

Who is George Washington and why is he important?

Content	<p>This instructional task engages students in content related to the following grade-level expectations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> K.1.1 Order events that take place in a sequence using appropriate vocabulary K.1.2 Describe the function of tools used for representing time K.2.4 Recall facts about people of the past and present
Claims	<p>This instructional task asks students to identify an American leader from the past and to explain the significance of his contributions. It contains a set of authentic source documents. Students engage with the sources to build their understanding of the content to explain how society, the environment, the political and economic landscape, and historical events influence perspectives, values, traditions, and ideas by corroborating sources and evaluating evidence.</p>
Unit Connection	<p>This instructional task helps students explore and develop claims around the content from unit 5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who were some important people from history? Who was George Washington? (K.2.4) What are some significant events that happened during his lifetime? (K.1.1, K.1.2) How has George Washington influenced history? Why was he important? (K.2.4)

Supporting Question 1	Supporting Question 2	Supporting Question 3
What are some significant events from George Washington’s lifetime?	What kind of person was George Washington?	How has George Washington influenced history?
Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task
Students will describe and order some significant events that happened during George Washington’s life.	Students will identify characteristics of George Washington and answer questions about George and the cherry tree.	Students will explain why George Washington is important and why he has a monument named after him.
Featured Source	Featured Source	Featured Source
Source A: “The Life of George Washington,” Scholastic	Source B: Grade K Core Knowledge Listening and Learning Strand Read-Aloud Anthology: “A Dishonest Story About an Honest Man” (pages 24-30) ¹	Source C: Crossing of the Delaware, Emanuel Leutze Source D: “The Washington Monument,” Susan LaBella (ReadWorks)

Summative Performance Task	Students work individually to design a page for a class book about George Washington. Each student decides on one or more facts to include in the design of a page about George Washington, along with an illustration. Students orally present their pages to the class.
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Formative Performance Task 1

Supporting Question	What are some significant events from George Washington’s lifetime?
Formative Performance Task	Students will describe and order some significant events that happened during George Washington’s life.
Featured Source	Source A: “The Life of George Washington,” Scholastic
Content and Claims	In this formative performance task, students explore events that happened during George Washington’s lifetime. Students then place the events in chronological order. (K.1.1, K.1.2)

Featured Source

Source A: [“The Life of George Washington,”](#) Scholastic

Steps

- Access prior knowledge of George Washington through discussion. Possible guiding questions:
 - What is a *president*?
 - Who was the first president of our country?
 - What do you know about him?
 - When did he live?
- Show Source A: “The Life of George Washington.”
- Have students discuss the video. Ask the students to name facts about George Washington, cited in the video. Chart student responses on chart paper.
 - Suggested frames : “George Washington was . . .” and “George Washington did...”
- Engage students in a discussion. Possible guiding questions:
 - What is George’s nickname?
 - Why did he get this name?
 - Do you think the nickname is a good one? Why?
- Tell students they are going to watch the video a second time. As they watch, they are to “take notes” by drawing different pictures to remember the events of George Washington’s life. As needed, explain what an “event” is and provide some examples from students’ lives (e.g., “When we’re you born? That is an event—it is your birthday.”)
- Provide students with a note taking sheet or a blank piece of white paper and markers or colored pencils.
- Ask students to discuss events in George Washington’s life, referring to their “notes” during the discussion. Call on a student to share an event. Ask whether the other students have a similar event. Verify what happened in the event with the class.
- Create a written statement of the agreed-upon event along with a corresponding picture.
- Repeat this process until students have identified 4-5 events.
- Explain to students what a timeline is and its purpose. Include that it is a way to visually show how something happened over time.
- Discuss and explain sequence, and show examples of timelines, as needed.

12. Divide class into groups of 3-5 students. Provide each group with large pieces of butcher paper and crayons or markers. Have each group create a timeline of George Washington's life, using the events/pictures gathered as a class.

- The paper will be divided (folded) into three sections, and numbered 1, 2, and 3.
- The students are to illustrate events in the order in which they occurred.

