



## *“North and South Will Hang Together if They Have You to Hang On”*

### **I. Background Information**

By 1792, George Washington had grown weary of the partisanship which had plagued much of his first presidency. He was convinced that political parties were a source of corruption, and that partisan politics would ruin the hard-won consensus that had brought unity to the early republic. Tired of public life and divisive politics, Washington was eager for retirement to Mount Vernon. The President went so far as to prepare a draft of his farewell address and to ask James Madison to put it in final form. Although Madison reluctantly drafted the address, he, with the support of Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, Edmund Randolph, Henry Knox, and others, convinced Washington to stay one more term. They believed that, in the existing political climate, the battle over Washington’s successor would tear the country apart. “North and South will hang together, if they have you to hang on,” argued Jefferson, in spite of Washington’s clear preference for the Hamiltonian fiscal policy over his own. Washington reluctantly accepted a second term, “after a long and painful conflict in my own breast,” to save the great experiment which he had helped to begin. He was elected unanimously.

In 1792, Washington’s friends were preoccupied with domestic issues. They believed that financial and economic policy demanded further consolidation under a steady government. By Washington’s second administration, however, foreign policy, came into the foreground and dominated the political scene. With the outbreak of war between revolutionary France and monarchical Britain in 1793, partisanship in Philadelphia reached new levels of intensity. Although Washington issued his “Proclamation of Neutrality” in April, announcing the decision to “adopt and pursue a conduct friendly and impartial towards the Belligerent Powers,” Federalist and Republican factions were anything but impartial. The Hamiltonians supported England, the Jeffersonians, France. By refusing to support America’s ally, Washington was assumed to favor the English and to be aligned politically with Hamilton. However, Washington had embraced neutrality to preserve the United States. Neutrality was a means of buying time for America. Taking sides in the conflict would be all the more disastrous in light of the ongoing political struggles at home.

By May, 1796, Washington definitively decided not to accept a third term. He drafted his farewell address and enlisted Hamilton, Madison’s political rival, to revise Madison’s 1792 version. Washington realized that the address didn’t reflect the changes that had taken place both at home and abroad since the first draft. If Washington’s first administration had established the foundations for the internal

organization of the republic, his second administration had laid out the course for the management of foreign affairs. Hamilton's contribution was to create the first comprehensive statement of the principles of American foreign policy. Because Hamilton was opposed to American involvement in a war, he emphasized the necessity of neutrality and peace.

Washington's "Farewell Address," published in the *Daily American Advertiser* in September 19, 1796, made public his decision to retire from the presidency. His "Farewell Address" soon achieved a monumentality that has encouraged some to regard it as a source of timeless wisdom. But its author had intended nothing of the sort. The document was a product of the political passions of the 1790s. Washington's audience was his living countrymen, not the unborn Americans of future centuries. For George Washington did not know, and would die not knowing, whether the United States was destined to endure for centuries.

## **II. Materials**

- ★ George Washington, letter to Henry Knox, April 1, 1789
- ★ George Washington's diary entries, April 16 and 23, 1789
- ★ George Washington, letter to James Madison, August 5, 1789
- ★ George Washington, letter to Gouverneur Morris, October 13th, 1789 and
- ★ George Washington, letter to Jean Baptiste Ternant, October 14th, 1791.
- ★ George Washington, letter to James Madison, May 20, 1792
- ★ George Washington, manuscript of 1794 Sixth Annual Message To Congress, November 1794
- ★ "Proclamation of Neutrality," Philadelphia, April 22, 1793
- ★ George Washington, "The Farewell Address," September 19, 1796

## **III. Lesson Activities**

This lesson provides a retrospective on Washington's presidency, as seen through his eyes. Students will use "The Farewell Address" and other primary source documents to analyze the important domestic and foreign events that helped shape Washington's policy as first president, and to better understand the principles that guided him. This lesson should serve as a culminating activity after students have studied the first and second administrations.

### **Part One**

- A. Divide students into groups of 5 or 6. Ask students to brainstorm major domestic and foreign events from Washington's first and second administrations. (Students can consult their textbooks if needed.) Have students create a timeline on a large piece of butcher paper.

