



National Park Service

**GEORGE WASHINGTON BIRTHPLACE
NATIONAL MONUMENT**

PRESENTS



**You Can Be
Like George
Washington**

STUDENT WORKBOOK



Students visit George Washington's birthplace on the park visit portion of the "You Can Be Like George Washington" character education program. It is protected as a unit of the National Park Service, called George Washington Birthplace National Monument.

Table of Contents

Park Background	4
KWL Chart	5
Duty, Public Service and the Washingtons	6
Popes Creek Plantation	9
Crossword Puzzle	11
George Washington’s Early Years: Succeeding Despite Challenges	13
George Washington: Reputation and Example Despite Setbacks	15
Primary Sources Activity	19
Park Map and Facilities	22
Follow-Up Exercises	23

Dear Students,

Thank you for participating in the educational program “You Can Be Like George Washington.” This workbook contains exercises that will help you understand the Virginia Studies Standards of Learning. The visit to George Washington Birthplace National Monument will provide insight into Washington the man, colonial Virginia life, and Washington’s famous character traits.

“You Can Be Like George Washington” was created by George Washington Birthplace NM. This program has been developed to promote student learning in a National Park setting. George Washington Birthplace NM is a wonderful place to learn about our first President, colonial Virginia, and character education.

Helpful hints for visiting the park:

- Wear comfortable walking shoes
- Wear seasonal clothes for being outside
- Complete the pre-visit exercises

Park Background

Is your mother or father keeping something valuable for you until you are older? Maybe it is your grandfather's pocket watch that he wanted you to have. It could be your grandmother's necklace or photograph. Your family "safekeeps" this item until you can understand its importance for you and your family. These items tell a story about your family. You will want to keep these "special" family items to pass down to your children.

The National Park Service has the same role your parents do in safekeeping your "special" family items. The National Park Service protects places that have a story to tell about the land, wildlife, or history. These sites are protected because they are "special places" for the people of the United States. The role of the National Park Service has been to protect and preserve (safekeep) these places for the future.

Where George Washington was born is a "special place" for the people of the United States. The birthplace is important because George Washington was the "Father of Our Country." Visitors have traveled to the birthplace of George Washington since 1815. George Washington Birthplace National Monument became a part of the National Park Service in 1930. Across the United States, almost 400 places that tell a story are in safekeeping by the National Park Service. This means that your children and your children's children will be able to visit these sites just as you can.

KWL chart

K What I Know	W What I Want to know	L What I learned

Duty, Public Service, and the Washingtons

George Washington is the stuff of legends: he is called the “Father of Our Country” for the critical things he did to help our country get started. He is also famous for his legendary character traits. Legend tells us that when his father asked him what happened to a cherry tree, young George said, “I cannot tell a lie; it was I who chopped down the cherry tree.” This story is not true: it was made up to show how honest George was. Even though the cherry tree story is not true, George Washington was well known for being honest trustworthy and reliable. These character traits helped George Washington through many difficulties in life.

By the time George Washington was born in 1732, three generations of Washingtons had lived in the Popes Creek area on the Northern Neck of Virginia. Landowners were the ruling class in the colonies. As landowners, George Washington and his ancestors had certain public duties or services that were expected of them. Public service included serving in appointed and elected positions. George’s great grandfather, John, first settled in the area when a ship he was crewing called the Seahorse, ran aground.

John Washington served as vestryman in the Anglican Church. The church and local government were combined in colonial Virginia. Vestrymen were church members who served as local government. John also served as a major in the Virginia Militia. He was Justice of the Peace and a member of the Westmoreland county court. He was elected to the Virginia House of Burgesses, the first form of government in the colonies. It is now called the General Assembly.

George Washington's grandfather, Lawrence, carried on the Washingtons' public service as lawyer, sheriff, Justice of the Peace, and a Westmoreland County court and House of Burgesses member. George's father, Augustine (Sr.), served as justice, sheriff, vestryman, and in the county militia.

Augustine (Sr.) Washington bought land on Popes Creek in 1718. This is the plantation that eventually became the National Park Service site. Augustine's first wife Jane Butler died, leaving 2 sons. Augustine married Mary



Ball and on February 22, 1732, their first child was born, at the Popes Creek Plantation. They named him George.

