THE DEATH OF MARTHA WASHINGTON

LEVEL:

High School

TIMEFRAME:

Approximately one class session

OBJECTIVES:

Students will analyze an obituary for Martha Washington.

Student will practice using historical thinking skills to answer questions using evidence from the document to support their conclusions.

STANDARDS

- · Reading and Writing Literacy in History/Social Studies
- · Reading Informational Texts
- · Reading for Perspective
- · Writing Skills
- · Developing Research Skills

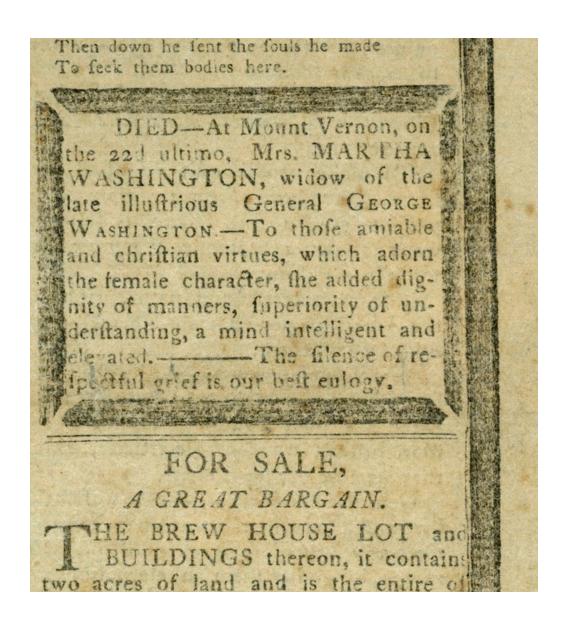
BACKGROUND:

Martha Washington passed away at Mount Vernon on May 22, 1802 at the age of 70 following an illness that lasted several weeks. At the time of her death she was surrounded by her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Newspapers around the country eulogized her as "the worthy partner of the worthiest of men." This obituary appeared in the Augusta Herald, published in Georgia, on June 9, 1802.

PROCEDURE:

- 1. Display the obituary for the class to see (located on Page 2). Clarify any confusing print.
- 2. Hand out the worksheet entitled Part One: Contextualizing the Source. Have the students answer the questions about the source.
- 3. Hand out the worksheet entitled Part Two: Close Reading. Have the students work individually.
 - a. If students are struggling, it may be a good idea to encourage the students to work in pairs to better analyze the source.

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Source: Martha Washington's Obituary from the Augusta Herald, Augusta, Georgia, June 9, 1802. (Mount Vernon Ladies' Association)

PART ONE: CONTEXTUALIZING THE SOURCE

1. When was this source created?	_ Who created it?
2. Who is this document about?	
3a. Is this a primary or secondary source? Explain your thinking	
3b. What type of source is this?	
4. Where was this source created?	
5. Who was the intended audience of this source?	

PART TWO: CLOSE READING

1. Why might the names Martha Washing	gton and General Georg	e Washington on lines 2	-5 be written in capital
letters? Why did the author write the i	names this way?		
2. Reread the <i>Background Information</i> . Use context of this document? How do yo			
3. The Latin word <i>amicus</i> means friendly the meaning of the word <i>amiable</i> on leading to the meaning of the word <i>amiable</i> on leading to the word <i>amiable</i> on the word <i>amiable</i> on the word <i>amiable</i> of the word <i>amiable</i> on the word <i>amiable</i> of the word <i>amiable</i> on the word <i>amiable</i> on the word <i>amiable</i> of the word <i>amiable</i> of the word <i>amiable</i> on the word <i>amiable</i> of the word <i>amiabl</i>	y. How does knowing the	e meaning of this word l	nelp you to understand
the meaning of the word amuable on i			
4a. Do you notice anything unusual with here:	the spelling of some of	the words in the passage	
4b. In the text, each of the words	s that you wrote on the a	shove list. Then, annotat	e in the text what you
think the modern spelling would be.	s that you wrote on the c	ioo io noi. Then, annotat	o in the text what you

5. Annotate and underline the characteristics used to describe Martha Washington in the above text. Which of
these characteristics, do you think, is the most important? Explain your thinking.
6. What does the author say would be the "best" eulogy for Martha Washington?
7. What 3 words from the text are most important to understanding the author's tone for the text? Explain your
choices using evidence from the text.
8. What was the author's purpose for writing this document?