

George Washington: A Reluctant President

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Abstract

Using the non-fiction picture book *George Did It* as springboard, elementary grade children will conduct research about George Washington, our reluctant first president.

Essential Questions

- What events led up to George Washington becoming our first President?
- Why did George Washington not want to be President?
- Why did George Washington decide to accept the job as President?

Assessment

Setting the Purpose

This lesson should be set in the context of a study of the end of the Colonial period of American history and the founding of the United States of America. Before reading the non-fiction picture book *George Did It* by Suzanne Tripp Jurmain, construct a KWL chart with the students in the class to assess background knowledge about George Washington. The information gathered will be used to guide children in their research about our first President.

Lesson Plan Procedure

(Time will vary with types of projects chosen, depth of research conducted, and ability levels of students. Setting the purpose and reading *George Did It* should take ~45 minutes. Research and projects should take 2-4 additional 45 minute class periods.)

1. After reading *George Did It*, construct a new KWL chart based on knowledge gained by and the questions raised in discussing the book.
2. Have students or groups of choose one of the following projects (or a project of their own after approval by the teacher):
 - Construct a time-line of major events in George Washington's life-this can also be illustrated
 - Write a short story or play about Washington's decision to agree to become President.
 - Construct a pro/con list from Washington's perspective about why or why he should not be President.
 - Explore images of Washington and write about the symbols they contain and what those symbols say about Washington and our country.

Annotated List of Materials and Resources

George Did It by Suzanne Tripp Jurmain, illustrated by Larry Day. Published by Dutton Children's Books, 2006. This non-fiction picture book presents George Washington as a real human being who led our country heroically during the Revolutionary War and reluctantly took on the duties as the first President of the United States of America.

George Washington's False Teeth

Contrary to the popular myth, George Washington did not have false teeth made of wood. The fascinating web site ***Spy Letters of the American Revolution*** contains information about George Washington's teeth including a letter to a Dr Baker requesting utensils to clean his teeth. Navigate to these pages by clicking on the "People" image on the left side and clicking on "Washington" at the top of the People page, then clicking on "Washington to Dr. Baker, May 29, 1781."

<http://www.si.umich.edu/spies/index-lounge.html>

Images of Washington

<http://schools.portnet.k12.ny.us/~kids/FOV1-0000F457/>

The "Document Based Questions Resource Page" has several worksheets for analyzing a variety of resources.

Photo Analysis Rubric

http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php?screen=ShowRubric&rubric_id=1447586&

Lesson Variation and Extension Activities

Go to the website ***Voices from World War II: Experiences from the Front and at Home*** and listen to people, radio propaganda and more. There is also a text version for hearing impaired students. <http://library.umkc.edu/spec-col/ww2/main-txt.htm>

Introduce the topic by reading the picture book ***Coming on Home Soon*** by Jacqueline Woodson, illustrated by E.B. Lewis. In the story, Ada May goes to live with her Grandma, while her mother goes to Chicago to work in a factory during World War II.

If you have access to United Streaming <http://streaming.discoveryeducation.com/> go to **Video Yearbook Collection: 1944 segment "The War Activities Committee of the Motion Picture Industry Presents; Women and Victory"** (02:27).

This newsreel footage features women in the various service branches and how they further the war effort.