The tradition of duty and public service was well-established by George's generation, in the Washington family, and with most colonial landowners. George Washington likewise felt a strong sense of public duty. George Washington is famous for his critical public service duties in leading the Continental Army in the Revolutionary War, leading the Constitutional Convention, and serving as the country's first President. Before those years, he served in the British military, and the Virginia House of Burgesses.

Discussion question:

- The name George Washington has become forever linked with duty and public service. What sort of public service and duties to people have and honor today?

Popes Creek Plantation

Virginia was an English colony. The leader of the colony was called the governor. He was appointed by the King of England. In Virginia, wealth was measured by the amount of land and the number of slaves a person owned. In the 1700's about 300 families had carved large plantations out of the wilderness and had formed an upper class that ruled Virginia.



Rivers were important to the colonists in Tidewater Virginia. The James, York, Rappahannock, and Potomac Rivers were the colonial highways that brought news and goods from the outside world. The land named the Northern Neck was located between the Potomac and Rappahannock Rivers. This tidewater plantation system in the Northern Neck produced 3 of the first 5 presidents: George Washington, James Madison, James Monroe. Virginia produced 4 of the first 5 presidents. Thomas Jefferson was the third President of the United States and a Virginian.

Thomas Lord Fairfax owned the Northern Neck of Virginia. Over 5 million acres of land had been granted to his family for their loyalty to the King of England. Lord Fairfax wanted people to settle in the Northern Neck. The colonists would pay quit rents (yearly fee like rent to own) for 7 years to own land in the Northern Neck. The more people that settled in the Northern Neck, the more money Lord Fairfax made.



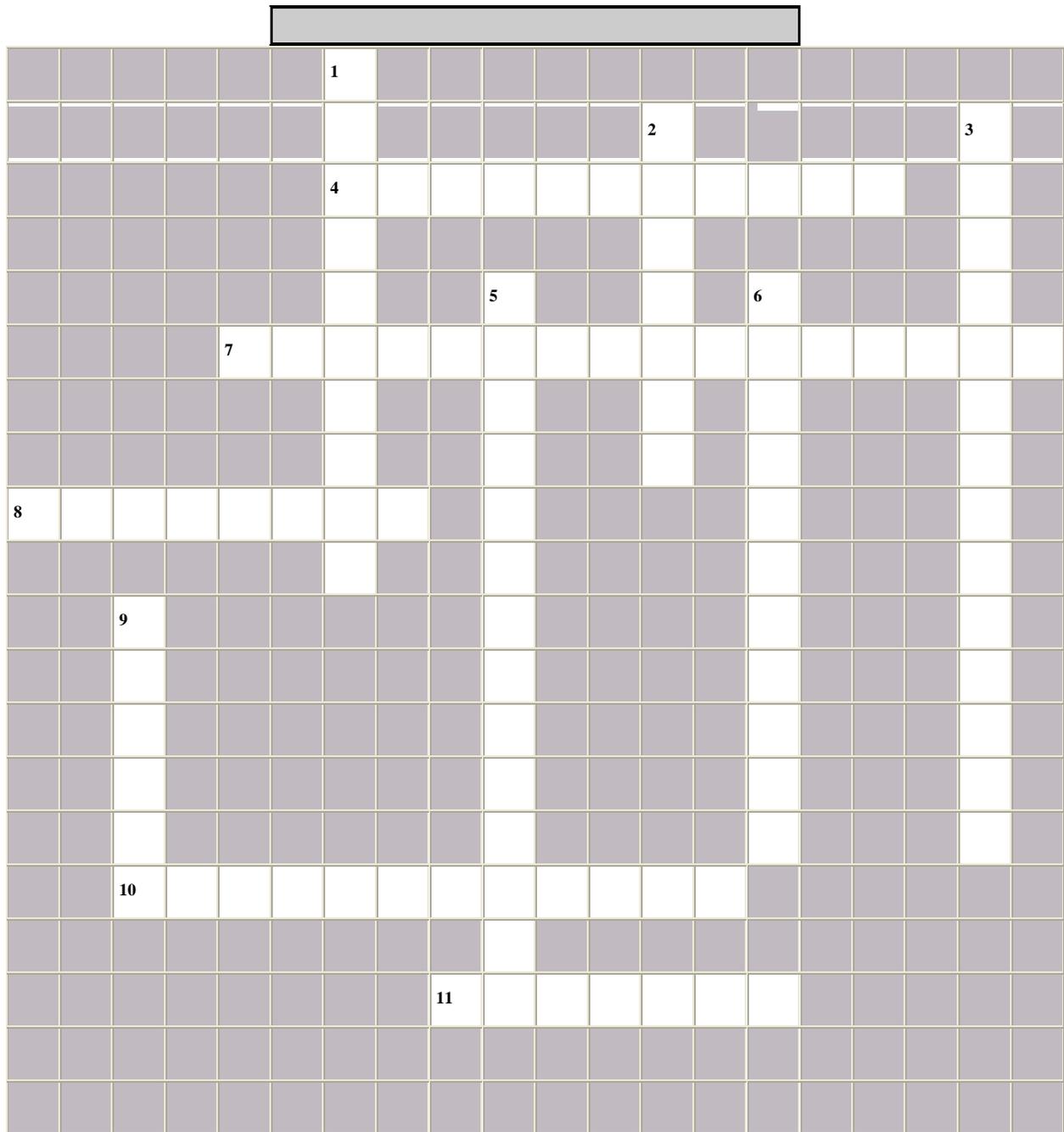
Popes Creek Plantation was located on the Potomac River in Westmoreland County. George Washington's father, Augustine Washington (Sr.) had over 20 slaves and 4 indentured servants working on Popes Creek. The plantation was like a village with the Washington family, indentured servants, and slaves. The plantation included hogs, cattle, sheep, geese and fowl. These animals were for food and clothing. Oxen were trained for working the fields and horses were used for riding. The plantation mostly grew tobacco. It was a cash crop that was sold to merchants in England. Ships from England would bring needed goods right to the plantation wharf on the Potomac River. The planters paid for the goods credit from the tobacco sales.