- B. Ask students to discuss and categorize each event as “domestic” or “foreign.” Label the timeline accordingly.
- C. Hand out primary source documents, selected from Documents 1–6, to each group member. Make sure that each student in a group receives a different document.
- D. Ask each student to read their document, filling out the “Document Analysis Worksheet” (Student Handout #1) provided with this packet. The “Document Analysis Worksheet” will help students to analyze their documents.
- E. In their groups, ask students to discuss which passages in their documents relate to which events in the timeline. How does the document reveal George Washington’s guiding principles, and how does it illuminate his conduct of domestic and foreign policy?
- F. Ask the students to individually do a “quick-write” on their document, summing up the group’s conclusions about the meaning of the document.
- G. Hand out copies of “The Farewell Address” and ask students to read it for homework.

### **Part Two**

- A. In their groups, ask students to select passages from Document 7 “The Farewell Address” that refer to the events in the chronologies they have compiled.
- B. Convene the whole class and hold a discussion on the major admonitions and recommendations that Washington was trying to make in his “Farewell Address.”
- C. Given the historical context of the 1790s, ask the class to debate the pros and cons of domestic policies forged during the early republic. If desired, students can debate from the perspective of either Jeffersonians or Hamiltonians.
- D. Given the historical context of the 1790s, ask the class to debate the pros and cons of isolationism during the early republic. Again, students can debate as Jeffersonians or Hamiltonians.

## **IV. While Touring the Exhibit**

While touring the exhibit take a look at the following images from Washington’s presidency.

1. **Andrew Ellicot, “Plan of the city of Washington . . . Seat of Government after the Year 1800,” Philadelphia, 1792**

George Washington raised no objection to the decision to name the new federal capital “Washington, the District of Columbia.” He personally picked a site about ten miles from Mount Vernon and made sure that a grand metropolis, worthy of a great nation, was laid out. But generations would pass before the muddy village on the Potomac became a great city.



**2. Gilbert Stuart, “George Washington,” 1797.**

Washington’s face became a ubiquitous republican icon. It is unfortunate that Gilbert Stuart’s “dollar bill” portrait of the grim, burned-out old man in his bitter second term has remained the universally recognized Washington. History is better served by Jean-Antoine Houdon’s superb sculpture of the vital younger man.

**3. William Birch, “Bank of the United States,” in: *The City of Philadelphia*, Philadelphia, 1800.**

Hamilton’s Bank of the United States, and the vision of America’s future it implied, were abhorrent to Virginia Republicans like Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. But their fellow Virginian, President Washington, endorsed Hamilton’s plan and signed the Bank bill into law.



### V. Extended Lesson Ideas

- ★. Ask students to assess the extent to which Washington's foreign policy, as delineated in "The Farewell Address," shaped and influenced foreign policy throughout the nation's history.
  
- ★. Ask students to debate the pros and cons of isolationism throughout other eras of United States history such as the Monroe Doctrine, Spanish American War, World War I, Wilson's 14 Points, the League of Nations, World War II, the Marshall Plan, the Truman Doctrine, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Gulf War.

**DOCUMENT ANALYSIS WORKSHEET**

This worksheet is an adaptation of one designed and developed by the staff of the Education Branch, Office of Public Programs, National Archives, Washington, DC.

1. Type of Document: (Check one)

- Image
- Private Letter
- Political Cartoon
- Speech or Public Address
- Other: please explain \_\_\_\_\_
- Report to Congress
- Map
- Artifact
- Secondary Source

2. Date(s) of document: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Author \_\_\_\_\_

4. For what audience was the document written?: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Document Information:

A. List important pieces of information presented in the document.

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B. Why was the document written?

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C. What evidence in the document helped you to determine why it was written? (Quote from the document if appropriate.)

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D. What historical events does this document refer to?

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## DOCUMENT 1 – (Two Documents)

George Washington, letter to Henry Knox, April 1, 1789.

In this remarkable letter to a friend, Washington poured out his fears as he prepared to risk his hard-won fame by taking on the presidency.

