

## George Washington: The President

Go To: <http://memory.loc.gov/learn/lessons/gw/reluct.html>

Read and record major precedent set by Washington.

Read and discuss Washington's views on each topic as revealed in his correspondence.

### *Federal Union*

- Read:
1. [George Washington to Congress, April 30, 1789, First Inaugural Address](#)
  2. [George Washington to David Humphreys, July 20, 1791](#)

Consider such questions as:

3. According to Washington, why is the United States unique among nations of the world?
4. How does government best serve the interests of the people?
5. What are the feelings of Southerners toward the national government? According to Washington, what factors are responsible for these attitudes?
6. What concerns does Washington express regarding future adherence to the excise tax on whiskey?

### *Political Factions*

- Read:
7. [George Washington to Alexander Hamilton, August 26, 1792](#)
  8. [George Washington to Thomas Jefferson, July 6, 1796](#)  
(Secretary of Treasury)

Consider such questions as:

9. According to Washington, should differences of opinion be put aside in the interest of unity?
10. How do political factors obstruct the functions of government?
11. Why does Washington feel that the nation will be torn asunder by political factions?

### *Whiskey Rebellion*

- Read: 12. [George Washington to Alexander Hamilton, September 7, 1792](#)  
13. [George Washington to Daniel Morgan, October 8, 1794](#)  
14. [George Washington to Henry Lee, August 26, 1794](#)
- For additional evidence explore: 15. [George Washington to Congress, November 19, 1794, Address](#)  
16. [Search](#) on *insurrection* for references to documents dated 1794.

Consider such questions as:

17. Why does Washington believe it is important for the government to act?
18. According to Washington, what are the consequences of taking no action?
19. In Washington's view, once a law is passed by the Congress what is the responsibility of citizens?

#### *Permanent Alliances*

- Read: 20. [George Washington to Thomas Jefferson, April 12, 1793, photostat \(Secretary of State\)](#)  
21. [George Washington, April 22, 1793, Neutrality](#)  
NOTE: [*Neutrality Proclamation is not transcribed*]  
22. [George Washington to Lafayette, December 25, 1798](#)

Consider such questions as:

23. Why is Washington concerned over the outbreak of war in Europe?
24. Why did Washington feel neutrality was the wisest course of action?
25. According to Washington, was the Proclamation of Neutrality a violation of the Franco-American alliance?
26. Why would Washington advise the nation to "steer clear of permanent alliances?" In your opinion, was this good advice in the 1790s? Would you consider it a wise policy in today's world? Explain.