

GEORGE WASHINGTON

Now that the U.S. Constitution has been written and ratified by the states, it is time to put the new plan of government to work. Will it prove to be an effective plan of government for the United States? In order to get the new plan started, the three branches of government-legislative, executive, and judicial-need to get started. Let's look at the executive branch first.

In the first presidential election in 1789 the electors unanimously chose George Washington as President. He had been a hero for the country in the American Revolution as head of the Continental Army and had served as president of the Constitutional Convention. John Adams received the second highest number of votes and so became the Vice-President.

Washington had his work cut out for him. As the first President of the United States he had no models to follow. He had to get the new government started. The policies and procedures he created set a precedent, or model, for future presidents to follow. In the Constitution, Article II says the President has the authority to establish "executive departments" as needed. This is the cabinet which serves as advisors to the President. Washington's first cabinet was as follows:

Secretary of State=Thomas Jefferson. This department helps with foreign countries and their dealings with the United States.

Secretary of the Treasury=Alexander Hamilton

Secretary of War=Henry Knox He was in charge of the army.

Attorney General=Edmund Randolph He served as advisor in matters of law and helped set up the court system.

Washington also had to establish the judicial branch of the government. In doing so he had to set up the first federal courts including the U.S. Supreme Court. The Congress had passed the Judiciary Act of 1789 which said the Supreme Court should have 1 Chief Justice and 5 associate justices. (Today there are 8 associate justices and 1 Chief Justice.) Washington appointed John Jay to be the first Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court. This appointment was approved by the Senate as called for in the system of checks and balances. The main job of the Supreme Court is to interpret the Constitution and decide if laws are constitutional as they are contested in courts.

Just like under the Articles of Confederation, the real test for the Constitution would be to see if the plan would work in a time of crisis. It so happened that the farmers in Pennsylvania were having a hard time financially. In order to make money many farmers were using their grain to make whiskey and sell it for a profit. The national government under the Constitution had the power to tax. The Congress enacted an excise tax, which is a tax on goods that are made, sold, and used in the United States, and this tax was on whiskey. The farmers were not happy about having to pay this tax. To protest the tax, farmers in western Pennsylvania organized and decided to rebel against the government officials who were collecting this tax. George Washington called out the new national militia and quickly stopped

the farmers' rebellion. This time, unlike in Shays's Rebellion, the test proved that the national government under the US Constitution could protect the citizens of the United States. It did create a strong plan of government that would work for the nation and has continued to do so for over 200 years.

Other things of importance that occurred under the President Washington:

1. Political parties began to appear because of disagreements between Thomas Jefferson who thought powers of government should be limited and Alexander Hamilton who wanted a strong national government. A political party is a group of people who share the same ideas about government issues. Study the chart below to see the differences in Jefferson, whose followers became the Democratic-Republican Party and Hamilton, whose followers were the Federalist Party.

<u>Federalists</u>	<u>Democratic-Republicans</u>
1. led by Alexander Hamilton	1. led by Thomas Jefferson
2. believed the wealthy and educated should have political power	2. believed people should have political power
3. favored a strong national government	3. favored strong state governments
4. emphasized manufacturing, shipping, and trade	4. emphasized agricultural products
5. favored loose interpretation of the Constitution	5. favored strict interpretation of the Constitution
6. were pro-British	6. were pro-French
7. favored a national bank	7. opposed a national bank
8. favored a protective tariff	8. opposed a protective tariff

(a protective tariff is a high tax on imports designed to help American businesses.)

2. In 1791 the first 10 amendments were added to the Constitution. These are the Bill of Rights.

3. Plans were started to create a national capital city at Washington D.C. It is of interest to note that George Washington was the only President who did not live in this city as President. The city was designed by an African American astronomer and surveyor named Benjamin Banneker.

Directions: Use the reading on George Washington to answer the following questions. You are to write out the question, skip a space, and then answer the question. You are to complete the activity on loose-leaf paper

1. When was George Washington elected President of the United States?
2. Who was the Vice-President under Washington?
3. What is the cabinet?
4. Who was the first Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court? How did he get this job?
5. Who was the first Secretary of State? What is the main duty of this person?
6. What incident proved to be the test to see if the Constitution could provide a plan of government that would be strong enough to protect American people?
Describe the outcome of this incident.
7. What is a political party?
8. What were the names of the first two political parties and who headed each one?
9. Which party favored a strong national government?
10. What is a protective tariff? Which political party opposed this?