

**Lost Hero: Was John Hanson Our First President? –**  
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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



# The Continental Congress's To Do List

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**DIRECTIONS:** Give students a moment to glance at the list below to see how long it is. If desired, allow time for students to look at the whole list on their own. Then read for or with them just the items in bold as examples of the kinds of actions the Continental Congress needed to take to establish a new country, the United States.

**NOTE ABOUT THE TEXT:** Some difficult terms are underlined and then explained in the parentheses. Some spelling and punctuation have been standardized. Otherwise, the text stands as it is in the original.

## **Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789** **WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 22, 1781**

The Committee appointed to prepare an Exposition of the Confederation... farther report(s) that the Confederation requires execution in the following manner

- 1. By adjusting the mode and proportions (kind and amount) of... Militia (military) aid to be furnished to a sister State labouring under Invasion (attempting to defend itself in case of an attack).**
2. By describing the privileges and immunities to which the citizens of one State are entitled in another.
- 3. By setting forth the conditions upon which a criminal is to be delivered up by one State upon the demand of the executive of another.**
4. By declaring the method of exemplifying records and the operation of the Acts and judicial proceedings of the Courts of one State contravening those of the States in which they are asserted.
5. By a form to be observed in the notification of the appointment or suspension of Delegates.
6. By an oath to be taken by every Delegate against secret trusts of salaries.
7. By specifying the privileges of delegates from arrests, imprisonments, questioning for free speech and debates in Congress saving as well their amenability to their constituents, as protesting against the authority of individual legislatures to absolve them from obligations to secrecy.
- 8. By instituting an oath to be taken by the Officers of the U.S. or any of them against presents, emoluments, office or title of any kind from a King Prince or Foreign State.**
- 9. By one universal plan of equipping, training and governing the Militia.**
10. By a scheme for estimating the value of all land within each State granted to or surveyed for any person or persons together with the buildings and improvements thereon: and the appointment of certain periods at which payment shall be made.
11. By establishing rules for captures on land and the distribution of the sales.
12. By ascertaining the jurisdiction of Congress in territorial questions.
- 13. By erecting a mint (coin making site).**
- 14. By fixing a Standard of weights and measures throughout the U.S.**
- 15. By appointing a Committee for Indian affairs.**
- 16. By regulating the Post-Office.**

**17. By establishing a Census of white Inhabitants (for the purpose of figuring out how much in taxes each State has to contribute to the central government).**

18. By publishing the Journal of Congress monthly.

19. By registering seamen.

20. By liquidation of old accounts against the U. S: and

**21. By providing means of animadverting on (criticizing) delinquent States (states that haven't paid their taxes or sent the soldiers required).**

(And a second list)

1. To lay Embargoes in time of war without any limitation.

2. To prescribe rules for impressing property into the service of the S. during the present war.

**3. To appoint the Collectors of (tax collectors) and direct the mode of accounting for taxes imposed according to the requisitions (requests) of Congress.**

4. To recognize the Independence of and admit into the federal Union any part of one or more of the U.S., with the consent of the dismembered State.

**5. To stipulate in treaties with foreign nations for the establishment of consular power, without reference to the States individually.**

**6. To destrain (take possession of) the property of a State delinquent in (refusing) its assigned proportion of Men and Money.**

7. To vary the rules of suffrage in Congress, taking care that in questions for waging war (the following need especially to be taken care of in time of war)

(1) Granting letters of marque and reprisal in time of peace

(2) Concluding or giving instructions for any alliance

(3) Coining money

(4) Regulating the value of coin

(5) Determining the total number of land and sea forces and allotting to each State its quota of men or money.

(6) Emitting bills of credit. **Borrowing money.**

(7) Fixing the number and force of Vessels of War, and appointing a Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy. At least two thirds of the U.S. shall agree therein.

Resolved, That a Committee be appointed to prepare a representation to the several States of the necessity of these supplemental powers and of pursuing in the modification thereof, one uniform plan.

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# Documents for John Hanson's Term As President of the United States in Congress Assembled



**NOTE:** The documents with asterisks (\*) demonstrate defects in the Articles of Confederation. The documents with plus signs (+) represent accomplishments during Hanson's tenure.

## **Document #1: Hanson Re-Elected by His State While Serving as President**

**Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789**  
**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4, 1781**

Mr. [John] Hanson and Mr. D[aniel] Carroll, having been re-elected delegates to represent the state of Maryland, produced the credentials of their appointment, together with Mr. S[amuel] Chase and Mr. Turbutt Wright.

## **\* Document #2: Asking the States to Provide the Troops They Promised**

**Letters of Delegates to Congress: Volume 18, March 1, 1781 – August 31, 1781**  
**John Hanson to the States**

Sir, Circular. Philadelphia. 12th December 1781.

