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# i Think : U.S. History

## Westward Expansion



by Sharon Coletti  
and Kendra Corr

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS



Objectives (terms, questions and answers) ...	page 6
Leading by Example (George Washington) ...	page 8
Partisan Politics (early political parties) ...	page 15
Living Legacy (Jeffersonian democracy) ...	page 20
The Great Unknown (Lewis and Clark) ...	page 27
Words and Music (War of 1812) ...	page 30
Distinguishing Democracies (Jefferson and Jackson) ...	page 33
Full Steam Ahead (Industrial Revolution) ...	page 40
Pioneer Spirit (frontier life) ...	page 48
Trails of Tears (Indian removal) ...	page 55
Fulfilling Our “Destiny” (land acquisitions) ...	page 63
Gold Fever (forty-niners) ...	page 69
Westward Ho! (interpreting information) ...	page 73
Who Went Where, When, and Why? (trails west) ...	page 79
Up Closer and More Personal (state settlement) ...	page 86
From Sea to Shining Sea (sectionalism and compromise) ...	page 90
Reviewing Terms (vocabulary puzzle) ...	page 95
Differentiated Content and Skills Assessments (A-modified; B-average; C-accelerated) ...	page 97
Resources (bibliography) ...	page 102



## Leading by Example

### Springboard:

The students should read “\_\_\_\_\_” and answer the questions.

**Objective:** The student will be able to explain the impact of George Washington’s presidency on American government.

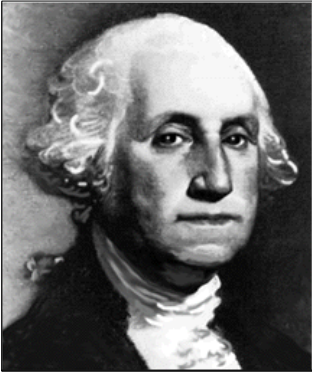
**Materials:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Springboard handout)  
President’s Precedents (2 page handout)

**Terms to know:**

- precedent** - an example or model for the future
- elector** - an elected state representative who helps formally elect the president
- cabinet** - official advisors to a chief of state
- diplomacy** - meetings and talks between nations
- standing army, navy, etc.** - full-time military forces

### Procedure:

- After reviewing the Springboard, explain that *in this lesson the student(s) will learn about some of the precedents set during the term of our first president, George Washington.*
- Hand out copies of “President’s Precedents.” The student(s) should work individually or in small groups to identify current government practices that are based on precedents set by Washington during his presidency. (They may need access to the internet or other resources in order to complete the handout.)
- Have the student(s) share their answers and discuss the following questions:
  - ? How would you describe George Washington? How would you describe his presidency? (*Answers will vary but students will likely think positively of Washington.*)
  - ? What are some ways our government might be different if Washington had done things differently? (*Answers will vary but should reflect student understanding of the material.*)



George Washington served America well in its struggle for nationhood and was greatly respected by all. Therefore when the first election for president was held there was little doubt that he would be the country's first chief executive.

Electors from ten states cast their votes for president on February 4, 1789. North Carolina and Rhode Island did not take part since they had not yet ratified the Constitution. New York also did not participate as it failed to appoint its electors by the assigned January 7<sup>th</sup> deadline.

In all, 69 electors voted for two candidates each, at least one having to be for someone outside of their state. As prescribed in the Constitution at that time, Washington, the candidate with the highest vote count of 69, became president and John Adams, with the second-highest tally at 34 votes, became vice president.

In discussing his new office Washington said, "...everything in our situation will serve to establish a **precedent**." Since the Constitution was vague on so many points, the presidency in particular, he fully understood that the decisions he made and actions he took while in office would establish patterns to be followed by many presidents to come. Of course Washington was right.

Which is the **LEAST** appropriate title for this passage?

- A. "Setting the Course"
- B. "Hail to the First Chief"
- C. "The Life of Washington"
- D. "Washington for President"

What conclusion can be drawn about America's first election based on information in the passage?

- A. All the states' electors were involved in some way.
- B. The people in each state voted for their electors.
- C. All of the electors voted for George Washington.
- D. Electors from John Adams' state voted for him.

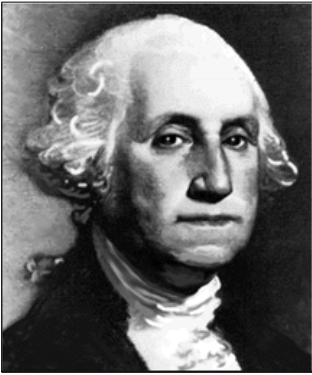
Which words give the best context clue to the meaning of the word "precedent" in the last paragraph?

