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# History in the Making

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## Grades 7 and 8



### OBJECTIVES

Students will make associations between a historical period, the office of the President of the United States, and foreign policy. Students will complete a diagram that illustrates this connection. Students will write an essay as homework and present a skit in teams to the class.



### CLASS TIME

Five 45- to 60-minute sessions



### NATIONAL STANDARDS

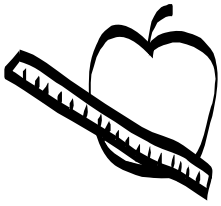
This lesson plan reflects some of the national standards of learning as defined by the National Standards for Civics and Government, the National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE), and the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE).

- National Standards for Civics and Government
- Social Studies: Foundations of the American Political System
- Social Studies: Principles of American Democracy
- Social Studies: Relationship of the United States to Other Nations and to World Affairs
- Language Arts: Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts.
- Language Arts: Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.
- Language Arts: Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
- Technology: Research tools — Students use technology to locate, evaluate, and collect information from a variety of sources.
- Technology: Communication tools — Students use a variety of media and formats to communicate information and ideas effectively to multiple audiences.



### MATERIALS

- Reference resources (including textbooks, library materials, and bookmarked Internet sites)
- Copies of the worksheets attached to this lesson plan
- 1 overhead projector



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- Age-appropriate texts (including student textbooks) that provide basic historical information about the nation’s presidents. For example:
  - *Our Country’s Presidents* by Ann Bausum
  - *The Look-It-Up Book of Presidents* by Wyatt Blassingame
  - *Scholastic Encyclopedia of the Presidents and Their Times* by David Rubel
- Computers with Internet access
- Chart paper
- Markers



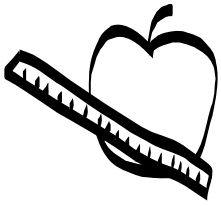
## PREPARATIONS

- Make copies of the following:
  - “History in the Making—Diagram” (1 per student)
  - “Project Rubric” (1 per student)
- Make overhead transparencies of each of the following:
  - The obverse of the Washington presidential \$1 coin from the Presidential \$1 Coin Lesson Plan Resource Center at [www.usmint.gov/kids/pres\\$1coin/LP/resources](http://www.usmint.gov/kids/pres$1coin/LP/resources).
  - Any other presidential \$1 coin obverses
  - “Excerpts—George Washington’s Farewell Address” worksheet
  - “History in the Making—Diagram”
  - “Project Rubric”
- Locate age-appropriate texts (including the student textbooks) that provide basic historical information about the nation’s presidents (see examples under “Materials”).
- Choose presidents to study based on a historical period, according to current curricular goals.
- Arrange to use the school computer lab for one session.
- Bookmark Internet sites that contain biographical information about the selected presidents.
- Determine the criteria for the essay, such as length, format, and whether it is to be hand written or typed.



## GROUPINGS

- Whole group or small groups
- Pairs
- Independent work



# History in the Making



## TERMS AND CONCEPTS

- Obverse (front)
- Precedents
- Duties of the President of the United States
- Executive Branch
- Foreign policy



## BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Students should have a basic knowledge of:

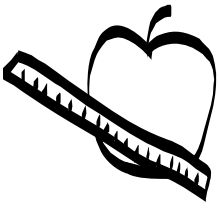
- President of the United States
- Constitution
- Diplomat
- Government
- Federal
- Alliances



## STEPS

### Session 1

1. Ask the students on what kind of American money George Washington's image has appeared. Student responses should include the dollar bill and the quarter. Display an overhead transparency of the Washington presidential \$1 coin obverse.
2. Tell the students that the very first dollar coin from the Presidential \$1 Coin Program depicts George Washington because he was the first President of the United States. Tell the students that the Presidential \$1 Coin Program began in 2007 to commemorate each of our nation's presidents. The program calls for four new dollar coin designs to be released per year in the order the presidents served the country. Point out to the students that each obverse in the series depicts a different president and shows the years the president served in office and the number of that presidency.
3. Have the students, in pairs, discuss and record on notebook paper what they know about George Washington.
4. As a whole class, share the students' responses and record them on a class chart. Student responses should place President Washington in our history as Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army, first President of the United States, our nation's founding father, and a framer of the Constitution. Guide the students to understand that Washington communicated that he had beliefs and aspirations about our growing nation, both domestically and internationally. As president, he represented the people and was bound to act in accordance with the Constitution.



