

George Washington was a great American from the Revolutionary War Period. Washington's leadership ability and military skills were some of the qualities that helped him lead our country during the Revolutionary War. Without him we probably would have lost the war and our country, the United States of America, would not even exist today. Instead, Washington led the continental army to victory and changed the future of the entire world.

George Washington was born in Westmoreland County, Virginia on February 22, 1732. He was the son of a planter, and one of six children. When George was eleven years old his father died and he went to live with his elder half brother Lawrence. Lawrence owned an estate at Mount Vernon, Virginia where he taught young George the trade of surveying. George almost joined the British Navy at the age of fourteen but changed his mind so he wouldn't disobey his mother's wishes. During his early years he was a superb horseman and prided himself on his good handwriting. George Washington's formal education ended at age fifteen, but he made up for his lack of schooling by reading and studying on his own.

Throughout his life George Washington was an active member of society. He was a strong military and political leader who served under the British during the French and Indian War. In the fall of 1753 Virginia Governor Robert Dinwiddie sent Washington to deliver a message to a French military base known as Fort Duquesne. Washington reached the Fort, but the return trip proved to be a bigger challenge. It was snowy and he nearly drowned when he fell off a raft in the Allegheny River. He had to spend one night on an island with no shelter. But he survived with no ill effects. The Governor printed Washington's account of his journey and by age 22 he had developed an international reputation for his ability and courage. In 1755 he was an aide to General Braddock during an expedition to drive the French from the Ohio River Valley. The mission was a failure, but Washington again displayed his bravery. Two horses were shot from under him, but he managed to help wounded soldiers to safety.

Afterwards he realized how close he had come to death when he discovered two bullet holes in his jacket. By age 27 he had become known as the most experienced military man in Virginia. For this reason he was chosen as the Commander and Chief of the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War.

At the start of the war Washington found he unprepared for the challenge he faced. His experience included frontier warfare involving small numbers of soldiers. But Washington had to learn to maneuver large formations, handle cavalry and artillery and to maintain supply lines for thousands of soldiers. But Washington learned quickly and his leadership qualities were soon evident. During the war he managed to convince the military leaders to provide food, clothing and money to keep the soldiers fighting in the struggle for Independence from Great Britain. Realizing he was outnumbered and outgunned by the British Army, Washington developed a successful strategy of hit and run attacks in an effort to frustrate the British and wear them down. He let the British take major cities such as New York and Philadelphia and lured the British into the countryside and engaged them in smaller battles which he could win. One such battle was a surprise attack on the enemy at Trenton New Jersey on December 26, 1776. When he and the troops won the battle, they were overjoyed by their success. It boosted their morale and encouraged his troops to continue on to road to independence. Later on during the winter of 1777-1778, Washington managed to maintain the morale of his troops eventhough they were suffering from cold and hunger while camped at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. They had no supplies, little clothing and no food. Consequently, many soldiers died. Fortunately, when spring came so did supplies and food. But soon Washington acquired much needed help in General Frederich von Steubin from Germany. Von Steubin trained the troops to fight properly and with discipline. Once again the soldiers did not give up remained loyal to their leader George Washington. Perhaps the most important achievement during the war was that that early victories, such as the one at Trenton showed the French that the Continental Army could win. And by 1777 Washington convinced the French to join

the war as an ally. Eventually with the help of the French, the Continental Army forced the British to surrender at Yorktown, Virginia in 1781. Washington had won the war! We were now a new nation that could form a new government that would protect the rights of the people.

As a politician he was appointed as a representative for Virginia at the First and Second Continental Congress. After the war, George Washington was elected to two terms as president. Unfortunately other leaders in government at that time did not agree on many issues. As a result, it was difficult for him to solve the problems the government faced. His presidency however was marked by several achievements. The United States Constitution was written, the Indian War in the Northwest frontier was won, Britain surrendered its forts in the Northwest, and Spain opened the Northwest to commerce.