

Teaching Guide

SEGMENT 6, WEBISODE 2

Please note: Each segment in this Webisode has its own Teaching Guide



Segment Overview



Let's Discuss

On April 30, 1789, just twenty-four days after his election, George Washington took the oath of office on the balcony of the Senate Chamber at Federal Hall on Wall Street in New York City. The Chancellor of New York Robert R. Livingston administered the oath. Washington placed his hand on the Bible that belonged to St. John's Masonic Lodge, opened to this verse in Deuteronomy: "Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the Lord your God will set you high above all nations of the earth." Only the joint session of Congress gathered in the Senate Chamber heard his inaugural address. As Washington began his presidency, some feared that he would turn the office into a kingship, for he surrounded the office with regal trappings and formal ceremony, but this fear proved groundless.

Teacher Directions

1. Ask the students the following questions.
 - Have you ever watched a presidential inauguration, perhaps on television?
 - What happens at an inauguration?
 - What is special about this event?
2. Students discuss what they know about presidential inaugurations. Make sure they understand that the purpose of the ceremony, no matter how elaborate the trimmings, is for the president to take the oath of office as written in the Constitution.
3. Share the information in the Overview with the students.
4. Ask the students to compare Washington's inauguration to what they have observed in a modern inauguration. What has changed? What has stayed the same? (the oath).



History Sleuth

Teacher Directions

Activity One

1. Distribute the Student Sheet: *And the Winner Is! Presidential Election Results 1789-1808*
2. Ask the students to study the election results for the first six presidential elections in our nation's history to answer the following questions.
 - Who won in the first presidential election? (George Washington)
 - Who became Vice President? (John Adams)
 - Look at the election results for 1789, 1792, and 1796 to discover how the vice president was chosen. (The candidate with the second highest number of votes became vice president.)
 - What election year did this become a problem? Why? (In 1800, Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr received the same number of votes.)
3. Ask the students to speculate how this problem was solved.
4. Direct students to Article II Section 1 of the Constitution to discover how a tied election would be decided. (The House of Representatives votes for President, each state having one vote.) The text of the Constitution is available in *A History of US, Sourcebook and Index*, page 58, or in *From Colonies to Country*, page 194, or on the web site The Constitution of the United States @ <http://www.nara.gov/exhall/charters/constitution/constitution.html>.
5. Share the following information with the students.

In the 1800 election, the House of Representatives cast thirty-six ballots before it elected Thomas Jefferson. A big part of the problem came from the formation of political parties that had gained in strength and become bitter in their differences.

Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr were Democratic Republicans who believed that a strong centralized government would pose a threat to individual liberties and ordinary people had the intelligence to govern themselves. John Adams was a Federalist. His party believed that a strong central government dominated by a well-educated upper class should prevail. Jefferson won only after he convinced Federalists that his administration would be more moderate than Burr's if he were elected.

After the 1800 election, Congress passed Amendment XII to the Constitution, which changed the method by which the vice president is elected. The amendment, ratified in 1804, provided that the electors cast separate ballots for the office of president and the office of vice president.

6. Ask the students to share what they know about how a vice president is chosen in modern elections. (The presidential candidate chooses a running mate.) Ask the students to speculate how our government would work today if the loser in the presidential election automatically became the vice president.

History Sleuth, Cont.

Activity Two

1. Use the following questions to encourage students to discuss what they know about modern presidential elections.
 - How long does the process of electing a president take?
 - What is a presidential primary election?
 - What is a political convention?
 - What happens at a political convention?
 - What happens after the convention?
 - How long does a presidential campaign last?
 - Can you guess at the cost of the entire process?
2. If students have sparse knowledge, briefly share information about the primary election process, the political conventions, campaigns, and the cost of the entire process. (See the web site <http://www.fec.gov/press/preslimits2000.htm> for an idea of the spending limits on a presidential campaign set by the Federal Election Commission.)
3. Distribute the Student Sheet: *The First Presidential Election, 1789*. Use the information on the sheet to contrast the first presidential election with modern presidential elections.
4. Ask the students what they think of the difference.
 - What has caused the process to change so much?
 - What has improved?
 - What changes have occurred that are not improvements?
5. For information on modern elections, students with access to the Internet can visit the web sites History Central – US Presidential Elections at <http://www.mutied.com/elections/> and Presidential Election History @ <http://www.sddt.com/features/convention/elections>.

Teacher Directions

1. Read to the students or display on chart paper or transparency the following observation of Thomas Jefferson on George Washington as president.
2. Ask the students the following questions.
 - What concerned Jefferson?
 - What led him to those concerns?
 - Did his predictions come true?
 - Do you think that Jefferson had reason to be concerned?
 - Do you think the president should be king-like or act like a common man?
 - What dangers might pomp and ceremony pose?
 - Do modern presidents have any royal trappings?





Teacher Directions

1. Share with the students the following words, which George Washington wrote in a September 9, 1786, letter.

...I never mean (unless some peculiar circumstances should compel me to it) to possess another slave by purchase; it being among my first wishes to see some plan adopted by the Legislature by which slavery in this Country may be abolished by slow, sure & imperceptible degrees.

