



TEKS 4B, 5A, 5B, 14A, 14B, 20B,
22A, 22B

What You Will Learn...

Main Ideas

1. In 1789 George Washington became the first president of the United States.
2. Congress and the president organized the executive and judicial branches of government.
3. Americans had high expectations for their new nation.

The Big Idea

President Washington and members of Congress established a new national government.

Key Terms and People

George Washington, p. 234

electoral college, p. 234

Martha Washington, p. 235

precedent, p. 236

Judiciary Act of 1789, p. 236



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TAKING NOTES

Use the graphic organizer online to take notes on why and how George Washington was chosen as first president.

Washington Leads a New Nation

If YOU were there...

You are a seamstress in New York City in 1789. You've joined the excited crowd in the streets for inauguration day. Church bells are ringing, and people are cheering. Even though you were just a young child during the Revolution, Washington is your hero. Now you watch as he takes the oath of office. You are proud to see that he is wearing a suit of American-made cloth.

What do you think America's future will be like under President Washington?

BUILDING BACKGROUND George Washington was more than just a popular war hero. People naturally looked to him as a national leader. He had taken part in the Continental Congresses and in creating the Constitution. He helped establish and strengthen the new national government.

The First President

Americans believed in **George Washington**. They saw him as an honest, intelligent, and steady leader. He was a hero of the Revolution and was known for his ability to motivate and administer the army. Many believed he should be the first U.S. president. Washington had been looking forward to retirement and a quiet life on his Virginia farm. When he hesitated to become a candidate for the presidency, his friends convinced him to run. Fellow politician Gouverneur Morris told him, "Should the idea prevail [win] that you would not accept the presidency, it should prove fatal . . . to the new government." Morris concluded confidently, "Of all men, you are the best fitted to fill that office."

In January 1789 each of the 11 states that had passed the Constitution sent electors to choose the first president. The group was the **electoral college**—a body of electors who represent the people's vote in choosing the president. The electoral college selected Washington unanimously, and John Adams became his vice president.

READING CHECK

Analyzing Why was Washington selected to be president?

Leaders of the New Nation

Hard work lay ahead for members of the new government. The new federal government had to create policies and procedures that would determine the future of the country.

The Founding Fathers

Many leaders who had been involved in the Revolution, the creation of the Articles of Confederation, and the framing of the Constitution continued to be leaders after the adoption of the Constitution. There were more than 100 men who might be called founding fathers for their work in founding the nation. Delegates to conventions and members of early state governments all worked together and brought ideas for the creation of the new system of government. These men expressed the civic virtue of representing the good of the whole nation, even those people they disagreed with.

Seven men stand out from the rest for their wide-ranging contributions to the nation. Thomas Jefferson and James Madison were known for their leadership in authoring the Declaration of Independence and Constitution respectively. John Adams, Alexander

Hamilton, and John Jay were known for their strong support of the new Constitution. Benjamin Franklin was older than many of the others, and was respected for his wise ideas on the organization and purpose of the Revolution. George Washington led the American forces during the Revolutionary War and then led the nation during its first years. Several of these men acted as ambassadors to European nations, and several became president. Each of them contributed their time, intelligence, and leadership to help found the nation.

Women's Contributions

Washington's wife, First Lady **Martha Washington**, entertained guests and attended social events with her husband. She described the scene to her niece: "I have not had one half-hour to myself since the day of my arrival." She ran the presidential household with style.

Other women of the time period, such as author Judith Sargent Murray, believed that women needed to play a greater role in the new nation than Martha Washington did. Murray, Abigail Adams, and others believed in Republican Motherhood, the idea that women played an important role in teaching their children to be good citizens.



VIDEO

Did You Know:
George Washington

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- 1 Henry Knox, secretary of war
- 2 Thomas Jefferson, secretary of state
- 3 Edmund Randolph, attorney general
- 4 Alexander Hamilton, secretary of the treasury
- 5 George Washington, president

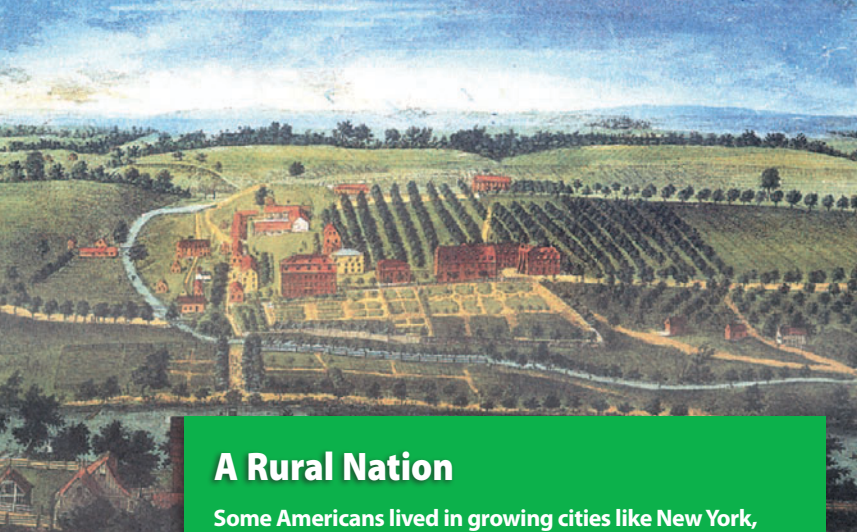
The First Cabinet

Washington's cabinet members kept him informed on political matters and debated important issues with one another. Each of the men chosen had experience that made him a wise choice to advise the nation's first president. By 1792 cabinet meetings were a common practice.