- A. "everything in our situation"
- B. "presidency in particular"
- C. "his decision and actions"
- D. "patterns to be followed"

Complete this analogy:

George Washington : 1789 :: \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_

## Answers and Explanations



George Washington served America well in its struggle for nationhood and was greatly respected by all. Therefore when the first election for president was held there was little doubt that he would be the country's first chief executive.

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In discussing his new office Washington said, "...everything in our situation will serve to establish a **precedent**." Since the Constitution was vague on so many points, the presidency in particular, he fully understood that the decisions he made and actions he took while in office would establish patterns to be followed by many presidents to come. Of course Washington was right.

Which is the **LEAST** appropriate title for this passage? *(While choice A could require interpretation, C is the best answer since the passage is only about Washington's presidency.)*

- A. "Setting the Course"
- B. "Hail to the First Chief"
- C. "The Life of Washington" \*
- D. "Washington for President"

What conclusion can be drawn about America's first election based on information in the passage? *(It is stated that there were 69 electors, and that Washington received 69 electoral votes.)*

- A. All the states' electors were involved in some way.
- B. The people in each state voted for their electors.
- C. All of the electors voted for George Washington. \*
- D. Electors from John Adams' state voted for him.

Which words give the best context clue to the meaning of the word "precedent" in the last paragraph? *(A good way to approach this question is to replace "precedent" with each of the clues to see which makes sense.)*

- A. "everything in our situation"
- B. "presidency in particular"
- C. "his decision and actions"
- D. "patterns to be followed" \*

Complete this analogy:

George Washington : 1789 :: \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Answers will vary, but the answer would be a president's name and the year elected.)*



# PRESIDENT'S PRECEDENTS

**DIRECTIONS:** Use your knowledge and/or reference sources as needed to find out how each “precedent” has affected the United States’ government and the presidency to the “present.”

<b>PRECEDENT</b>	<b>PRESENT</b>
Right after Washington was sworn in as the first president, he made a speech.	
Almost immediately trouble arose with the native Creek nation. Washington negotiated a treaty and asked Congress to approve it after it was finalized.	
The Departments of State, War, and the Treasury were established and Washington appointed a trusted advisor to head each.	
Washington appointed an Attorney General to be the head of the Justice Department and the chief law enforcement officer of the federal government.	
The Supreme Court was established, headed by a Chief Justice and (at that time) five others. All were appointed by Washington and then approved by Congress.	
Washington appointed ambassadors to go to countries in Europe to discuss tensions between the British and the U.S. and other issues.	
Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton proposed a national bank. Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson wanted a permanent capital city near Virginia. In a cabinet compromise both were approved.	
By the middle of Washington’s first term his administration had split into two groups that disagreed on almost everything. The Democratic Republicans were led by Thomas Jefferson and the Federalists by Alexander Hamilton.	



<p>Pirates from North Africa were raiding U.S. ships and kidnapping their crews for ransom. Recognizing America's weakness at sea, Washington pushed to build a strong navy.</p>	
<p>During his first term in office, Washington toured the country, speaking to people to give them a chance to see him in person and boost confidence in his administration.</p>	
<p>A revolt erupted in 1794 in Pennsylvania over a tax on whiskey ("Whiskey Rebellion"). Washington ordered militias from several states to go there to control the situation.</p>	
<p>Problems continued with the British seizing American ships and encouraging Natives to attack settlements in efforts to de-stabilize the young nation. Washington insisted on addressing these problems through diplomacy.</p>	
<p>John Jay, Washington's first choice for Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, resigned from the position to serve in other ways. Washington selected Jay's successor from outside the Court.</p>	
<p>Jay, selected to negotiate with England, worked out a weak treaty which brought much criticism from the press. Washington bore the newspapers' attacks, never responding to them publicly.</p>	
<p>Though Washington was a slave owner himself, he expressed a sincere desire to see "a plan adopted for the abolition of slavery."</p>	
<p>Forty years of public service left Washington exhausted; he refused to consider running for a third term in office.</p>	
<p>Washington ended his presidency with a farewell address during which he strongly emphasized the importance of America remaining a single, united nation.</p>	