Although the present aspect of (outlook for) American Affairs is truly favorable and opens to our view the brightest prospects of a glorious peace and the... possession of the... rights we have nobly dared to contend (fight) for, yet (but) a relaxation in our exertions (efforts) will not only be disgraceful, but may prove dangerous and even fatal to our liberties. Congress... have thought proper, by their Act of the 10th instant, a copy of which I have the honor of enclosing, to call upon the Legislature of each State, in the most pressing manner, to complete the Quota (the sending) of troops assigned to them...

I have the honor to be, Sir, with great respect, Your Excellency's (the governor of each state) Obedient & very humble Servant,  
John Hanson President

## **\* Document #3: Urging the States to Send Required Money and Troops**

**Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789**  
**MONDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1781**

His excellency the President of Congress.

A letter to the **states** reported and agreed to, urging them to comply with the requisitions for men and money.

The committee, consisting of Mr. [Edmund] Randolph, Mr. --, reported the draft of a circular letter to the **states**, which was agreed, and is as follows:

Gentlemen,

We are happy to observe that the present year hath been distinguished by the reduction of a powerful British garrison in Virginia, and that our arms have also been prosperous in other parts of the United States. But to infer (assume) that our inexorable (persistent) foe is subdued beyond recovery, may be attended with ruinous consequences...

From an assurance that peace is best attained by preparations for war... we have called upon you for eight millions of dollars...

We therefore trust in your attention... at this important crisis, of the glorious advantages lately obtained, by a full compliance with these requisitions of men and money which we have made to you, and the necessity of which hath been pointed out to us by the matuarest (most thoughtful) consideration on the present circumstances of these United **States**.

By order of Congress.  
John Hanson, **President**.

#### \* **Document #4: Trying to Stop Trade with England**

##### **Letters of Delegates to Congress: Volume 18, March 1, 1781 – August 31, 1781 (Letter from) John Hanson to the States**

Sir, Circular. Philadelphia, 24th June 1782. Your Excellency will receive enclosed herewith a copy of an Act of Congress of the 21st inst. recommending to the several **States** to adopt the most efficacious measures for suppressing all traffic (trade)... with the enemies of the United States.'

**NOTE FROM THE JOURNALS:** This recommendation to the **states** to suppress illicit commerce with the enemy was deemed necessary... to prevent the corruption of "the patriotism of their citizens" and the weakening "of the public credit." "Having renounced the hope of accomplishing their designs against the United **States** by force alone," Congress declared, the enemy was promoting an "illicit traffic" which if unchecked would provide a market for British merchandise, drain **specie** (cash) from the United States, render the payment of taxes "more difficult and burdensome," and discourage "honest and lawful commerce."

#### \* + **Document #5: Asking the States to Help Out With a Census**

##### **Letters of Delegates to Congress: Volume 18, March 1, 1781 – August 31, 1781 John Hanson to the States, 12th December 1781**

I have the honor likewise of transmitting (sending) to your Excellency a copy of an Act of Congress of the 11th instant, recommending (asking) the Legislature of each State to ascertain (count), as soon as practicable, (possible) their number of white Inhabitants...

I have the honor to be, Sir, with great respect, Your Excellency's (the governor of each state) Obedient & very humble Servant,  
John Hanson President

#### + **Document #6: Starting a Department of Foreign Affairs**

##### **Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789 FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1782**

Secretary to the United States of America, for the department of foreign affairs... may at all times attend upon Congress, and particularly when the President of Congress shall summon him to attend

Resolved, That a seat be assigned him in Congress, which he shall take on the order of the house... or in consequence of his request in writing directed to the President. That when he shall have taken his seat... He shall answer from his seat to such inquiries, respecting his department, as may be put from the chair, by order of Congress, and to questions stated in writing about matters of fact which lie within his knowledge, when put by the President at the request of a member, and not disapproved of by Congress.

#### \* **Document #7: Asking the States to Send Representatives to Congress**

##### **Letters of Delegates to Congress: Volume 18, March 1, 1781 – August 31, 1781 John Hanson to the States**

Sir, Circular. Philadelphia 28th May 1782. The necessity which occasioned the Act of Congress of the 27th instant (see the explanation of this Act of Congress below), a copy of which I have the honor of enclosing, is sincerely to be lamented (regretted), and I could wish had been avoided,

I have the honor to be... John Hanson

Explanation of the Act of Congress:



On May 27, the Congress passed a resolution calling on the states “to keep up a constant representation,” and urging the unrepresented states to send delegates to Congress immediately “inasmuch as business of the greatest consequence is often delayed... for want (the absence) of... sufficient representation,” Two days before, only seven states were represented in Congress. The states without delegates were New Hampshire, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, and North Carolina.

### + Document #8: Communicating with Other Heads of State

#### **The Revolutionary Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States, Volume 5 Hanson, President of Congress, to the King of France**

November 29, 1781

The United **States** in Congress assembled to their great, faithful, and beloved friend and ally, Louis the Sixteenth, King of France...

Great, Faithful, and Beloved Friend and Ally: At a period so glorious to the arms of France both by sea and land, and so favorable to the fortunes of America, it is with particular satisfaction that we congratulate the monarch whose wise counsels and generous support have so largely contributed...