Discussion question:

- The plantation was like a small community. What duties or responsibilities do you think the Washingtons had toward the people living and working on their plantations?

Character Traits Crossword



Character Traits Crossword Clues

Down

1. Showing support of your country
2. Truthful
3. Something that is yours to take care of
5. Can control yourself (2 words)
6. Doing things to be a responsible member
of your community and country
7. Obligations, what you feel you have to do

Across

4. Dependable
7. Father of Our Country (2 words)
8. Politeness, thoughtfulness
10. Can take care of yourself (2
words)
11. People have a high opinion of you

Word Bank

Self-discipline	George Washington	Respect
Honesty	Responsibility	Duties
Trustworthy	Courtesy	Patriotism
Self-reliance	Citizenship	

George Washington's Early Years: Succeeding Despite Challenges

George Washington was the eldest child of Augustine (Sr.) and Mary Ball Washington. George had half brothers and sisters from his father's first marriage, including Lawrence and Augustine Jr. In 1735, when George was 3 years old, the Washingtons moved from Popes Creek to Little Hunting Creek. They moved to Ferry Farm on the Rappahannock River near Fredericksburg when George was 6.

When George was 11 years old, his father died. Lawrence inherited Little Hunting Creek, later known as Mount Vernon. Augustine Jr. inherited the Popes Creek plantation where George was born. As a teen, George visited his half-brothers often at both plantations. George inherited Ferry Farm where he lived with his mother and younger siblings. This plantation was not large enough to support the Virginia planter's lifestyle that George desired. His mother could not afford to send George to England for an education like his older half-brothers. At age 13, George began studying geometry and surveying using a set of surveyor's instruments from the storehouse at Ferry Farm. Virginia needed surveyors to measure land, and land was plentiful. Surveying was a prestigious trade like doctors and lawyers.

Young George Washington met Thomas Lord Fairfax, owner of the Northern Neck peninsula of Virginia. Lord Fairfax enjoyed fox hunting and riding horses. George Washington was an excellent horseman. Fairfax liked George and sent him on his



first surveying job at age 16. George was appointed surveyor for Culpeper County one year later. He made good money as a surveyor. He was known for his fairness, honesty, and dependability. It was during this time that George began to buy and sell land, which he did throughout his life. He was elected to the House of Burgesses from Frederick County when he was 26 years old. This was the beginning of Washington's political career.

Discussion questions:

- What difficulties did young George Washington have to overcome?
- What character traits did George Washington show as a surveyor?

George Washington: Reputation and Example Despite

Setbacks

George Washington was only 20 years old when Governor Dinwiddie appointed him as major in the Virginia Militia, which fought for the British. He was assigned a risky mission to warn the French to leave the Ohio Valley, which the British claimed. That was the same year that George's older half-brother Lawrence, owner of Mount Vernon died. After Lawrence's widow later died, the property went to George. Mount Vernon became George's home when he was 22.

