

PROJECT TITLE: The Road Home	
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CLASSROOM PRACTICE

1. Teaching Thesis & Guiding Questions: This unit is designed to give students a glimpse into the more personal side of George Washington’s life. As teachers, we are often asked to teach the more celebrated facts of Washington’s life (i.e., he was a farmer, our first president, born in Virginia and nicknamed the Father of our Country), without giving due respect to the aspect of Washington’s life that he, himself, would have chosen to be remembered for; Mount Vernon. Even though Washington spent a great deal of time away from Mount Vernon in the later years of his life, we find in his letters and various documents that much of his thoughts were spent on securing his crops and animals, planting more trees, and transforming Mount Vernon from a cottage into a mansion. Why did a man, who so loved his home, chose to leave it?

2. Suggested Grade Level and Length of Activities

First Grade; 3-4, 45 minute lessons

3. Significance & Relevance:

As a part of Virginia standards, students are required to know four essential facts about George Washington: he was born in Virginia, he was a farmer, he was the first president, and he was nicknamed the Father of our Country). These lessons provide an overview of these roles, but focus on how each forced him to leave his home at Mount Vernon. Students will begin to understand the struggle that Washington faced when deciding to leave his home to improve a nation.

- **Selected State & National Standards –**

Virginia Standard of Learning: Social Studies 1.2

The student will describe the stories of American leaders and their contributions to our country, with emphasis on George Washington, ~~Benjamin Franklin, Abraham Lincoln, and George Washington Carver.~~ Essential knowledge includes that he was born in Virginia. He was a farmer. He became a brave leader of soldiers. He was the first President of the United States. He is known as the “Father of Our Country.”

Virginia Standard of Learning: Social Studies 1.4

The student will develop map skills by

- a) recognizing basic map symbols, including references to land, water, cities, and roads;
- b) using cardinal directions on maps;
- c) identifying the physical shape of the United States and Virginia on maps and globes;

- **OAH Historical Inquiry Skills –**

Chronological Thinking-students examine Washington’s roles throughout his lifetime and look at the transformation of Mount Vernon during his absence

Historical Analysis and Interpretation- students use various primary sources to document Washington’s travels to and away from Mount Vernon.

4. Lesson Objectives – Students will be able to

- distinguish between Washington’s public and private lives (lesson #1)
- illustrate how Washington’s various duties required that he leave his residence, Mount Vernon (lesson #1, #2, #3)
- define Washington’s roles as a surveyor, soldier, and president (lesson #1, #2, #3)
- describe Washington’s relationship with his home and his country (lesson #1, #2, #3)
- select and support their choice of roles during each phase of expansion at Mount Vernon (lesson #3)
- describe the role that Washington carried throughout his life; the role of gentleman farmer (lesson #3)

5. Annotated list of supplemental resources

www.mountvernon.org

<http://www.apples4theteacher.com/holidays/presidents-day/george-washington/timeline.html>

6. Lesson Plans or Instructional Activities –

Lesson #1- This lesson provides students with an opportunity to identify Washington’s various roles throughout his lifetime. Students will translate, into their own words, what the quote by Henry Lee says about Washington. Students will also examine George Washington’s home, Mount Vernon. Students will compare/contrast a painting and a photograph. Students will discuss the definition of duty.

Lesson #2- This lesson illustrates how the many roles that George Washington had required that he leave his home, Mount Vernon. Students will view primary sources and decide if these sources carried Washington away from his home, Mount Vernon.

Lesson #3- This lesson provides an opportunity for students to see how Mount Vernon evolved, even in George Washington’s absence. They will illustrate Mount Vernon with the various roles that Washington undertook and be able to develop an understanding of his life as a farmer and care taker of Mount Vernon.

10. Technology – This unit is designed around the use of a Smart Notebook application. Students are interactively engaged within the lessons by hands on exploration. Students will manipulate the text, pictures, etc. to find solutions/answers to proposed questions.

11. Modifications, Differentiation, and Extensions—Each lesson in this unit has specific modifications for either gifted learners or those students with special needs. See lessons for further ideas and extensions.

APPENDIX (FOLDER)

12. Related Materials & Resources –

- **Lesson plans—see individual folders for plans, Smart notebook file, worksheets and all primary sources. See file named (questions_discussions_slides#1-10.doc) for easy reference to questions on each slide.**
- **See file (timeline_GW.doc) for a reference of events in George Washington's life**