

# The Great Experiment

## Creating a New Government

GEORGE WASHINGTON'S  
MOUNT ★ VERNON

THE MOUNT VERNON LADIES' ASSOCIATION



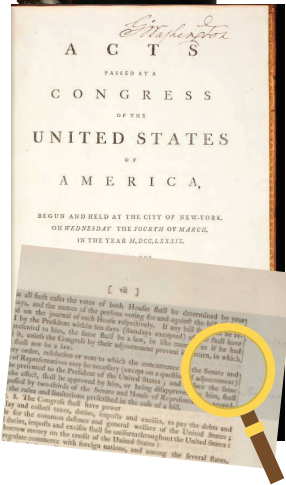
After gaining independence, the Americans needed to build a new government that was completely different from British rule. George Washington had just led the Revolutionary War as Commander in Chief of the Continental Army, but made the choice to give up his power and step down (unlike many other famous leaders of the time). However, when it was time to create the new system of government, the people looked to George Washington to be their new leader.

Washington was elected and served **2** **terms** as president from 1789-1797.

## What's a President? Look at the Constitution!

The **CONSTITUTION** outlines how the U.S. Government works.

George Washington owned a book that combined the **CONSTITUTION** and the first acts (laws) that Congress passed. That book is called the **ACTS OF CONGRESS**. Washington wrote in the margins of that book, noting the different role he needed to assume as president. He also highlighted the ways the president could interact with the other branches of government.



The President is the leader of the country and enforces the laws. This is called the **EXECUTIVE branch**.



Lawmakers are elected to **Congress** and create the laws. This is called the **LEGISLATIVE branch**.



Judges decide if the laws are following the Constitution. This is called the **JUDICIAL branch**.

## Creating a Presidential Image

### Presidential Tours: 1789-1791

After the war, Americans lacked a strong sense of belonging. President Washington believed that he could strengthen the young nation by visiting towns across all **13** states. These actions helped bring people together.



### Presidential Parties

During the Presidency, the Washingtons often entertained guests through gatherings, dinners, and parties at the President's House in Philadelphia. To prepare for the gatherings, Washington bought a china set. This bowl, mug, and table items were all a part of this china set.

It had **309** different pieces.



## What NOT to Wear



In contrast to **royalty**, Washington wore a simple, **American-made suit** at his **inauguration** and rode in a simple carriage. This let Americans know that he was still one of them, even though he was their new leader.

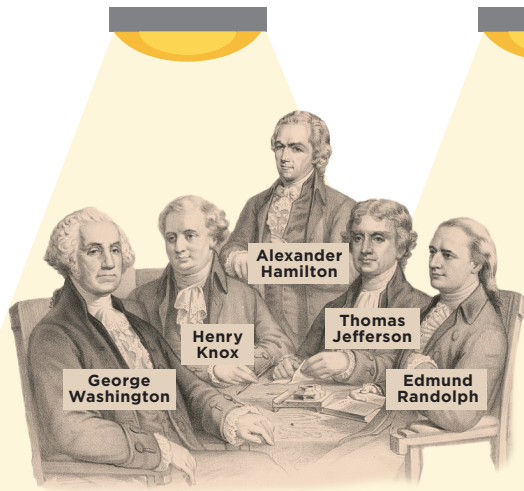
## Vocabulary

**Congress** - The House of Representatives (representatives vary on state size) and the Senate (two representatives per state) - both are responsible for creating the laws.

**Inauguration** - The formal ceremony at which a newly elected president of the United States takes office.

**Precedent** - An earlier event or action that is used as an example or guide for future actions

**Terms** - A set amount of time. In the case of the presidency, every term is four years.



### Washington's First Cabinet

Washington created a **cabinet** to help him in his presidency. They worked as a team to solve important issues together. The cabinet members had different political beliefs and backgrounds, which gave Washington a variety of perspectives and encouraged the states to work together. Washington also listened to the advice of his family and friends, too.



**Martha Washington**

Martha Washington was the first First Lady of the United States. She made sure the President's house was a welcoming place for everyone who visited and participated in many important conversations alongside George Washington while serving as hostess.



**Elizabeth Powel**

Elizabeth Powel was George Washington's close friend and lived in Philadelphia during Washington's presidency. In 1792, she wrote a letter to Washington, convincing him to run for a second **term** as President.

### Hidden Figures



**Ona Judge**

Ona Judge was one of the hundreds of people enslaved by George and Martha Washington. During the presidency, Ona made the brave decision to seek her freedom. By doing this, she challenged George Washington to think about his opinion on slavery. Even though Washington had begun to develop antislavery beliefs, he still took advantage of the new Fugitive Slave Act and tried to recapture her.

## What Problems Did Washington Face?

### THE WHISKEY REBELLION

Farmers in Pennsylvania refused to pay a national tax on whiskey, sparking a rebellion. As President, George Washington used his executive power to send state militias (soldiers) to enforce the tax.

### NEUTRALITY

George Washington decided that the United States should remain **neutral** in conflicts happening around the world, like the French Revolution.

### JAY TREATY

In 1794, George Washington signed a new **treaty** with Great Britain. The **treaty** helped boost much needed trade, but also created major disagreements among lawmakers in the U.S.

### NATIVE AMERICAN POLICY

As the United States expanded its borders, treaties were made with different Native American nations to try and keep peace. George Washington often gave peace medals to Native American leaders as a sign of goodwill.



### SLAVERY AND DIVISION

People in the United States debated if slavery was right or wrong. **Congress** passed laws to try to make decisions, such as:

#### The Fugitive Slave Act of 1793

This allowed local governments to find people who had found freedom and return them to their enslaver.

#### The Slave Trade Act of 1794

This slowed America's participation in the international slave trade.

### Stepping Down

In his letter to the American People (entitled the "**FAREWELL ADDRESS**"), Washington warned that the formation of political parties and participation in wars among other countries may lead to America breaking apart. He stepped down from his Presidency after serving for eight years, setting a precedent for future presidents.



### Vocabulary (cont.)

**Cabinet** - a trusted group of advisors

**Neutrality** - not taking sides in a conflict.

**Policy** - a set of rules or guidelines put in place by a government, group, or person; a law.

**Treaty** - a formal, legally binding agreement between countries