We wish to convey to your majesty our sense of the victory obtained by the Count de Grasse (who helped the United States defeat the British at the Battle of Yorktown) over the enemy’s fleet on our coast and the subsequent reduction of the British armaments (soldiers and weapons) in Virginia; and we repeat our grateful acknowledgments for the various aids so seasonably extended to us.

...Major-General the Marquis de la Fayette has in this campaign so greatly added to the reputation he had before acquired... that...we have directed our minister... to present the marquis to your majesty.

We pray God, great, faithful, and beloved friend and ally, always to keep your majesty in his holy protection.

Done at Philadelphia the twenty, ninth day of November, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-one, and in the sixth year of our Independence, by the United States in Congress assembled, your faithful friends and allies.

John Hanson, President.  
Charles Thomson, Secretary.

### **Document #9: Granting Authority for Someone to Negotiate with a Head of State**

#### **Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789 SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 1782**

COMMISSION TO THE HONOURABLE B. FRANKLIN, ESQUIRE, FOR NEGOTIATING A TREATY OF AMITY (friendship) AND COMMERCE (business) WITH THE KING OF SWEDEN.

The United States in Congress assembled--To all who shall see these presents, send greeting.

It having been represented (reported) to Congress... that the king of Sweden has signified by his ambassador at that Court to our said minister his desire to enter into a treaty with the United States in Congress assembled;

...we... do nominate, constitute and appoint... Benjamin Franklin, our minister giving him full powers... to confer, treat, agree and conclude with the person or persons vested with equal powers (assigned to negotiate) by the said king... a treaty of amity and commerce between the United States in Congress assembled, and the king of Sweden; and whatever shall be so agreed and concluded for us and in our name to sign and thereupon to make such treaty, conventions and agreements as he shall judge conformable

In witness whereof we have caused these to be sealed with our seal.

In testimony whereof, we have caused the seal of the United States of America to be affixed to these presents. Witness His Excellency John Hanson, Esq. President of the United States in Congress assembled, the twenty-eighth day of September, in the year of our Lord, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-two, and of our sovereignty and Independence the seventh.

## + Document #10: Thanksgiving Proclamation

### ...the United States in Congress assembled.

...Do hereby recommend to the inhabitants of these States in general, to observe... **THURSDAY** the twenty-eighth day of **NOVEMBER** next, as a day of solemn **THANKSGIVING**...

*Done in Congress, at Philadelphia, the eleventh day of October, in the year of our **LORD** one thousand seven hundred and eighty-two, and of our Sovereignty and Independence, the seventh.*

**JOHN HANSON, President.**

**Charles Thomson, Secretary.**

## + Document #11: Giving Someone Authority to Negotiate a Treaty with a Foreign Power

### Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789

#### MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 1782

Resolved, That the following commission be executed and transmitted to his Excellency General Washington:

THE UNITED STATES IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED.

To all people who shall see these presents, send greeting.

Now therefore know ye, that... our trusty and well beloved George Washington, esq. our Commander in Chief of all our armies... we have authorized (given the power)... in our name, to negotiate such general cartel (an agreement) between the United States in Congress assembled, and the king of Great Britain, for the exchange... and better treatment of all prisoners of war...; hereby giving and granting to our said Commander in Chief full power and authority... to adjust and conclude the principles, terms and conditions of the said cartel, and in general to do and perform every matter and thing which shall in any wise (way) be necessary for the final and perfect accomplishment thereof.

...And we do hereby declare that the engagements (agreements) concluded upon by our said Commander in Chief in the premises, being mutually interchanged with the party contracting on behalf of the crown and nation of Great Britain, shall be binding... on (absolutely required of) the United States of America.

In testimony whereof we have caused... the great seal of the United States of America to be thereunto affixed. Witness his Excellency John Hanson, President of the United States in Congress assembled, the 16th day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-two, and of our sovereignty and independence the seventh.

## + Document #12: The United States Borrows Money from Holland

### Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789

#### TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 1782

To the honorable Benjamin Franklin, Minister... from the United States of America, to his Most Christian Majesty (The King of Sweden),:

Whereas the minister of his Most Christian Majesty hath informed the United States in Congress assembled, that the loan of ten millions... opened in Holland on account of these United States (in a bank account in the name of the United States), was in a great measure completed in October last... You are therefore hereby authorized (given the power)... to enter into such engagements (agreements) with his Most Christian Majesty with the States General of the United Provinces (Holland), with any particular state or province, or with any man or body of men whatsoever, with whom you may find it necessary to enter into engagements, for the purpose of binding these United States to discharge (pay back) the said loan...

Done at Philadelphia, the fifth day of February, in the year of our Lord, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-two, and in the sixth year of our independence.

By the United States in Congress assembled.

JOHN HANSON, President.



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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



# Comparing Washington and Hanson

	John Hanson	George Washington
Birth Date		
Birthplace (Town, Colony)		
Home Place		
Profession		
Home Life/Family		
Office(s) Held Other Than President		
Accomplishments Before Becoming President		
Accomplishments of the Government While in Office		