George Washington did not win many battles in his military career. In 1754 he accidentally triggered the French and Indian War. He fought his first battle against the French and Indians in Jumonsville, Pennsylvania, surrendering Fort Necessity to the French on July 4. However, during the French and Indian War, George Washington served with honor and courage.



He retired from the Virginia Militia in 1758 to his farm at Mount Vernon. At Mount Vernon he continued what he like best. He was a planter, “first and foremost a farmer.”

After the French and Indian War, the English Parliament wanted to tax the colonies heavily to pay for the debt of the war. The colonists didn't believe this was fair or legal. Parliament felt the taxes were within their rights. The colonists held meetings in Philadelphia to discuss the problems with England. In 1775, George Washington was appointed Commander-In-Chief of the Continental Army. The Revolutionary War had begun.

Again, General George Washington lost most of the battles he and his army fought. However, General Washington was determined. He did not give up. His soldiers trusted him and followed him loyally, despite many hardships. Finally, Washington and the Continental Army won a critical battle at Yorktown. Washington defeated Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown in 1781. Cornwallis' surrender ended the last major conflict, but the Revolutionary War did not end until 1783.

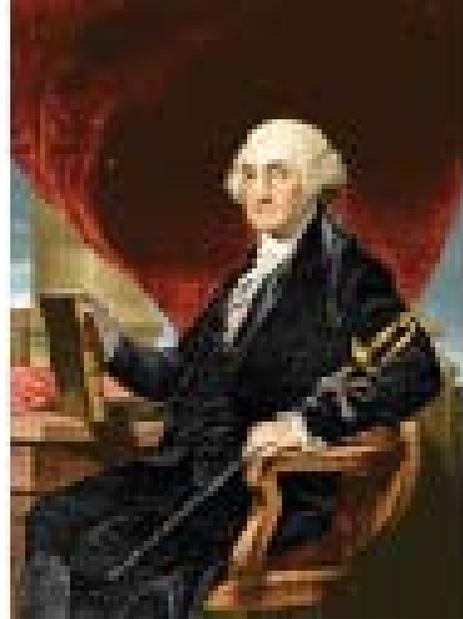


After the war was over General Washington again resigned his commission as Commander-In-Chief. He could have stayed in command, but voluntarily gave up his military power by retiring. He chose to set a different example. Military leaders at

that time often became dictators who ruled by force. They seldom handed the power back to the people. George Washington, however, was always very aware of the example he was setting. He read his resignation to the Continental Congress and retired to Mount Vernon. Once again, he became a planter.

George Washington was called back to public service to preside over the Constitutional Convention in 1787. Washington's leadership led him to be called the "Father of Our Country." His presence at the meetings held the states together because everyone trusted him. The Constitution was adopted, or ratified, in 1788.

George Washington became the first President of the United States in 1789. He served 2 terms and then retired. By voluntarily giving up power, he again set the example for future presidents. Twice George Washington gave his power back to the government (people) by resigning as Commander-In-Chief and later as President. He died at Mount Vernon in 1799. In his will, he wanted to set another example by asking that the slaves he owned outright be freed.



Discussion questions:

- What character traits show in the examples that George Washington set for others?
- How did George Washington make the best of mistakes that he made?
- How did his reputation help him?

Primary Sources Activity

Read the following primary source quotes by or about George Washington.

In pairs or small groups, discuss the following questions about each quote and defend your position. Organize and summarize what was discussed, and share with the whole class. The speakers' names are italicized.

- What character trait does the quote show that the writer is concerned about?
- How does the writer feel about the way that George Washington displays the character trait in question?
- Does the quote give a fact or an opinion?
- How do you think the character trait might have helped or hurt George Washington, and the things he accomplished?

Primary Source Quotes

1. "I have never seen anyone who was more naturally and spontaneously polite." A visiting Frenchman, quoted in *George Washington's Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior In Company and Conversation*.

2. "[George Washington] swore 'til the leaves shook on the trees." *Revolutionary War General Charles Lee*.