My dear Sir,

Mount Vernon April 1st, 1789

. . . . In confidence I can assure you... that my movements to the chair of Government will be accompanied by feelings not unlike those of a culprit who is going to the place of his execution: so unwilling am I, in the evening of a life nearly consumed in public cares, to quit a peaceful abode for an Ocean of difficulties, without that competency of political skill—abilities & inclination which is necessary to manage the helm. I am sensible, that I am embarking the voice of my Countrymen and a good name of my own, on this voyage, but what returns will be made for them—Heaven alone can foretell. 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. For of the consolations which are to be derived from these (under any circumstances) the world cannot deprive me. With best wishes for Mrs. Knox, & sincere friendship for yourself—I remain Your affectionate

GWashington

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George Washington's Diary Entries

April 16 and 23, 1789

About ten o'clock I bade adieu to Mount Vernon, to private life, and to domestic felicity; and with a mind oppressed with more anxious and painful sensations than I have words to express, set out for New York in company with Mr. Thompson, and colonel Humphries, with the best dispositions to render service to my country in obedience to its call, but with less hope of answering its expectations.

The display of boats which attended and joined us on this occasion, some with vocal and some with instrumental music on board; the decorations of the ships, the roar of cannon, and the loud acclamations of the people which rent the skies, as I passed along the wharves, filled my mind with sensations as painful (considering the reverse of this scene, which may be the case after all my labors to do good) as they are pleasing.

## DOCUMENT 2

George Washington, letter to James Madison, August 5, 1789

President Washington consulted James Madison, the “Father of the Constitution,” on the workings of that untried document. The Constitution required the president to make foreign treaties with the “Advice and Consent of the Senate.” But no one could say what form “Advice and Consent” should take. The president asked Madison “would an Oral or written communication be best?” Washington’s single attempt to negotiate a treaty with the Senate was a failure and has never been repeated by any of his presidential successors.

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My dear Sir,

*I want to communicate two matters to Congress; the substance of which is contained in the enclosed paper.— The first requires to be decided upon before the proposed adjournment that take — but my motive for communicating thereafter, at this time, is only to fix the other, and to premote enquiry against the next meeting.*

*Whether would an oral or written communication be best?*

*If the first what mode is to be adopted to effect it?*

*I would thank you ; my good Sir, for amending the enclosed address, if you have liezure, by adding to, or takinging out, such parts as you may think had better be expunged.*

*I am most affectionately,*

*Yours*

*GWashington*

## DOCUMENT 3 – (Two Documents)

George Washington, letter to Gouverneur Morris, October 13th, 1789

In this letter George Washington reflects on the outbreak of the French Revolution.

Dear Sir,

New York, October 13th, 1789

. . . . The revolution which has been effected in France is of so wonderful a nature that the mind can hardly realise the fact—If it ends as our last accounts to the first of August predict that nation will be the most powerful and happy in Europe; but I fear though it has gone triumphantly through the first paroxysm, it is not the last it has to encounter before matters are finally settled.

In a word the revolution is of too great magnitude to be effected in so short a space, and with the loss of so little blood—.

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George Washington, letter to Jean Baptiste Ternant, October 14, 1791.

Although Washington would later advise against involvement in foreign alliances, he chose to intervene in the Haitian rebellion.

Mount Vernon, September 24, 1791.

Sir: I have not delayed a momt. since the receipt of your communications of the 22d. instant, in dispatching orders to the Secretary of the Treasury to furnish the money, and to the Secretary of War to deliver the Arms and Ammunition, which you have applied to me for.

Sincerely regretting, as I do, the cause which has given rise to this application; I am happy in the opportunity of testifying how well disposed the united States are to render every aid in their power to our good friends and Allies the French to quell “the alarming insurrection of the Negroes in Hispaniola” and of the ready disposition to effect it, of the Executive authority thereof.

## DOCUMENT 4

George Washington, letter to James Madison, May 20, 1792

President Washington wanted to leave office when his first term ended in 1793. He asked Madison to help him write a farewell address to announce his decision to retire. But Madison and other statesmen soon convinced Washington that he was obliged to continue as president. The new country and the fragile Union could not survive the embittered partisan battle for the presidency that Washington's departure was sure to bring.

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My dear Sir,

Mount Vernon May 20th. 1792.

