

# LESSON PLAN

## George Washington

**Level:** Literacy, Low Beginning

**Suggested Length:** 3 or 4 class periods, depending on class time and level

### Civics Test Questions

- #28—What is the name of the President of the United States now?
- #69—Who is the “Father of Our Country”?
- #70—Who was the first president?
- #93—Name one state that borders Canada.
- #94—What is the capital of the United States?
- #100—Name two national U.S. holidays.

### Reading Test Vocabulary

- George Washington, Abraham Lincoln
- capital, state, Father of Our Country, President
- United States
- Presidents’ Day
- What, Where, Who
- can, come, do, is/was, lived, name
- in, of, on, the, to, we
- independence
- first, second, people, dollar bill, one

### Writing Test Vocabulary

- Lincoln, Washington
- capital, Father of Our Country, President
- United States, Washington, Washington, DC
- February
- Presidents’ Day
- can, come, is/was, lived
- in, of, on, the, to, we
- first, second, people, dollar bill, one

## Objectives:

Students will:

- learn about George Washington’s life and the importance of Washington’s role in U.S. history
- locate and label Washington State, Washington, DC, East Coast and West Coast on map
- explore ways that Washington is honored using money, paintings, and famous landmarks
- identify names of other important presidents in U.S. history
- identify the current U.S. president
- identify the date and presidents honored on Presidents’ Day

## Materials:

2 wall maps: one world map and one U.S. map, calendar, one dollar bill, U.S. coins

4 handouts: *George Washington’s Life*, *We Honor George Washington*, *George Washington—Special Places*, *George Washington—Yes or No?*

8.5” x 11” visuals: paintings of George Washington, Washington Monument, Mt. Vernon, Mt. Rushmore

**Additional Instructions for Teachers: Using Visuals and Original Artwork in the Adult ESL/Civics Classroom—George Washington**

3 optional handouts (Literacy Level Writing Practice): *George Washington, President*, *Father of Our Country*

*George Washington Lesson Answer Key*



## Lesson Overview and Notes to Teacher:

In planning this history lesson, consider whether you wish to cover this material in two, three, or four class sessions. This lesson is designed to learn about George Washington as a man and as a leader. It highlights the impact that Washington made on our country as well as his enduring legacy over time. To teach about George Washington and not weave in more detail about him would be a missed opportunity. Besides, it makes for a richer lesson to teach and to learn. The visuals (photos, paintings, drawings, and maps) illustrate the teaching points (Civics items) and to engage the students in the discussion, whether or not they know all the vocabulary. The short “Reading Paragraphs” with pictures help students grasp the main ideas without having to worry about recognizing spelling or pronouncing every single new word perfectly. Also note that there may be more vocabulary than your students know at their current ESL level, but remember: it is **not critical** that they understand and produce every word. What is important is that they are engaged in the topic and gather general knowledge from it in order to be successful on the Civics Test. Therefore, the critical issue is that students be able to recognize and answer the Civics Test items correctly. For example, in the readings on Washington Monument and Mt. Rushmore, the dates of the construction are included **not** because the students must know those details, but rather to demonstrate that hundreds of years after his death, Americans are still honoring Washington in concrete ways.

To set up the lesson, you will discuss the concept of leader and leadership roles, tying that to the students’ experience in their home country and here. Key vocabulary, such as **leader, important, remember, celebrate, and honor** will be taught and used, by first having the students identify important leaders and historical figures in their native country. Then the lesson topic shifts to George Washington, his life and leadership. The lesson moves on to discuss ways in which he is recognized and honored on a daily basis. During the class, you will teach and reinforce the importance of Washington’s role in American history, and how he is remembered today. Much of the content here involves “Fun Facts” about Washington. Again, these facts (such as Mt. Vernon, Mt. Rushmore, and faces on money) are not on the Civics Test. These points are included to illustrate the importance of George Washington and to tie content to the Civics questions. Also, remember, students will not need to know dates of George Washington’s life. The **Additional Instructions for Teachers: Using Visuals and Original Artwork in the Adult ESL/Civics Classroom** offers strategies for using the artwork in class as prompts for the different sections of the lesson text. The Literacy Level Writing Practice handouts **George Washington, President** and **Father of Our Country** help beginners practice spelling and handwriting while using content words from the lesson.

**Introduction:** Tell the class you will talk about important leaders. Write **LEADER** on the board, and ask **What does LEADER mean?** Students should answer **important man/woman/person, power, person who helps people,** etc. Ask the class **Who is the leader of this class? this school?** Then ask **Why is he/she important (to the class/to the school)?** Students answer **help students, make decisions, supervise, control money,** etc. Say **Give me some examples of leaders in the world today,** and write the students’ answers on the board under the words **Important Leaders.** Ask **Who is the leader of the**

**U.S.?,** then rephrase it by asking **What is the name of the President of the United States now?** Students should answer with the correct first and last name of the current president. Ask them to spell the name out loud while you write it on the board for them to copy. Write the question **What is the name of the President of the United States now?** on the board above the president’s name. Point out that this is an item on the Civics Test. Model the question and answer for the students to hear and practice in order to become familiar with this item.

**Warm-up:** Tell the class that you will talk about leaders in the world. Ask several more advanced students **Who is the leader of your country? What is that position?** Students answer **President, King/Queen, Prime Minister, Emperor/Empress,** etc. Ask again **What position is the leader of the U.S.?** Write **President** on the board. Then say **Now let’s talk about history, or the past** and ask **Who was the first president of the U.S.?**

If they answer **George Washington,** ask them to spell **Washington** as you write it on the board. (If they don’t know, give them a hint and ask **What’s the capital of the United States?**). Point out that **Who was the first president?** is on the Civics Test. Tell the class **We will study George Washington today.** Show the 8.5” x 11” visuals of George Washington and discuss the content of the artwork.

