

~Based on the originals, how do the language and style of each excerpt reflect who Washington was? (*1753: short action sentences, informal, simple language, realistic, articulate. 1754: longer, detailed sentences; more formal polished and structured prose; clear—stating his case, positive, inner thoughts, articulate. Students also should take into account the different forms: journal and letter.*)

~Based on these materials, how do you think Washington related to other people? (*In the trip from Fort LeBoeuf, Washington had to work closely with Gist. At the same time, he seemed to take charge in steering the raft. In the letter to Corbin, Washington clearly knew what it took to get ahead—not only to obtain the promotion but also to be qualified for it: a “high” position in the military and knowing the right people.*)

~What do these excerpts tell you about Washington’s personality and ambitions? (*In entirely different situations, Washington comes across as brave, ambitious, resourceful. He took advantage of the situations: survival in the wilderness and promotion in the military. The excerpts show him as realistic, smart, capable, ambitious, with a strong sense of duty.*)

## Pulling It All Together

**1** Have students answer the Focus Question by writing a short essay titled “The Man for the Job.” Based on the journal entries, they should consider the personal characteristics and experiences that led George Washington to feel that he was worthy of becoming a lieutenant-colonel at 21.

**2** To focus students’ thinking, discuss:

~What skills did Washington have that made him so confident and ambitious? *(In 1753, Washington was able to survive in the wilderness. He was resourceful—built a raft, survived falling overboard by holding onto the raft, survived the night by sleeping on an island. He almost appears invincible or just plain lucky. The cold didn’t seem to affect him. In 1754, Washington had completed the trip, delivered the French reply, and was prepared to take on more assignments. He was confident that he would be successful because he knew the value of hard work and a sense of duty. He had digested what he learned from his earlier experiences.)*

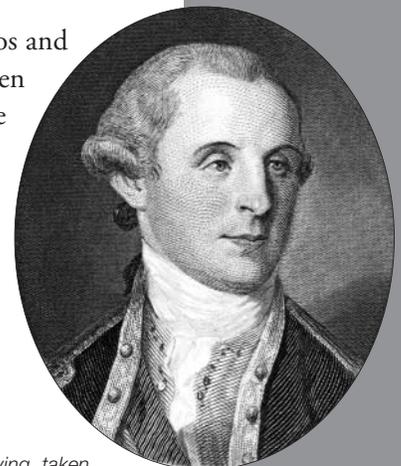
~Are Washington’s personality and motivations reflections of the times or are they timeless? Are young people today motivated by the same desires? Are ambitious people of the past the same as ambitious people today? *(Washington was brave, resourceful, smart, realistic, articulate, proud, ambitious, dutiful, capable, and political. All of these characteristics would prove helpful—essential—to his later military, personal, and political careers. Discuss with students in what ways these characteristics remain important in their world today.)*

**3** Ask for volunteers to read their essays to the class.

## Making Connections

*Topics for students to consider in discussion or in writing*

- Why should we know George Washington today? What can we learn about ourselves and our lives by studying leaders of the past?
- Do you think that people are products of their past? How do you think the personality and ambitions Washington exhibited as a young man affected the person he became? How do you think that your own personality and ambitions will affect the person you will become?
- When George Washington was a teenager, he copied down 110 rules of civility, or conduct. He felt that by following them he would be a proper gentleman and could better “get ahead.” What rules do you think will help you “get ahead”?
- Would you be willing to take a dangerous journey for your country, a journey in which you might sacrifice your life? Why or why not?
- Work with a partner to research and write about the youth of both George Washington and another famous American man or woman. Compare similarities and differences in their experiences and ambitions as young people.
- Have a class debate on the pros and cons of ambition. Consider when ambition can be a positive force and when it could have a negative impact.



*This engraving, taken from a miniature on ivory, shows Washington as a young man.*