3. Describing a dangerous, heroic and eventually successful effort to cross the Allegheny River in winter: “I think I can do no less than apologize in some measure, for the numberless imperfections of [our crossing].” *George Washington, 1753, after warning the French to leave the Ohio Valley.*

4. “I hold the [idea] no less applicable to public than to private affairs, that honesty is always the best policy.” *George Washington, 1790*

5. “Integrity and firmness is all I can promise: these, be the voyage long or short, never shall forsake me although I may be deserted by all men.” *George Washington, 1789.*

6. “There is one reward that nothing can deprive me of, and that is the consciousness of having done my duty with the strictest [morality or goodness] and the most [careful] exactness.” *George Washington, 1780.*

7. “I do not think myself equal to the command I am honored with.” *George Washington, when appointed commander-in-chief of the Continental Army, 1775.*

8. "...by his own presence, he brought order out of confusion, animated his troops, and led them to success." *George Washington, 1778.*

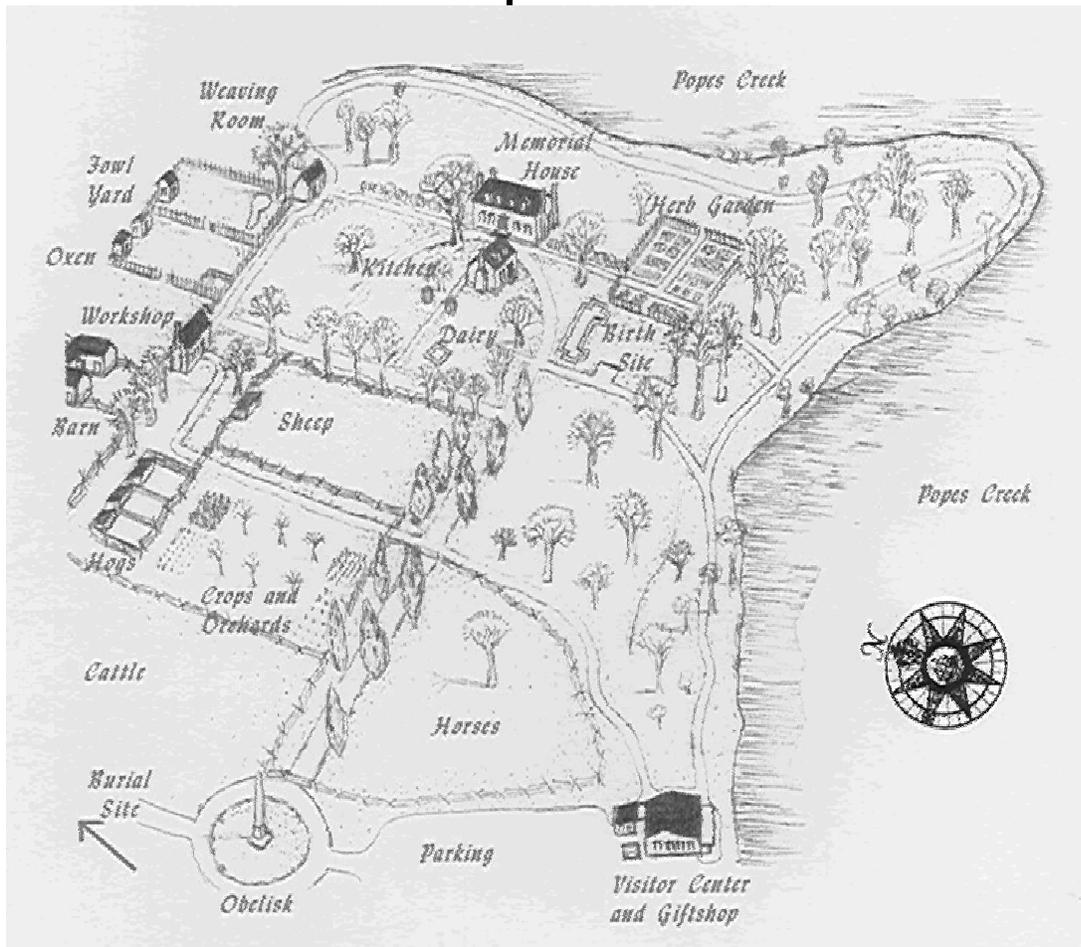
9. "If you speak of solid information and sound judgment, Colonel Washington is unquestionably the greatest man on that floor." *Patrick Henry, when asked to name the greatest man at the Continental Congress, 1774.*

10. "no wish but that of living and dying an honest man on my own farm." *George Washington when responding to the call of duty to be President, 1789.*

11. "Nothing but harmony, honesty, industry, and frugality are necessary to make us a great and happy people." *George Washington, 1789.*

12. "First in war, first in peace, first in the hearts of his countrymen."
Congressman Henry Lee summing up George Washington's life when he died in 1799.