*. . . . I still look forward to the fulfillment of my fondest and most ardent wishes to spend the remainder of my days (which I can not expect will be many) in ease & tranquility.*

*Nothing short of conviction that my dereliction of the Chair of Government (if it should be the desire of the people to continue me in it) would involve the Country in serious disputes respecting the chief Magestrate, & the disagreeable consequences which might result therefrom in the floating, & divided opinions which seem to prevail at present, could, in any wise, induce me to relinquish the determination I have formed: and of this I do not see how any evidence can be obtained previous to the Election. My vanity, I am sure, is not of that cast as to allow me to view the subject in this light.*

*. . . . I will, without apology desire (if the measure in itself should strike you as proper, & likely to produce public good, or private honor) that you would turn your thoughts to a Valedictory address from me to the public; expressing in plain & modest terms—that having been honored with the Presidential Chair, and to the best of my abilities contributed to the Organization & Administration of the government—that having arrived at a period of life when the private Walks of it, in the shade of retirement, becomes necessary, and will be most pleasing to me; and the spirit of the government may render a rotation in the Elective Officers of it more congenial with their ideas of liberty & safety, that I take my leave of them as a public man . . .*

GWashington

## DOCUMENT 5

## George Washington, Sixth Annual Message To Congress, November 1794

This is the president's 1794 Annual Message, now known as the State of the Union Address. Washington claimed that the state of the Union in 1794 was precarious. He was alarmed by the recent "Whiskey Rebellion: fomented by opponents of his administration from the new Democratic-Republican Societies."

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*United States, November 19, 1794.*

*Fellow Citizens of the Senate and of the House of Representatives:*

*When we call to mind the gracious indulgence of Heaven, by which the American People became a nation; when we survey the general prosperity of our country, and look forward to the riches, power, and happiness, to which it seems destined; with the deepest regret do I announce to you, that during your recess, some of the citizens of the United States have been found capable of an insurrection. ...*

*. . . During the session of the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety, it was expedient to exercise the legislative power, granted by the constitution of the United States, "to lay and collect excises." In a majority of the states, scarcely an objection was heard to this mode of taxation. In some, indeed, alarms were at first conceived, until they were banished by reason and patriotism. In the four western countries of Pennsylvania, a prejudice, fostered and embittered by the artifice of men... produced symptoms of riot and violence.*

*. . . . I postponed the summoning of the militia immediately into the field. But I required them to be held in readiness... Pardon...was tendered to them by the government of the United States and that of Pennsylvania, upon no other condition, than a satisfactory assurance of obedience to the laws.*

*. . . . I ordered the militia to march, after once more admonishing the insurgents . . . .*

**DOCUMENT 6****Proclamation of Neutrality, Philadelphia, April 22, 1793**

*Whereas it appears that a state of war exists between Austria, Prussia, Sardinia, Great Britain, and the United Netherlands, on the one part, and France on the other; and the duty and interest of the United States require, that they should with sincerity and good faith adopt and pursue a conduct friendly and impartial towards the belligerent powers.*

*I have therefore thought fit by these presents, to declare the disposition of the United States to observe the conduct aforesaid towards those powers respectively; and to exhort and warn the citizens of the United States carefully to avoid all acts and proceedings whatsoever, which may in any manner tend to contravene such disposition.*

*And I do hereby also make known, that whosoever of the citizens of the United States shall render himself liable to punishment or forfeiture under the law of nations, by committing, aiding or abetting hostilities against any of the said powers, or by carrying to any of them those articles which are deemed contraband by the modern usage of nations, will not receive the protection of the United States against such punishment or forfeiture; and further that I have given instructions to those officers to whom it belongs, to cause prosecutions to be instituted against all persons, who shall, within the cognizance of the Courts of the United States, violate the law of nations, with respect to the powers at war, or any of them.*

## DOCUMENT 7

George Washington, "The Farewell Address," in Claypoole's *Daily American Advertiser*, Philadelphia, September 19, 1796.

Washington announced his decision to retire at the end of his second term by publishing the Farewell Address in a Philadelphia newspaper. Many had expected that the first president would stay in office until he died.