Student Look-Fors

1. Students should be able to identify that George Washington was the first president of the United States.
2. Students should be able to tell that George Washington lived a long time ago.
3. The timeline should include at least three events with illustrations and labels and/or complete sentences. The events should be listed in order. A sample of a completed timeline is included below.

Soldier



George was 21 when he joined the army.

Leader



George was in charge of the army in the war with England.

Hero



America won the war. George was a hero.

President



George was the 1st president of the new country.

4. Students may present their timelines to the class.
5. Students' written responses should follow the English language arts standards for written expression at grade kindergarten.

Formative Performance Task 2

Supporting Question	What kind of person was George Washington?
Formative Performance Task	Students will identify characteristics of George Washington and answer questions about George and the cherry tree.
Featured Sources	Source B: Grade K Core Knowledge Listening and Learning Strand Read-Aloud Anthology: “A Dishonest Story About an Honest Man” (pages 24-30)
Content and Claims	This formative performance task requires students to identify characteristics of George Washington and answer questions about George and the cherry tree. (K.2.4)

Featured Source

Source B: Grade K Core Knowledge Listening and Learning Strand Read-Aloud Anthology: “A Dishonest Story About an Honest Man” (pages 24-30)

A Dishonest Story about an Honest Man

Almost everyone likes a good story. Some people especially like true stories that tell how real people did real things. Other people say, “I love made-up stories best. A person who tells this kind of story can decide to leave in only the most interesting parts and even make sure there will be a happy ending.”

However, there is a third kind of story that mixes together true and made-up stories. Today’s story is an example of this third type of story and is what we call a **legend**. It is called, “A Dishonest Story about an **Honest Man**.”

This story is about George Washington—a real person—who acts in the story in an honest way as he often acted in real life. The true part of the story is that George Washington was a real person, and he was very honest. The made-up part is that he cut down his father’s cherry tree.

Augustine Washington loved his farm by the river. He loved the rolling, green meadows in which he raised horses and other animals. He loved the woods. He loved the rich soil that allowed him to grow plants for food on the farm or to sell in town. He loved the fruit trees on his farm that gave him beautiful flowers in spring, delicious fruit through the summer and autumn, and graceful shapes to look at in winter.

Augustine especially loved his cherry trees. When his son George was about five years old, Augustine said, “George, I will teach you which sorts of cherry trees grow best here and how to take care of them so that they will grow tall and strong and give delicious fruit.”

So you can imagine how upset Augustine was to find one day that someone had chopped down one of his prize trees.

This particular day he was walking with his foreman, a man who worked for him and helped him run his farm. Augustine said, “This was no accident. Someone did it on purpose. Look how neat a job of cutting this was; no wild animal could have done that. Who would do such a thing?”

His foreman replied. “I just can’t imagine who would have the nerve to do it, sir, or the reason.”

Caught up in their conversation, the two men did not notice little George Washington approaching from the house. The boy silently listened to the two grown-ups. He looked at his father’s face and saw disappointment and anger.

George stepped forward, looking pale and worried. To the shock of his father and the foreman, George said quietly but firmly, “Father, I cannot tell a lie. I chopped down the tree with my little axe. I wanted to see if I could do it, but now I know it was a bad thing to do.”

Augustine Washington looked at his son. He could see from the expression on his face how badly George felt. Meanwhile, the foreman, surprised by the boy’s **confession**, turned back to look at Augustine Washington. He thought, “Mr. Washington sometimes has a very bad temper. Poor George! I hate to think what is about to happen to him.”

But to his surprise, he heard the father tell his son, “It was a bad thing to do, George, and you should be punished for doing it. However, I so **respect** you for coming forward and telling me the truth that, if you will promise not to do such a thing again, I shall not punish you.”

“I promise, Father,” said George, and he kept that promise.

So you see, even as a young boy, George Washington was honest and took responsibility for his actions.

Wouldn’t it be wonderful if all of us could be like that?

That is the famous legend of “George Washington and the Cherry Tree.” It’s important to remember that this story about George Washington and the cherry tree is a legend because it is partly true and partly made-up.

You might ask, “Was George Washington really an honest man?” Actually, he was! After he grew up and became president of the United States, one of the things for which he was most famous was his honesty.