ANALYSIS SKILL

ANALYZING VISUALS

How do you think a modern cabinet meeting might look different from the one shown here?



A Rural Nation

Some Americans lived in growing cities like New York, shown above. However, the new republic was overwhelmingly rural. Most Americans lived and worked on farms.

Why might rural Americans and urban Americans want different things from their new government?

Some promoters of Republican Motherhood did not expect women to participate in politics or business. Other people, however, hoped that Republican Motherhood would lead to greater opportunities for women. They hoped more women would receive an education. Only a few families were willing to provide much education for their daughters, and adult women rarely had the time or money to get an education later in life. Most women in the early republic faced long days managing their households and working hard inside or outside the home to support their families.

READING CHECK **Describe** What did the Founding Fathers do?

Organizing the Government

As President Washington noted in a letter to James Madison, “The first of everything in our situation will serve to establish a precedent.” A **precedent** is an action or decision that later serves as an example.

The First Congress created departments in the executive branch for different areas of national policy. Washington met with the department heads, or cabinet members, who advised him.

Today we know that presidents have cabinet meetings with their top advisers. This practice started during Washington’s presidency and was common by 1792.

For two of his most important cabinet positions, Washington chose carefully. He picked Alexander Hamilton as secretary of the treasury and Thomas Jefferson as secretary of state. Henry Knox served as secretary of war, and Samuel Osgood was chosen as postmaster general. Hamilton was a gifted economic planner, and Jefferson had served as ambassador to France. Knox had helped Washington run the Continental Army, and Osgood had government experience.

To set up the federal court system and the courts’ location, Congress passed the **Judiciary Act of 1789**. This act created three levels of federal courts and defined their powers and relationship to the state courts. It set up federal district courts and circuit courts of appeals. The president nominated candidates for federal judgeships. Those candidates then had to be approved or rejected by the Senate. Washington wrote about the importance of these duties:

“I have always been persuaded that the stability and success of the national government . . . would depend in a considerable degree on the interpretation and execution of its laws. In my opinion, therefore, it is important that the judiciary system should not only be independent in its operations, but as perfect as possible in its formation.”

—George Washington, quoted in *The Real George Washington*, edited by Parry et al.

The basic parts of the federal government were now in place. Leaders began to face the challenges of the new nation. Hard work lay ahead.

READING CHECK **Finding Main Ideas**

What two important precedents were established for the federal government?

Expectations for the Nation

In 1790 the United States was home to almost 4 million people. Most Americans lived in the countryside and worked on farms. They wanted fair tax laws and the right to settle western lands. Other Americans worked in towns as craftspeople, laborers, or merchants.

Many merchants wanted simpler trade laws, but manufacturers wanted tariffs to protect them from foreign competitors.

Americans had high expectations for their new nation. They hoped the government would improve trade and keep the economy stable. During this period the economic system of free enterprise expanded. Most business owners and merchants wanted the government to make few regulations on business practices, protect the rights of property owners, and keep taxes low. They believed such government policies would encourage businesses to expand production and trade.

Most cities were small. Only New York City and Philadelphia had populations larger than 25,000. New York City was the first capital of the United States, and it represented the spirit of the new nation. Although badly damaged during the Revolution, the city had already begun to recover. Citizens got rid of many signs of British rule.

New York City had a bustling economy. International trade and business became more active. A French visitor to New York City noted the city's energy.

“Everything in the city is in motion; everywhere the shops resound [ring out] with the noise of workers . . . one sees vessels arriving from every part of the world.”

—A French visitor to New York, quoted in *New York in the American Revolution* by Wilbur Abbott

In 1792 some 24 stockbrokers signed an **agreement** under a buttonwood tree on Wall Street. This agreement was the foundation for what later became the New York Stock Exchange. It cemented Wall Street's image as the economic hub of the United States. By 1790 the city had grown rapidly. To many officials, it reflected the potential future of the new nation and was a fitting place for the capital.

READING CHECK **Analyzing** Why was New York City chosen as the first capital of the United States?

SUMMARY AND PREVIEW Americans, led by President George Washington, set up their new government. In the next section you will read about Alexander Hamilton's economic plan.

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

agreement
a decision reached by two or more people or groups

THE IMPACT TODAY

Today the New York Stock Exchange is the largest market for securities, or stocks, in the world.

Section 1 Assessment

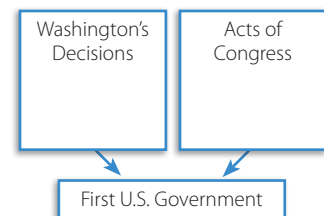
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ONLINE QUIZ

Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and People

- a. Describe** What role did the electoral college play in **George Washington's** election to the presidency?
b. Summarize What were some of **Martha Washington's** duties as First Lady?
c. Evaluate How did the contributions of the Founding Fathers demonstrate civic virtue?
- a. Describe** What **precedent** did President Washington and Congress establish regarding the executive branch?
b. Explain What was the purpose of the **Judiciary Act of 1789**?
c. Evaluate What do you think was the most important element of the Judiciary Act of 1789? Why?
- a. Recall** What city served as the first capital of the United States? Why?
b. Draw Conclusions What expectations did most Americans have for the new nation? How did the nation begin to develop a free enterprise system?
c. Make Judgments Do you think New York City should still be the capital city of the United States? Explain your answer.

Critical Thinking

- Comparing** Review your notes on George Washington. Then copy the chart below and use it to compare how Washington and Congress organized the new government.



FOCUS ON WRITING

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- Thinking about Washington's Contributions**
In this section you learned some things about George Washington as president. Jot down one or two things you could use to support his nomination for a Nobel Prize.