**Guided Practice:** Distribute the handout **George Washington’s Life**. Point out the first picture on the handout before reading the sentences. Ask **Who’s this? What’s his name?** Then read each sentence 2-3 times out loud for students to hear. Then have the students repeat each sentence line by line. When you reach a sentence with a blank, read the sentence and pause at the blank. Ask the students to fill in or guess the correct word for the blank. Have them spell out the missing word as you write it on the board for them to copy on their paper. Point out and discuss the corresponding pictures. Then model and practice each sentence aloud. Ask the students **Who is in the picture?, How many people/men/women/animals are there?, What are they doing?, Can you find George Washington?, What is George Washington doing?, Tell me about the people. (They are . . . young/old, rich/poor, happy/serious/angry/cold/worried, etc.)** You can print out 8.5” x 11” copies of the same picture which you can hold up for the class to see, or make copies for

them to examine in pairs or small groups. Help the students with new vocabulary such as **independence** (freedom/separation), **Revolutionary War** (change), and **Great Britain** (England). Dictate dates for students, then write the dates on the board for them to copy into the blanks. (NOTE: students will not be tested on these dates about George Washington’s life, but in other parts of the Civics Test, the students need to be able to understand or produce these year dates (1776, 1787, 1800s, 1803, 1812, 1900s). See the **Answer Key** for all missing vocabulary and dates to be dictated. Tell the class **DO NOT worry about these dates for George Washington**, emphasizing **This is interesting (or nice to know), but it’s NOT ON THE TEST**. Practice saying the dates correctly (17-76, 17-87, etc.) so that the students become familiar with reading year dates aloud. Point out **Who is the Father of Our Country?** and **Who was the first president?** are questions on the Civics Test.

**Practice:** Continue the same method reviewing the “Reading Paragraphs” with the 2-page handouts **We Honor George Washington** and **George Washington—Special Places**. Refer to the **Answer Key** for information to fill in the blanks. For the section on money, have the students take bills and coins from their pockets or provide them with some change or play money. For the middle section of the page on **We Honor**, have the students place the coins over the circles and identify which president is on each coin.

While this lesson focuses on President Washington, all the other presidents are mentioned in other parts of the Civics Test (Jefferson, Lincoln, and Franklin D. Roosevelt). On **Special Places**, continue this process (discuss picture, model sentences, and practice together out loud) and fill in the sentences as you go along. Stress to the students once more that they are not required to know these dates or specifics for the Civics Test, but that it is interesting to know these facts.

**Evaluation:** The handout **George Washington—Yes or No?** is a true-false exercise which reviews the information that students have learned. Items 1-6 are all related to the test itself. The rest (items 7-12) review other interesting facts about Washington’s life. Please note that all the sentences

are false, or **“NO,”** and the students will need to correct each sentence by crossing out some words and writing in the corrections. There may be more than one possible correction, so refer to the **Answer Key** and accept any reasonable change offered by the students.

**Follow-Up Extension:** Students can bring in paper money and coins from their native country, and discuss who is on each and why. Students can practice the

6 test items in pairs, role-playing as teacher/student or immigration officer/applicant.

**Additional Writing Practice for Literacy/Low Beginning Students:** Handouts **George Washington**, **President**, and **Father of Our Country** are included for optional copy work. Students can practice writing words from the

Reading and Writing Vocabulary lists or from the Civics Test. Test items related to the vocabulary are included in each handout.

## ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR TEACHERS— Using Visuals and Original Artwork in the Adult ESL/Civics Classroom

# George Washington

The old expression, “A picture speaks a thousand words” applies here, and those words are exactly what we want to elicit from our beginning ESL students. We hope the artwork and photos chosen for this lesson will be used to “illustrate” and “brighten” your history and civics lessons. Discussion of the visuals can range from small details to broad generalities, tailoring that discussion to the class time, the language proficiency, and the level of student interest. This discussion is valuable because new vocabulary can be introduced as you discuss the visuals with the students. This approach gives them a chance to “warm up” to the specific vocabulary to be mastered later on. You will find that the time involved in this discussion will be well spent. In addition, your visual learners will have the time and opportunity to employ their own learning strategies and absorb the lesson objectives without being taxed by a text-rich handout.

In reviewing the handouts, you can start each “Reading Paragraph” section by asking the students to tell you about the accompanying picture, with such questions as: 1) **How many people do you see?**, 2) **What are the people doing?**, 3) **What are they wearing?**, or 4) **Are they happy, sad, cold,** etc? While the lesson plan includes suggestions about how to address this, it would be

impossible to cover every point that might come up. You may find that the students notice and comment on details you have overlooked or taken for granted. As we all do, the students will relate to the picture by drawing from their own life experiences. As you discuss the visual, write key vocabulary on the board and give the students time to practice the pronunciation, copy the words, and reflect on the meaning.

The paintings and photos were chosen with some consideration for our target audience. While we all know this anecdotally, research has shown that when lessons evoke an emotional response in the learner, the individual will be more open and receptive to the subject and more able to absorb and retain the new information. Some paintings were selected because of their content and appeal, even when produced in a black and white version. Others were chosen because they represented a previous era that may be easily identified by our older students.

If the visuals can be printed in color, it would be best. However, black and white versions can be used effectively as well. If there are limited resources, it might be economical to produce one or two sets of color visuals and laminate them for future use.