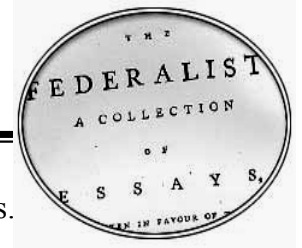
# PRESIDENT'S PRECEDENTS

## Suggested Answers & Explanations

PRECEDENT	PRESENT
Right after Washington was sworn in as the first president, he made a speech.	<i>Washington's speech on April 30, 1789 was the first inaugural address. Each president since then has given such a speech after being sworn into office.</i>
Almost immediately trouble arose with the native Creek nation. Washington negotiated a treaty and asked Congress to approve it after it was finalized.	<i>The Constitution says the president can make treaties with "the advice and consent of the Senate," Washington's actions here separated the branches' roles in the process. Treaties still require 2/3 approval by the Senate.</i>
The Departments of State, War, and the Treasury were established and Washington appointed a trusted advisor to head each.	<i>These appointments established the precedent for a cabinet of advisors. The president chooses cabinet members, who are approved by Congress, to head government departments.</i>
Washington appointed an Attorney General to be the head of the Justice Department and the chief law enforcement officer of the federal government.	<i>The Attorney General advises the president and executive department and represents the U.S. in legal matters. The Attorney General also represents the government before the Supreme Court in important cases.</i>
The Supreme Court was established, headed by a Chief Justice and (at that time) five others. All were appointed by Washington and then approved by Congress.	<i>Washington helped to establish a clear separation between the executive and legislative branches by making decisions and appointments and THEN sending them to Congress for approval, clarifying "advice and consent".</i>
Washington appointed ambassadors to go to countries in Europe to discuss tensions between the British and the U.S. and other issues.	<i>Washington established the power of the president and his representatives to negotiate with foreign powers (and native tribes). Unless there are treaties to be ratified, Congress is not required to be involved.</i>
Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton proposed a national bank. Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson wanted a permanent capital city near Virginia. In a cabinet compromise both were approved.	<i>Today the Financial Management Service in the U.S. Treasury receives and disburses all public monies, maintains government accounts, and reports on government finances. Of course the capital city is Washington, D.C. near Virginia.</i>
By the middle of Washington's first term his administration had split into two groups that disagreed on almost everything. The Democratic Republicans were led by Thomas Jefferson and the Federalists by Alexander Hamilton.	<i>This split between the two factions in Washington's administration became the first two political parties. While the parties have changed and evolved, America still has a two-party political system, though more parties exist.</i>

<p>Pirates from North Africa were raiding U.S. ships and kidnapping their crews for ransom. Recognizing America's weakness at sea, Washington pushed to build a strong navy.</p>	<p><i>The ships Washington built proved to be a great asset in future disputes and set a precedent for the need for a standing Navy. The U.S. also maintains a standing Army, Air Force, Marines, and Defense Intelligence Agencies (with offices in the Pentagon) as well as a Coast Guard.</i></p>
<p>During his first term in office, Washington toured the country, speaking to people to give them a chance to see him in person and boost confidence in his administration.</p>	<p><i>Washington was, especially during his first term, essentially campaigning for re-election. Traveling, making appearances in person, on radio, and TV, and giving speeches has become the norm for candidates running for office.</i></p>
<p>A revolt erupted in 1794 in Pennsylvania over a tax on whiskey ("Whiskey Rebellion"). Washington ordered militias from several states to go there to control the situation.</p>	<p><i>The Constitution names the president as commander of the state militias. Now presidents can call up the "National Guard," a modern version of state militias, in cases of riots, disasters, or other dangerous situations.</i></p>
<p>Problems continued with the British seizing American ships and encouraging Natives to attack settlements in efforts to de-stabilize the young nation. Washington insisted on addressing these problems through diplomacy.</p>	<p><i>Washington placed great emphasis on the need for diplomatic solutions to problems whenever possible. This approach has been taken by most presidents since and has even been adopted by the global community of nations (with the U.N.).</i></p>
<p>John Jay, Washington's first choice for Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, resigned from the position to serve in other ways. Washington selected Jay's successor from outside the Court.</p>	<p><i>Had Washington selected one of the existing justices to be promoted to Chief Justice, this would have set the precedent for future Chief Justices to be from the Court. His decision in this case allows presidents greater flexibility.</i></p>
<p>John Jay, selected to negotiate with England, worked out a weak treaty which brought much criticism from the press. Washington bore the newspapers' attacks, never responding to them publicly.</p>	<p><i>By ignoring the criticism by the press, Washington strengthened freedom of the press. As powerful as he was, he could have tried to stop the abuse or punish the writers, but he saw such actions as tyrannical.</i></p>
<p>Though Washington was a slave owner himself, he expressed a sincere desire to see "a plan adopted for the abolition of slavery."</p>	<p><i>The fact that he owned slaves and failed to take a strong stand to abolish slavery is considered by many to be Washington's greatest weakness. He left this decision to the legislature, which eventually abolished it with the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment.</i></p>
<p>Forty years of public service left Washington exhausted; he refused to consider running for a third term in office.</p>	<p><i>Since Washington's refusal to run for a third term, no president except Franklin Roosevelt has been elected more than twice. The 22<sup>nd</sup> Amendment now prevents it from happening.</i></p>
<p>Washington ended his presidency with a farewell address, during which he strongly emphasized the importance of America remaining a single, united nation.</p>	<p><i>Washington foresaw issues that would divide the nation. His address is still read every year in Congress in tribute to him and his contributions. Also, presidents still give farewell addresses.</i></p>