George Washington Birthplace NM Historic Area Map and Facilities for Park Visit



- One and a half hour educational program conducted in the Historic Area. This program focuses on character education concepts, using George Washington, the challenges he overcame, and the character traits he symbolizes.
- For safety, do not feed or pet the animals (students could get bitten or hurt).
- The Historic Area has no restrooms. Please use the Visitor Center restrooms from the outside entrance (left side) upon arrival.
- Nature Trail (one mile long) is near the picnic grounds (turn right), on the way to the Washington burial grounds.
- Picnic grounds have restrooms that are open April to November.
- Potomac River beach (no swimming allowed) is past the Washington burial grounds, at the end of the road.
- Remember–this is a National Park. All natural and archeological items are protected including shark’s teeth, shells and pottery shards. Leave No Trace philosophy: Please take only pictures and leave only footprints.

FOLLOW-UP EXERCISES

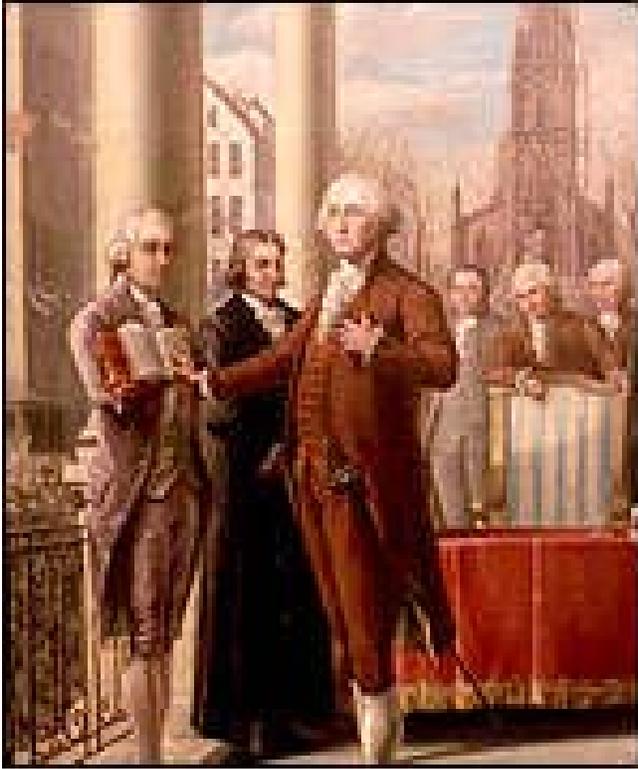
Follow-Up Activities are to be completed after your visit to the park.



As a young boy, George Washington copied a set of manners called the “Rules of Civility”. It was common to hand copy lessons in that time. The “Rules” described how to fit in with the ruling class, who were the landowners in colonial Virginia. Young George Washington was very ambitious and wanted to be part of that group in power, so understanding the “Rules” was very important to him.

Write a paragraph about George Washington’s character traits. Generate ideas before starting to write. Organize your paragraph to include a beginning, middle, and end. Include major points and details such as:

- What character traits do you think were important to George Washington?
- What problems did George Washington have to overcome as a teen or young man?
- How did his character traits help George Washington get what he wanted?



George Washington is often called our first and greatest national hero. He did several things that were critical to the founding of our country: he led the Continental Army in the Revolutionary War, he led the Constitutional Convention and he helped shape the country as its first President.

Write a paragraph about why George Washington is called our first and greatest national hero. Generate ideas before starting to write. Organize your paragraph to include a beginning, middle, and end. Include major points and details such as the answers to these questions in your paragraph:

- What is a hero?
- What character traits do heroes display?
- What character traits of a hero did George Washington display?
- As the first President, why do you think George Washington was so concerned about the example he set?

Questions for Further Discussion

1. How have other founding fathers' character traits contributed to the character of the country?
2. Compare and contrast character traits of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. How did each use their character traits to influence the direction of the country?
3. In what ways can students demonstrate citizenship today?
4. What character traits would be important for leaders in your school, community and country to have?
5. Who else can you list who took on a difficult job or gave our country something important to remember?

Pictorial Image

Think about one of George Washington's character traits, duties or public service responsibilities.

Design a pictorial image of the trait, duty or responsibility. Do further research using available technology if needed.

Share your image with the class.

