

## 20. “The Home of the President: Washington, D.C.”

by Core Knowledge Staff

The American flag is the symbol of our nation, the United States of America. It has red and white stripes and fifty stars. Each star is a symbol for one of the states in the United States of America. There is one very important city in the United States that is not in any of the fifty states. In fact, it is the nation’s capital. It’s the city where most of the decisions that affect the country are made: Washington, D.C.

Men from each of the original colonies helped write the Constitution, a plan for how the new country should be run. We call these men the “Founding Fathers.” The Founding Fathers wanted a leader who would listen to what the people wanted and work hard to get them what they needed. They decided the president would have to be elected by the people.

When the Founding Fathers started to think about where the president would live, they started to worry. If the president lived in the state he was from, it would make that state feel more important than all the others. The Founding Fathers were afraid that one of the states would try to take over and be in charge of the others. They decided to write into the Constitution that a special city should be built, no bigger than ten miles wide, which would serve as the nation’s capital. This capital city would not be in any state, so no state could say that it was in charge of the country. This city was to be called Washington, in honor of George Washington, our first president. Eventually, Washington grew into the area we now call the District of Columbia, or Washington, D.C.

If you visit Washington, D.C., today, you can see the White House, the house where the president lives. The president moves into this house when he or she becomes president, and then moves out when the next president is elected. But not just presidents live in the White House. Their families, and even their pets, come with them to live in the White House.

The president doesn't just live in the White House; he or she works there, too. The part of the White House where the president works is called the West Wing. The president's office has a special name, too: the Oval Office. Sometimes the president signs laws or gives speeches from the Oval Office.

**Word Count: 402**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

QUESTIONS

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## Comprehension Questions

### “The Home of the President: Washington, D.C.”

*Assess each student’s comprehension of the selection by asking him or her to respond orally to the following questions one on one with you:*

1. ***Inferential*** Why did the Founding Fathers create the city of Washington, D.C.?
  - » because they wanted a place for the president to live that was not in any state so no state could say it was in charge of the whole country
2. ***Literal*** What important house located in Washington, D.C., does the president live in?
  - » the White House
3. ***Literal*** In what part of the White House does the president work?
  - » the West Wing