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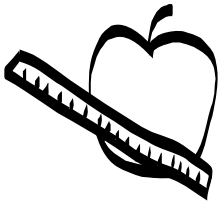
5. Explain to the students that, as the first President of the United States, George Washington faced many challenges and had to make many choices for our young nation. He was the first to decide how to do certain things (set precedents), including how the nation should interact with other nations (foreign policy).
6. Ask the students to define foreign policy (guidelines for how a country handles political and economic interactions with other countries). Record the definition on a chart or the chalkboard.
7. Tell the students that George Washington wrote a very powerful farewell address when he concluded his final term as president. Display the overhead transparency of “Excerpts—George Washington’s Farewell Address” and read it aloud to the students.
8. Have the student pairs discuss and brainstorm about the foreign policy they can identify in George Washington’s Farewell Address. Have them record their thoughts on notebook paper and identify the aspects of the quotes that support their findings.
9. Have the students share their responses with the whole class.

**Note:** Refer to “History in the Making—Washington Diagram Key” as you prepare for the next sessions. At the end of Session 1, add the most important points from the class discussion to the “History in the Making—Diagram” overhead transparency. The transparency should now include the findings about the first president and the foreign policy of the time (first two columns). In Session 2, you will complete the “Historical Snapshot of the Time” column (third column).

## Session 2

1. Display the “History in the Making—Diagram” overhead transparency completed before this session. Explain the importance of placing the office of the president and policy in a historical background. For example, ask students what was happening in our young nation that might have inspired George Washington to arrive at his particular foreign policy. If necessary, suggest that the nation’s recent involvement in a war for independence may have affected Washington’s choice of foreign policy.
2. Give each student a copy of the “History in the Making—Diagram.” Have the student pairs read their textbooks and record their findings about President Washington, his foreign policy, and the historical time. Instruct the students to make additions to their diagrams. Tell the students that they will be referring to these diagrams when they write an essay, and that the diagrams will be handed in with the essay.
3. As a class, review the overhead transparency of the diagram, which you began to fill in using George Washington’s presidency as a model.

**Note:** After Session 2, add the most important points from the class discussion and from the



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diagram key to the diagram overhead transparency. Your transparency should now include the findings about the first president, the foreign policy of the time, and the historical snapshot of the time.

## Session 3

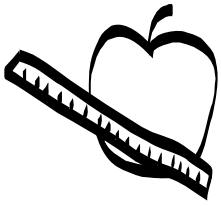
1. Display the overhead transparency of the quotes from Washington’s Farewell Address. Review the definition of “foreign policy” in connection with this address. Ask the students what foreign policy has to do with the duties of the president and how those duties are assigned to the president.
2. Have the student pairs read about the duties of the Executive Branch either in their textbooks or in a copy of the Constitution and summarize key phrases.
3. As a class, share observations about these key phrases and record them on a class chart.
4. Assign or have the students select a president to research. (Current curricular goals can form the basis of your selection of the time period.) Ask the students to keep George Washington in mind when selecting a president and his foreign policy. Remind the students that each president is symbolic of and representative of our nation and its particular time and place in history.
5. Display the completed “History in the Making—Diagram” from Session 2 that the class developed.

## Session 4

1. Tell the students that they will use various resources, including textbooks, library materials, and bookmarked Internet sites, to write an essay that shows they understand the relationship between the president, foreign policy, and a time period in history.
2. Distribute the “Project Rubric” to each student. As a class, review the rubric so the students have a clear understanding of the expectations for their essay.
3. Take the students to the computer lab. Allow sufficient time for the students to gather information and begin writing their essay.
4. As a homework assignment, have the students write the final essay on their selected or assigned president using the information on their diagram.

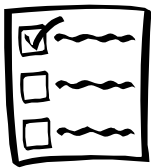
## Session 5

1. Collect the students’ essays and their “History in the Making—Diagram” worksheets.
2. Have the students meet with other students who wrote about the same time period. Tell the students they will have 3 to 5 minutes to create a skit to present information about the time period to the class. For presentation ideas, suggest scenarios such as a press conference, a Cabinet meeting, or a public assembly.



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3. As a class, review the “Project Rubric.”
4. Allow sufficient time for the students to prepare and present their presentations to the class.



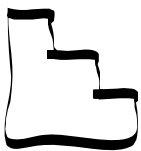
## ASSESSMENT

- Use the essay and the “History in the Making—Diagram” completed by each student to evaluate whether the student has met the lesson objectives.
- Use the rubric to evaluate the essay and the skit.



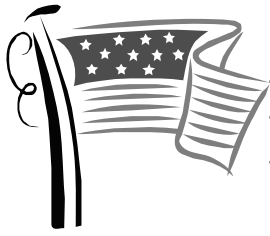
## ENRICHMENT/EXTENSIONS

- Have students consider what the Statue of Liberty on the back of the presidential \$1 coin symbolizes.
- Have students research and present their findings about the symbolism on the quarter and on the one-dollar bill.
- Have students write a research paper about the interaction between the president, his foreign policy, and his time in history.
- Have students read about other dollar coins—Eisenhower, Susan B. Anthony, and Sacagawea on the Golden Dollar—at [www.usmint.gov/kids/index.cfm?FileContents=/kids/coinnews/circulatingCoins/dollarCoin.cfm](http://www.usmint.gov/kids/index.cfm?FileContents=/kids/coinnews/circulatingCoins/dollarCoin.cfm).
- Allow students to play the “Branches of Power” game in the Games section of [www.usmint.gov/kids](http://www.usmint.gov/kids).



## DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING OPTIONS

- Have students work in pairs to research a chosen time period.
- Have students use texts at various reading levels for their research materials.
- Give the students extended time for gathering information and draft writing in Session 4.
- Allow students to hand-write their essay or use a scribe rather than use the computer.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Excerpts

### George Washington's Farewell Address

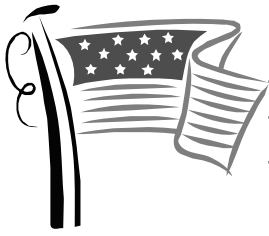
These quotes are from George Washington's Farewell Address, 1796, at [usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/facts/democrac/49.htm](http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/facts/democrac/49.htm)

"The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements, let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith."

"It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world, so far, I mean, as we are now at liberty to do it, for let me not be understood as capable of patronizing infidelity to existing engagements."

"Taking care always to keep ourselves by suitable establishments on a respectable defensive posture, we may safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies."

"In the execution of such a plan nothing is more essential than that permanent, inveterate antipathies against particular nations and passionate attachments for others should be excluded, and that in place of them, just and amicable feelings toward all should be cultivated."



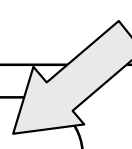
Name \_\_\_\_\_

# History in the Making Diagram

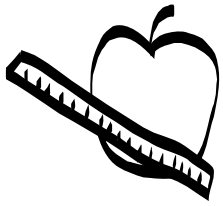
PRESIDENT

FOREIGN POLICY OF THE TIME

HISTORICAL SNAPSHOT  
OF THE TIME







Name \_\_\_\_\_

# History in the Making

## Washington Diagram Key

### PRESIDENT

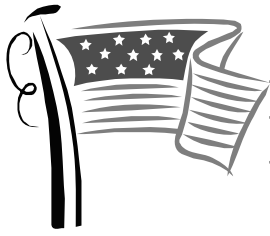
Name: George Washington  
Born: February 22, 1732  
Died: December 14, 1799  
Population when term began:  
3,929,214  
Defended the Constitution  
Upheld policy-making powers  
of the Constitution

### FOREIGN POLICY OF THE TIME

"...as little political connection  
as possible with foreign  
nations..."  
"...to steer clear of permanent  
alliances with any foreign  
world..."  
"...establishments on a re-  
spectable defense  
posture..."

### HISTORICAL SNAPSHOT OF THE TIME

USA a growing/vulnerable young  
nation  
USA newly won war for  
independence  
USA depleted resources and  
money  
French Revolution  
Major war between France and  
England in progress



Name \_\_\_\_\_

# History in the Making Project Rubric

## ESSAY

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1	SCORE
<b>Form</b>	Well organized, thorough facts, in paragraph form	Organized, factual, written in paragraph form	Somewhat disorganized, but facts written in paragraph form	Disorganized, lacking facts, written as one long paragraph	
<b>Focus</b>	Clear main idea; each paragraph logical, with a topic sentence and supporting details	Main idea; most paragraphs logical, with a topic sentence and supporting details	Main idea; some paragraphs logical, with a topic sentence and supporting details	No main idea, few supporting details, little logical organization	
<b>Editorial</b>	No errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar	Few errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar	Some errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar	Many errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar	

## ORAL PRESENTATION (SKIT)

<b>Under- standing</b>	Reflects good understanding of knowledge gained through research	Reflects some understanding of knowledge gained through research	Reflects minimal understanding of the knowledge gained through research	Reflects a lack of understanding of knowledge gained through research	
<b>Informa- tiveness</b>	Clearly conveys knowledge about the topic	Adequately conveys knowledge about the topic	Somewhat conveys knowledge about the topic	Conveys little knowledge about the topic	
<b>Detail</b>	Good clarity and variety of details	Some clarity and variety of details	Limited clarity and details	Lacks clarity and details	
<b>Focus</b>	Consistently stays on topic and shows interest in the topic	Mostly stays on topic and shows interest in the topic	Barely stays on topic or shows interest in the topic	Wanders from the topic and shows no interest in the topic	
<b>Voice</b>	Loud, clear with no words mispronounced	Loud, clear with good pronunciation	Audible with adequate pronunciation	Words often inaudible or mispronounced	
<b>Presenta- tion</b>	Sentences complete; always looks at audience	Sentences complete; often looks at audience	Sentences incomplete; sometimes looks at audience	Sentences incomplete and seldom looks at audience	

**Total**

## COMMENTS