What is even more interesting is the way in which people looked up to the real George Washington. Washington was not perfect. He made mistakes, as everyone does at times. A few times he made decisions with which his friends disagreed. When that happened, they usually said, “We would have chosen differently, but we know he made this choice for a good reason and not just to help himself.”

Even the king of Great Britain, King George III, admired Washington. After King George lost control of the colonies to the people there, who now thought of themselves as Americans, he expected Washington to make himself king of the new nation. Instead, Washington decided to give up control of the army he led and go home to Mount Vernon, his farm in northern Virginia. When King George heard George Washington’s plan, he said, “If he can do that, he is the greatest man in the world!”

George Washington is often described as “first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen.” There are many reasons for that: George Washington was the most important leader in winning the war that freed us from the control of Great Britain and the king. Washington was one of the most important people involved in setting up the new government and starting the new country in the right direction. He was also the most admired and trusted person in that new country.

Today, we still look up to George Washington. In fact, he is considered one of our greatest **national** heroes. His face is on the front of the one-dollar bill and on the front of the quarter. All across America there are cities, towns, and streets named after him, from Washington, D.C., to the state of Washington. More than two hundred years after he died, some people still ask, “What would Washington do?” when making important decisions. George Washington never chopped down that cherry tree, but he left us something that blossoms brightly in all seasons: the example of a brave and honest man.

Steps

1. Read aloud Source B: “A Dishonest Story About an Honest Man.”
2. After reading aloud the text once. Reread the text aloud and stop at regular intervals to assess the students’ understanding. Possible guiding questions:
 - What kind of story is the story of George Washington and the cherry tree?
 - Is a legend a completely true story, a completely made-up story, or a mix of both?
 - Why is the story of George Washington and the cherry tree considered a legend?
 - In this legend, who cut down the cherry tree?
 - In this legend, how do you think George Washington felt when he realized what he did was wrong?
 - In this legend, why do you think George’s father forgave him?
3. Assign students work in pairs to participate in a Think-Pair-Share activity following the steps below.

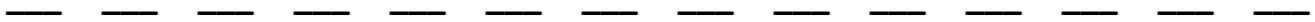
- Explain the activity to students: “I am going to ask a question. I will give you a minute to think about the question, and then I will ask you to turn to your neighbor and discuss the question. Finally, I will call on several of you to share what you discussed with your partner.”
 - Pose the discussion topic to students: “In real life, why do you think George Washington did not make himself king?”
 - Provide students with sentence frames to identify characteristics of George Washington. See below for an example handout.
4. Once each pair has completed their frames, have pairs share out their sentences with the class.

George Washington Sentence Frames

George Washington was _____.

George Washington was _____.

He was also _____.



George Washington Sentence Frames

George Washington was _____.

George Washington was _____.

He was also _____.

Student Look-Fors

1. Students responses to questions should reflect accurate information.
 - What kind of story is the story of George Washington and the cherry tree? (a legend)
 - Is a legend a completely true story, a completely made-up story, or a mix of both? (a story that mixes together truth and made-up events)
 - Why is the story of George Washington and the cherry tree considered a legend? (It is true that he was an honest person, but it is not true that he chopped down a cherry tree.)
 - In this legend, who cut down the cherry tree? (Augustine's son, George Washington)
 - In this legend, how do you think George Washington felt when he realized what he did was wrong? (He felt sorry; he was worried that he might be in trouble; he felt determined to tell the truth.)
 - In this legend, why do you think George's father forgave him? (He knew George felt guilty already and was truly sorry for what he had done; he respected George's honesty when he confessed what had really happened.)
 - In real life, why do you think George Washington did not make himself king? (He knew that he and others fought to free the people from a king, so making himself a king would be wrong.)
2. Students' responses should include, but not limited to
 - George Washington was born on a farm, He had a large family, and he played with his sisters and brothers. He liked to make maps. He studied.
 - George Washington joined the army and became their leader. He led them through a war.
 - George Washington was an honest person.
3. Students' written responses should follow the English language arts standards for written expression in kindergarten.