## Partisan Politics



### Springboard:

Students should read “A Federalist Paper” and answer the questions.

*(They disagree on how powerful the federal government can be.*

*This can be problematic if it causes disunity or argument among the people.)*

**Objective:** The student will be able to explain the rise of political parties in the U.S.

**Materials:** A Federalist Paper (Springboard handout)  
From Jefferson’s Inaugural Address (handout or transparency)  
Presidential Elections (handout)  
On the Map (handout)

**Terms to know:** **political party** - organization of people who have similar approaches toward government and governing

### Procedure:

- After reviewing the Springboard, explain that disagreements over government and other issues led to the rise of political parties in the U.S. Once sides were taken, the political climate, especially with Jefferson’s election in 1800, was VERY tense and could have even resulted in a split between the states. Recognizing this, Jefferson worked hard to heal the nation’s wounds.
- Hand out or display the “From Jefferson’s Inaugural Address” transparency. Read the excerpt together and have the student(s) summarize Jefferson’s message. (*He emphasized the need for unity and cooperation in order to preserve the Union.*)
- Hand out “Presidential Elections.” The student(s) should work individually, in pairs, or small groups to study the maps and answer the questions for the “On the Map” handout.
- Have them share their answers and discuss. (*Suggested answers with explanations:*
  1. *The number of states had grown from the original 13 to 17 (adding Vermont, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Ohio) as the country expanded to the Mississippi River. It had also acquired new territories: Indiana, Mississippi, Orleans Territory, and Louisiana (which Jefferson purchased from France in 1803 during his first term in office).*
  2. *The Democratic Republicans dominated both elections winning 92% of the vote in 1804 and 70% in 1808. While the Federalists did gain ground in 1808, their rivals still held a slim majority. In 1808 another party, the Independent Republicans, also ran a candidate for president but only took 3% of the vote.*
  3. *Unlabeled areas were lands not yet in the control of the United States. Florida (won from the British while aiding the colonists in the Revolution) and the Western lands were held by the Spanish, and the white area in the north was British.*
  4. *Another thing to note is that some states such as New York and North Carolina split their electoral votes among two parties, while today the winner of most states’ popular vote takes all. This is why states are typically colored in red or blue in election night coverage.)*

# *A Federalist Paper*

*by Publius*

(The Constitution) forms a strong national government made up of three distinct branches, each with its own separate powers. This structure provides that while each branch is powerful, it is kept in check by the combined powers of the other two. All care was taken to protect the rights of citizens of each state by means of representation in two houses. While all states have equal say in the Senate, larger, more populous states are allotted a greater share of membership in the House of Representatives, insuring fair representation for all. The federal courts are designed to guarantee that at no time or in any place will the violation of individuals' or states' rights be tolerated.

# *An Anti-Federalist Paper*

*by Brutus*

Under the Articles of Confederation, the states were strong and the interests of the people were safeguarded. Merely a few years have passed since the American people suffered great injustices at the hands of the powerful British, but the framers of this Constitution have seen fit to devise another powerful government that could once more destroy the rights and liberties its people have fought and died to gain.

Under the previous plan the states had broad powers and decisions were made by local leaders who knew and understood the people they represented. The Constitution takes many of those powers from the states, placing them instead with a distant Congress composed mainly of wealthy men with little concern for the day-to-day lives and struggles of common folk. In addition to an overly-powerful legislative branch, a chief executive with no term limits also endangers our country's future. What guarantees that this president in his capital city will be so different from a king enthroned in his palace?

**What do the Federalists and Anti-Federalists disagree about?**

**How do you think this might cause problems for the young nation?**