

George Washington's Inauguration

George Washington was inaugurated on April 30, 1789. It was important because it was the first inauguration in U.S. history, but it was also important in world history. There had never been a nationally-elected leader before. George Washington was the only president in a world full of kings. No one knew exactly what the role of the President would be, or if this new form of government would even be a success. Washington didn't want to be president, but his country needed him.

The Election of 1789

The first presidential election was held on February 4, 1789. It was a bit different than modern elections. Each state chose electors to cast a vote for president. Electors could be selected by popular vote, or appointed by the state legislature or governor. Each elector voted twice—once for president and once for vice-president. All 69 electors cast their vote for Washington. He is the only president to be elected unanimously!

The federal government did not begin meeting until March 4. Not enough Congressmen were present to count the votes, so the votes were not officially tallied until April 6.

Secretary of Congress, Charles Thomson, brought the official results to Mount Vernon on April 14.



Inauguration day

George Washington's inauguration was held in the largest open square in New York City to allow as many people as possible to see it.

Cannons were fired at sunrise. Church bells rang throughout the city, and parades filled the streets.

Since there was not yet a Supreme Court, the Oath of Office was administered by Robert Livingston, the highest ranking judge in New York.

After taking the oath, Washington delivered his inaugural address. A spectacular, hour-long fireworks show ended the day's celebrations.

Journey to New York City

George Washington left Mount Vernon on April 16, 1879. He arrived in New York City, the capital at that time, on April 23. His journey took him through six states. In every town he went through, people lined the streets to cheer the new president. Some larger towns and cities even hosted parades and balls in his honor.

Follow the path to learn more about George Washington's journey to New York City.



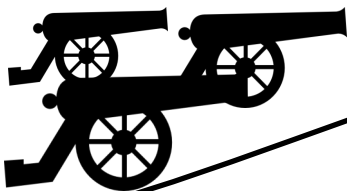
New York City

Mary Coxe

Chestnut was a young girl when she saw Washington in Trenton, New Jersey. She would one day be a member of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, and is the only Lady to ever see Washington in person!

Washington spent a quiet night in Wilmington, Delaware, but there were speeches the following morning.

In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, a big parade was held to honor Washington!



In Baltimore, Maryland, cannons were fired to salute Washington!

Mount Vernon



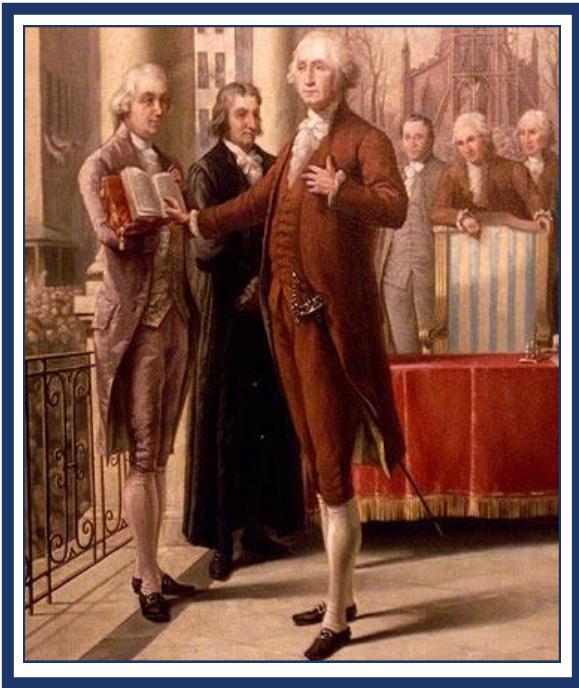
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In 1789 George Washington was elected the first president of the United States of America. However, before he could officially be president, he had to be inaugurated.

Let's answer a few questions about what it means to be inaugurated!

? What does the word inauguration mean?

To **inaugurate** means to mark the beginning of something. When a president is inaugurated, it marks the beginning of their term in office.



What happens at an inauguration?



Every time a president is inaugurated, they have to take an **oath of office**. To take an oath is to make a promise. In their oath, presidents promise to be a faithful leader who protects and obeys the Constitution.

Presidents also give a speech called an **inaugural address**. George Washington's second inaugural address was the shortest in history—just 135 words long!

You can take the Presidential Oath of Office too!

I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States.

Fun Fact!

George Washington was inaugurated on April 30, 1789 in New York City. Cannons fired at sunset, church bells rang throughout the day, and an hour long fireworks show was held in the evening.

The First President

As the first president of the United States, everything George did set a precedent, or example. Several of George's decisions helped shape the presidency today.

The Name

Today the president is addressed as "Mr. President," but here are some of the other names that were suggested:

- Your Excellency
- His Exalted Highness
- His Highness, the President of the United States, and Protector of the Rights of the Same
- His Majesty, the President

The Cabinet

George Washington chose to have a **cabinet**, or team of advisors. His four cabinet members helped run different parts of the government. They also gave him advice. Every president since Washington has had a cabinet. Today there are sixteen members.

The Term

George Washington chose not to run for a third term as President. He served two terms, then decided to return to Mount Vernon. In 1951 a law was passed that said a president could only serve for two terms, a total of eight years.

America choose to have a president instead of a king. Presidents and kings are very different types of leaders. Using the word bank, write the words that describe each leader underneath their picture.

King George III



Crown

Coronated

Royalty

Suit

Inherited

Your Majesty

Citizen

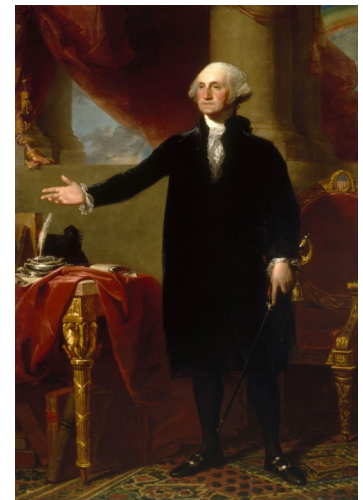
Elected

Mr. President

Inaugurated

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

George Washington



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____