

Prompt 5.5 - Washington & Neutrality

Warm-up: What makes a good leader?

*George Washington was the first President of the United States. Many presidents who came after him followed most of the **precedents** (traditions) that Washington created because he was the first. However, Washington did have many critics who thought that he became too much of a Federalist.*

The Whiskey Rebellion

1. Describe what **caused** the Whiskey Rebellion and how Washington **responded**.

2. Describe in detail how both **Federalists** and **Republicans** felt about Washington's decision.



3. Do you **agree** with what Washington decided to do? Explain.

The Whiskey Rebellion

Farmers found it too costly to take their **surplus** (extra) wheat across the Appalachian Mountains to sell in New York. Instead, they distilled their bulky wheat into whiskey. **Whiskey**, an alcoholic beverage, could be shipped more cheaply and made these farmers a great deal of money.

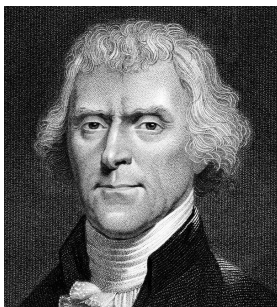
During this time, The United States government was experiencing problems with money. According to Alexander Hamilton, the solution was an **excise tax** on whiskey. This tax would make selling whiskey more expensive but would give the government much needed tax **revenue** (money). In 1791, Hamilton convinced Congress to pass the bill and Washington signed it into law.



Farmers were furious so they began to protest. In response, the government lowered the tax. However, the tax rebels of western Pennsylvania did not give up. These "Whiskey Boys" tarred and feathered tax collectors who tried to enforce the law. The city of Pittsburgh even had to bribe 7,000 of these rebels with barrels of whiskey to stop their attacks on the city.

Washington agreed with Hamilton and saw the Whiskey Rebellion as a threat to the country. At Hamilton's urging, Washington put on his old war uniform and marched 13,000 soldiers across the mountains to stop the rebels. This was the only time a sitting president led soldiers into battle.

At first, the rebels ignored Washington's call for peace. However, when they saw his 13,000 militia, they did not show up to the battlefield. Instead, his militia arrested and jailed 150 suspected rebels. At the end of the day only 2 people were actually convicted of treason against the United States and Washington **pardoned** both of them.



Jefferson was furious. He thought that the idea of sending soldiers to catch a few tax rebels was an act of a tyrant. Even worse, he believed that Hamilton and Washington were prepared to violate people's liberties by using an armed force to put down what he considered to be peaceful protests. Hamilton agreed with Washington's actions. He felt that a strong message was needed that rebellions would not be tolerated in a democracy.

The French Revolution

1. Describe what **happened** during the French Revolution and how Washington **responded**.

2. Describe in detail how both **Federalists** and **Republicans** felt about Washington's decision.





3. **Should** Washington have helped the French overthrow their King? Explain.

The French Revolution

In 1789, the French people rebelled against their king. The leaders of the French Revolution dreamed of building a nation based on the Enlightenment ideas of "Liberty" and "Equality," which they had witnessed during the American Revolution. However, the French Revolution was also fueled by poor angry citizens, who felt that the rich had taken all of the country's wealth and food.



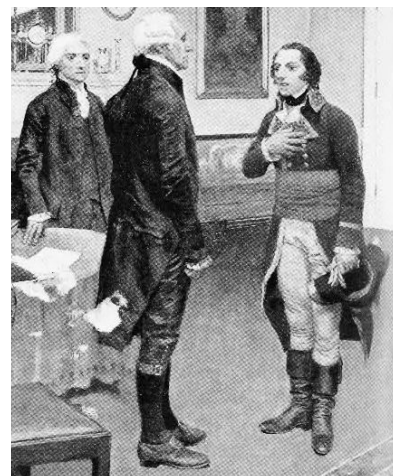
Many Americans were thrilled by the French Revolution. This was especially true of Thomas Jefferson and his followers, who called themselves **Democratic-Republicans**. The Republicans saw the French Revolution as part of a great crusade for democracy. They began to urge Washington to send soldiers and supplies to the people of France to help overthrow their King. After all, they helped the United States with Great Britain.



Over time, however, The French Revolution became increasingly violent. Cheered on by angry mobs, the French began lopping off the heads of many wealthy nobles. Some 20,000 men, women, and even children were killed simply because they were wealthy. This became one of the bloodiest revolutions in world history.

Hamilton and his followers, who called themselves **Federalists**, were appalled by the bloodshed. Many Federalists were themselves wealthy. They began to wonder whether such terrors could happen in the United States. "Behold France," warned one Federalist, "an open hell...perhaps our own future."

George Washington worried that The United States had many problems of its own. The country was still in debt and did not have a powerful military. He also worried that if he helped the French people overthrow their King, then other Kings around the world could respond by attacking The United States. Washington decided it would be best if he stayed **neutral**, or did not get involved with the French Revolution.



The Jay Treaty

1. **Why** was the Jay Treaty created, **what** was it, and what happened **afterwards**?

2. Create a **quote** for how the Republicans (**Jefferson**) and Federalists (**Hamilton**) felt about this.



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Empty speech bubble for Hamilton's quote.



3. Do you agree with Washington's decision? Explain.

The Jay Treaty

After the French Revolution, France became a republic. However, it was not done fighting. The French Republic declared "a war against all kings." France was now planning to go to war against all of Europe to spread democracy and it wanted The United States to help fight Britain.



During The American Revolution, The United States had signed a **Treaty of Alliance** with France. In the agreement, it had promised to help France in time of war. Many **Republicans** were eager to honor that pledge. Furthermore, they were upset with Britain for **impressing** american sailors and for keeping soldiers in America. **Federalists** disagreed. They thought that the country was too weak and in debt to go to war. Additionally, businesses in cities depended on trade with Britain. Washington faced a difficult decision, either help France and risk war with Britain or break the treaty and upset France.



In 1793, the new French government sent Edmond "Citizen" Genet to the United States to convince Washington to help France with its war. Citizen Genet was welcomed by Republicans as a hero. As he traveled about the country, preaching against kings and the rich, he was cheered on by large crowds. When he presented himself to Washington, however, he sent Genet away and decided to declare **neutrality**, breaking the Treaty of Alliance.

Afterwards, Washington sent John Jay to Britain to create a new treaty with Britain instead. In the **Jay Treaty**, the British agreed to make trading cheaper, remove their soldiers, and stop impressing American sailors. In exchange, the United States promised to pay back debt leftover from the American Revolution and not help France with its war.

French officials viewed the Jay Treaty as a betrayal. Their navy began attacking Americans while Citizen Genet led Republican protests in the streets against Washington. To make matters worse, the British never stopped impressment. Republicans used this opportunity to criticize Washington. Republican newspapers called the Federalists "British bootlickers." In response, Federalist newspapers called Republicans "frog-eating, blood-drinking cannibals."



Then, a private letter from Thomas Jefferson was leaked to the press. In it, Jefferson called the Federalists an "Anglican, monarchical, aristocratic party" and he called Washington a British puppet. The two never spoke again and Washinton's wife, Martha, later called Jefferson "the most detestable of mankind" and Jefferson's election in 1800 "the greatest misfortune our country had ever experienced." Not only did the parties of Hamilton and Jefferson divide citizens, but also the founding fathers.