

# Reading Through History

## The Leadership of George Washington



By Jake Henderson & Robert Marshall

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The American Revolution  
by Jake Henderson & Robert Marshall  
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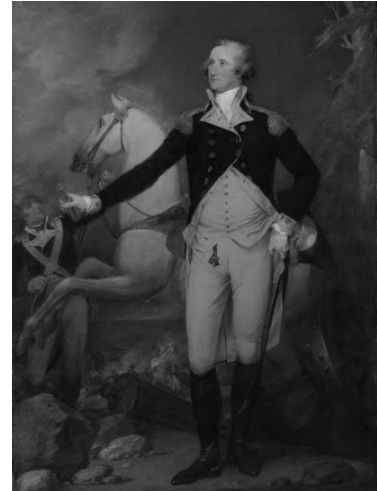
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## **The Leadership of George Washington**

Few figures in history have attained the levels of respect and adoration of George Washington. Under his leadership, the ill-equipped and outnumbered Continental Army endured multiple defeats, hardships, and disappointments to emerge victorious. What types of qualities did he display to make him such an effective and admired leader?

It is highly unlikely that the United States of America would have survived the Revolutionary War without George Washington in command. Throughout the conflict, Washington displayed characteristics that came to embody both the American struggle and the Continental Army. Five of his most vital leadership skills were toughness, persistence, bravery, and talents for motivation and organization.



Washington was raised on the Virginia frontier and endured many hardships, including health issues, as a child. Early in his military career, he also faced many failures, such as the embarrassing defeat at Fort Mifflin during the French and Indian War. Through persistence and dedication, he worked his way back through the military ranks, eventually earning the opportunities for advancement that led to him being named Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army.

As a military leader, Washington became known for bravery and heroism in battle. While most commanding generals led from the rear of an engagement, Washington frequently placed himself in harm's way. During several battles, such as Princeton in January of 1777, Washington found himself caught between the firing lines of the British and American armies. While horses were often shot out from under him and bullet holes filled his jacket, the general always emerged unscathed.

By the end of the Revolutionary War, few could question Washington's abilities as a leader. Perhaps his greatest attributes were his organizational skills, battlefield instincts, and the ability to inspire his men. Throughout the war, with his army often starving, cold, barefoot, and outnumbered, Washington managed to hold his forces together and keep the spirit of the army alive. While he often suffered crushing defeats, such as the Battle of Long Island in August of 1776, the British were never able to destroy or capture the Continental Army.

After the war, Washington gave up the power he had achieved and returned home to Mt. Vernon until his country called upon him again. He presided over the Constitutional Convention in 1787 and was elected to serve as the first President of the United States. After serving two terms, Washington once again willingly gave up his position of power to retire to civilian life.

While his military and political careers are well documented, many historians argue that Washington's greatest leadership quality was his moral character. The examples and precedents he set were fundamental to the forming of the United States. His leadership and example helped to place the nation, and its people, on the proper path.

**Multiple Choice:** *Select the choice that completes the statement or answers the question.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_ What was the official name of the army George Washington commanded during the Revolutionary War?
  - a. Patriot Army
  - b. American Army
  - c. The Minutemen
  - d. The Continental Army
  
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Where was George Washington raised?
  - a. In the Caribbean Islands.
  - b. On the Virginia frontier.
  - c. In Upstate New York.
  - d. In Boston, Massachusetts.
  
3. \_\_\_\_\_ In August of 1776, Washington suffered a crushing defeat at
  - a. Fort Necessity
  - b. Ticonderoga
  - c. Brandywine
  - d. Long Island
  
4. \_\_\_\_\_ What contribution did George Washington make to the young nation in 1787?
  - a. He accepted command of the Continental Army.
  - b. He gave up his power and retired to Mt. Vernon.
  - c. He presided over the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia.
  - d. He was elected as the first President of the United States of America.
  