2. Ask the students to comment on Washington's words.
 - What peculiar circumstances might force Washington to purchase a slave?
 - Does he intend to give up his slaves?
 - Why does he want slavery abolished "by slow, sure & imperceptible degrees"?
 - Wouldn't abolishing slavery all at once be better? Why or why not?
 - Is he willing to make sacrifices to abolish slavery?
3. Direct the students to read Article I. Section 9. of the Constitution and ask the following questions.
 - To what does "The migration or importation of such persons" refer? (the slave trade) When did the Constitution state the slave trade would end? (1808)
4. Ask the students the following questions.
 - Why didn't the Constitution end the slave trade right away? (The southern states would never agree to this.)
 - Did slavery end in 1808? (The end of the slave trade did not end slavery for the Africans who were already enslaved or for their children.)
5. Share with students the understanding that the Constitution did not end slavery because it never would have been ratified if it had; it took the Civil War to accomplish that. Although many of the delegates from the south to the Constitutional Convention owned slaves, several of them, including George Washington, freed their slaves in their wills.





Connections

Teacher Directions

Use the following activities with your students.

Art — Students research the art of Charles Willson Peale and examples of his portraits. Students may also research the Peale family of artists.

Media — Students visit Mount Vernon, George Washington's home on the web sites Mount Vernon Mansion Tour @ <http://www.mountvernon.org/mtour> and Mount Vernon Grounds Tour @ <http://www.mountvernon.org/groundstour>.

Media — Students research presidential inaugurations of the past on these web sites:

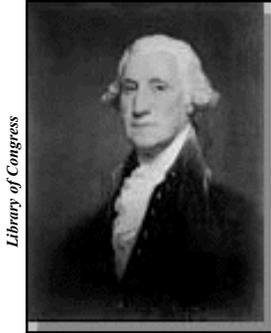
- Inaugurations in American Memory @ <http://lcweb2.loc.gov:8081/ammem/ndlpedu/features/inaug/inaug.html>
- American Memory: Library of Congress @ <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/pihtml/pihome.html>
- Inaugural History @ <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/inauguration/history.html>

Writing/Research — Students research the history of the laurel wreath and write a brief report.

Math — Students use the Student Sheet: *And the Winner Is! Presidential Election Results 1789-1808* to calculate the following: How many electoral votes were cast in each election? How many more votes were cast in the election of 1808 than in the election of 1789? What does this increase reflect?

Art — Students find portraits and statues of George Washington. How did artists portray him? Does he look more like a king than an ordinary citizen? Artists may include the following: Gilbert Stuart, Rembrandt Peale, Edward Savage, and Jean-Antoine Houdon. A good web site to see portraits of Washington is The American Revolution Home Page @ <http://www.dell.homestead.com/revwar/files/GWASH.HTM>.

And the Winner Is!
Presidential Election Results 1789 - 1808



Library of Congress

1789

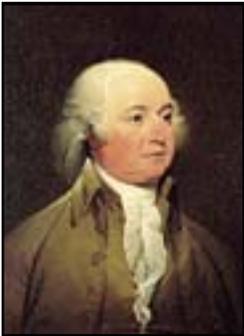
President: George Washington – 69 votes

Vice President: John Adams – 34 votes
John Jay – 9 votes
Others – 26 votes

1792

President: George Washington – 132 votes

Vice President: George Clinton – 50 votes
Others – 5 votes

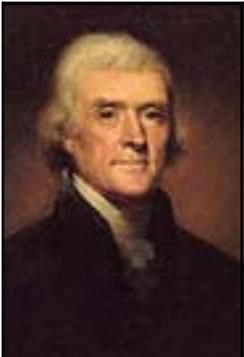


Library of Congress

1796

President: John Adams – 71 votes

Vice President: Thomas Jefferson – 68 votes
Thomas Pinckney – 59 votes
Others – 78 votes



Library of Congress

1800

President: Thomas Jefferson – 73 votes

Vice President: Aaron Burr – 73 votes
John Adams – 65 votes
Others – 65 votes

1804

President: Thomas Jefferson – 162 votes

Vice President: George Clinton
C. C. Pinckney – 14 votes



Library of Congress

1808

President: James Madison – 122 votes

Vice President: George Clinton – 6 votes
C. C. Pinckney – 47 votes

The First Presidential Election, 1789

On June 21, 1788, New Hampshire was the ninth state to ratify the Constitution, making it the law of the land. The Continental Congress passed the Election Ordinance the following September, calling for the states to select presidential electors on January 7, 1789 and setting February 4 as the date they would cast their ballots in their states.

Neither North Carolina nor Rhode Island had ratified the Constitution, and the New York legislature did not pass an election act in time to choose its electors. Two electors in Maryland and one in Virginia failed to cast ballots on February 4. Therefore, a total of sixty-nine electors voted in the first presidential election.

Each elector had two votes; he had to cast at least one for a person outside his home state. When Congress counted the votes in the presence of the senators and representatives, the person with the most votes would be president; the one finishing second highest number of votes would be vice president.

Here is how the voting turned out.

State	George Washington	John Adams	Others
New Hampshire	5	5	
Massachusetts	10	10	
Connecticut	7	5	2
New Jersey	6	1	5
Delaware	3		3
Pennsylvania	10	8	2
Maryland	6		6
Virginia	10	5	6
South Carolina	7		7
Georgia	5		5
Totals	69	34	35

On April 1, 1789, the House of Representatives confirmed the results; on April 6, the Senate confirmed the results. Vice President John Adams assumed his duties as president of the Senate on 21 April and George Washington was inaugurated as President of the United States on 30 April 1789.