Formative Performance Task 3

Supporting Question	How has George Washington influenced history?
Formative Performance Task	Students will explain why George Washington is important and why he has a monument named after him.
Featured Source	Source C: Crossing of the Delaware , Emanuel Leutze Source D: “The Washington Monument,” Susan LaBella (ReadWorks)
Content and Claims	This formative performance task requires students to explain why George Washington is important, and how he has influenced history.

Featured Source

Source C: [Crossing of the Delaware](#), Emanuel Leutze

Source D: [“The Washington Monument,”](#) Susan LaBella (ReadWorks)

Steps

- Review information about George Washington gleaned from Formative Performance Tasks 1 and 2.
- Project Source C: *Crossing of the Delaware* and ask students to locate George Washington in the painting.
- Lead students in a discussion pertaining to the painting. Possible guiding questions:
 - What is happening in this painting?
 - Where are they?
 - What is the weather like?
 - Who is in charge of what is happening on this boat? How do you know?
 - How do you think George Washington feels? Why?
 - What is one word you would use to describe George Washington based on this painting?
- While students are discussing, record their thoughts on a white board or chart paper, particularly adjectives and facts which describe George Washington and his importance to our country (e.g., George Washington is a leader. He is not scared. He is a soldier. He fights for our country.)
- Once students have finished answering questions, explain to them what this painting depicts. Ask students if they want to add any additional information to their sentence frames.
- Read aloud Source D: “The Washington Monument” and project it so students can follow along. As you are reading, point to the words to support students in tracking as you are reading aloud. After reading the text, conduct a brief discussion to check for understanding. Possible guiding questions:
 - For whom is this building named?
 - Why would a special building be made to honor him?

Student Look-Fors

1. Students have answered the corresponding questions correctly and can discuss their answers to demonstrate understanding of information contained in the article.
2. Students can explain (orally) why they think George Washington was important to our country.

Summative Performance Task

Compelling Question	Who was George Washington and why is he important to our country?
Summative Performance Task	Students work individually to design a page for a class book about George Washington. Each student decides on one or more facts to include in the design of a page about George Washington, along with an illustration. Students orally present their pages to the class.

Teacher Overview

In this summative performance task, students are asked to write and illustrate a response to the compelling question using evidence from the sources they explored throughout the three formative performance tasks.

Throughout this instructional task, students have explored George Washington’s life and his significance to our country. Having gone through the previous tasks, the students have engaged with material about George Washington, and presented their ideas to the class, increasing their content knowledge and speaking skills.

Review the previous tasks and content with students. Have students recall and tell facts about George Washington. Remind them of, “The Life of George Washington,” source viewed in task 1. Ask students to recall the second task, centered on, “George Washington and the Cherry Tree.”

Student Prompt

Today, we are going to create a class made book. We are going to be authors and illustrators! Using paper, crayons, and pencils, you will each create a page for our book. Think of one fact about George Washington that you would like to include on your page. Draw a picture, using crayons, of your fact about George Washington. Then, write your fact below the picture. Let’s look at what this will look like.

Student Look-Fors

1. Scoring Notes
 - An exemplar response may include but is not limited to:
 - George Washington was the first president of the United States. (Illustration includes George Washington)
 - George Washington was an honest man. (Illustration includes George Washington and the cherry tree)
 - George Washington was a great leader. (Illustration includes George Washington and the crossing of the Delaware)
 - Students’ written responses should follow the English language arts standards for written expression in kindergarten.
 - Students should also present their pages to the class, and should follow the English language arts standards for speaking and listening in kindergarten.
2. A strong response:
 - References documents appropriately.

- George Washington was the 1st president of our country. (Source A)
- Students provide facts about George Washington. Examples include: George Washington was born on a farm in Virginia. He had a big family. He studied a lot. He joined the army when he was 21. He married Martha Custis when he was 26, and moved to Mount Vernon. He was the leader of the army and is considered a hero. He became our first president. Many call him, “The Father of Our Country.” (Sources B & C)
- Students should be able to explain why George Washington was important to our country. (Source D) Examples include:
 - George Washington was important to our country because he was the leader of the army during the war.
 - George Washington was the first president of our country.
- Applies the provided evidence as well as additional information about George Washington.
 - George Washington was a farmer.
 - George Washington’s image is on the dollar bill and the quarter.