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*Friends, and Fellow-Citizens: The period for a new election of a Citizen, to Administer the Executive government of the United States, being not far distant, and the time actually arrived, when your thoughts must be employed in designating the person, who is to be clothed with that important trust, it appears to me proper, especially as it may conduce to a more distinct expression of the public voice, that I should now apprise you of the resolution I have formed, to decline being considered among the number of those, out of whom a choice is to be made . . . .*

*The Unity of government which constitutes you one people is also now dear to you. It is justly so; for it is a main Pillar in the Edifice of your real independence, the support of your tranquility at home; your peace abroad; of your safety; of your prosperity; of that very Liberty which you so highly prize. But as it is easy to foresee, that from different causes and from different quarters, much pains will be taken, many artifices employed, to weaken in your minds the conviction of this truth; as this is the point in your political fortress against which the batteries of internal and external enemies will be most constantly and actively (though often covertly and insidiously) directed, it is of infinite moment that you should properly estimate the immense value of your national union to your collective and individual happiness; . . . .*

*For this you have every inducement of sympathy and interest. Citizens by birth or choice of a common country, that country has a right to concentrate your affections. The name of AMERICAN, which belongs to you in your national capacity, must always exalt the just pride of Patriotism more than any appellation derived from local discriminations. With slight shades of difference, you have the same Religion, Manners, Habits and political Principles. You have in a common cause fought and triumphed together. The independence and liberty you possess are the work of joint councils, and joint efforts; of common dangers, sufferings and successes . . . .*

*I have already intimated to you the danger of parties in the state, with particular reference to the founding of them on geographical discriminations. Let*

*me now take a more comprehensive view, and warn you in the most solemn manner against the baneful effects of the spirit of party generally.*

*This spirit, unfortunately, is inseparable from our nature, having its root in the strongest passions of the human mind. It exists under different shapes in all governments, more or less stifled, controlled, or repressed; but in those of the popular form it is seen in its greatest rankness and is truly their worst enemy . . .*

*It serves always to distract the public councils and enfeeble the public administration. It agitates the community with illfounded jealousies and false alarms; kindles the animosity of one part against another; foments occasionally riot and insurrection. It opens the door to foreign influence and corruption, which find a facilitated access to the government itself through the channels of party passion. Thus the policy and the will of one country are subjected to the policy and will of another . . . .*

*It is substantially true that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government. The rule indeed extends with more or less force to every species of free government. Who that is a sincere friend to it can look with indifference upon attempts to shake the foundation of the fabric? Promote, then, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge. In proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened . . . .*

*Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence (I conjure you to believe me, fellow-citizens) the jealousy of a free people ought to be constantly awake, since history and experience prove that foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of republican government. But that jealousy, to be useful, must be impartial, else it becomes the instrument of the very influence to be avoided, instead of a defense against it. Excessive partiality for one foreign nation and excessive dislike of another cause those whom that actuate to see danger only on one side, and serve to veil and even second the arts of influence on the other. Real patriots who may resist the intrigues of the favorite are liable to become suspected and odious, while its tools and dupes usurp the applause and confidence of the people to surrender their interests.*

*The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is, in extending our commercial relations to have with them as little political connections as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith. Here let us stop.*

*Europe has a set of primary interests which to us have none or very remote relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes*

*of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves to artificial ties in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics or the ordinary combinations and consolations of her friendships or enmities.*

*Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course. If we remain one people, under an efficient government, the period is not far off when we may defy material injury from external annoyance; when we may take such an attitude as will cause the neutrality we may at any time resolve upon to be scrupulously respected; when belligerent nations, under the impossibility of making acquisitions upon us, will not lightly hazard the giving us provocation; when we may choose peace or war, as our interest, guided by justice, shall counsel.*

*Why forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation? Why quit our own to stand upon foreign ground? Why, by intervweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalry, interest, humor, or caprice?*

*Though in reviewing the incidents of my administration I am unconscious of intentional error, I am nevertheless too sensible of my defects not to think it probable that I may have committed many errors. Whatever they may be, I fervently beseech the Almighty to avert or mitigate the evils to which they may tend. I shall also carry with me the hope that my country will never cease to view them with indulgence, and that, after forty-five years of my life dedicated to its service with an upright zeal, the faults of incompetent abilities will be consigned to oblivion, as myself must soon be to the mansions of rest.*

*Relying on its kindness in this as in other things, and actuated by that fervent love toward it which is so natural to a man who views in it the native soil for himself and his progenitors for several generations, I anticipate with pleasing expectation that retreat in which I promise myself to realize without ally the sweet enjoyment of partaking in the midst of my fellow citizens the benign influence of good laws under a free government — the ever-favorite object of my heart, and the happy reward, as I trust, of our mutual cares, labors and dangers.*