5. \_\_\_\_\_ How many terms did Washington serve as President of the United States?
  - a. 1
  - b. 2
  - c. 3
  - d. 4

**TRUE/FALSE:** *Indicate whether the statement is true or false. If the statement is false, write the correct word in the space provided to make the statement true.*

6. \_\_\_\_\_ It is highly likely that the United States of America would have survived the Revolutionary War without George Washington in command.  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Washington experienced many health issues as a child.  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Fort Necessity was an embarrassing defeat for Washington during the Revolutionary War. \_\_\_\_\_
  
9. \_\_\_\_\_ At Princeton in January of 1777, Washington found himself caught between the firing lines of the British and American armies. \_\_\_\_\_
  
10. \_\_\_\_\_ The British were never able to destroy or capture the Continental Army.  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Guided Reading:** *Fill in the blanks below to create complete sentences.*

1. Few figures in history have attained the levels of respect and \_\_\_\_\_ of George Washington.
  
2. Washington displayed \_\_\_\_\_ that came to embody the army he commanded.
  
3. Washington held the title of \_\_\_\_\_ of the American army.
  
4. As a military leader, Washington became known for \_\_\_\_\_ in battle.
  
5. As a leader, Washington frequently placed himself in \_\_\_\_\_ way.
  
6. Washington had a knack for always emerging from battles \_\_\_\_\_.
  
7. By the end of the \_\_\_\_\_, few could question Washington's abilities as a leader.
  
8. Throughout the war, Washington managed to hold his forces together and keep the \_\_\_\_\_ of the army alive.
  
9. After the war, Washington gave up the power he had achieved and returned to his home at \_\_\_\_\_.
  
10. Many historians argue that Washington's greatest leadership quality was his \_\_\_\_\_ character.

**Vocabulary Check:** *Select the option that best identifies the use of the underlined word.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_ In the opening sentence, the word adoration implies
  - a. The feeling of displeasure or indignation at some act, remark, person, etc.
  - b. Fervent and devoted love.
  - c. To look upon or treat with contempt; despise; scorn.
  - d. The lack of interest or concern.
  
2. \_\_\_\_\_ “Washington displayed characteristics that came to embody both the American struggle and the Continental Army.” In the previous sentence, the word embody means
  - a. To express, personify, or exemplify.
  - b. To hold or treat as dear; feel love for.
  - c. To cling fondly or inveterately to.
  - d. To put into words; utter or state.
  
3. \_\_\_\_\_ In the second paragraph, the word vital implies
  - a. Unusual or uncommon.
  - b. Of no consequence, influence, or distinction.
  - c. Necessary to the existence, continuance, or well-being of something.
  - d. Having or expressing a meaning; indicative; suggestive.
  
4. \_\_\_\_\_ “Washington was raised on the Virginia frontier and endured many hardships, including health issues, as a child.” In the previous sentence, the word endured seems to imply
  - a. Admirable or fine.
  - b. To hold out against; sustain without yielding.
  - c. To admit, allow, or bear.
  - d. An open conflict of opposing ideas, forces, etc.
  
5. \_\_\_\_\_ In the final paragraph, the word fundamental means
  - a. Having its root as its lowest note.
  - b. Of the lowest rank.
  - c. First in time; earliest; primitive.
  - d. Serving as, or being an essential part of, a foundation or basis; basic; underlying.

**Student Response:** *Please respond to the questions raised below. A thorough response should be a paragraph of at least three to five complete sentences.*

6. After reading about the leadership qualities of George Washington, which quality do you believe to be the most important and why? Of the contributions he made to the United States, which do you believe required the most skill? Explain your answer.

**The Leadership of George Washington Multiple Choice:**

- 1) D
- 2) B
- 3) D
- 4) C
- 5) B

**True/False:**

- 6) F – unlikely
- 7) T
- 8) F – French and Indian
- 9) T
- 10) T

**Guided Reading for The Leadership of George Washington:**

- 1) Adoration
- 2) Characteristics
- 3) Commander-in-Chief
- 4) Bravery and heroism
- 5) Harm's
- 6) Unscathed
- 7) Revolutionary War (or American Revolution)
- 8) Spirit
- 9) Mt. Vernon
- 10) Moral

**Vocabulary Check:**

- 1) B
- 2) A
- 3) C
- 4) B
- 5) D

**Student Response for The Leadership of George Washington:**

- 6) Responses may vary.