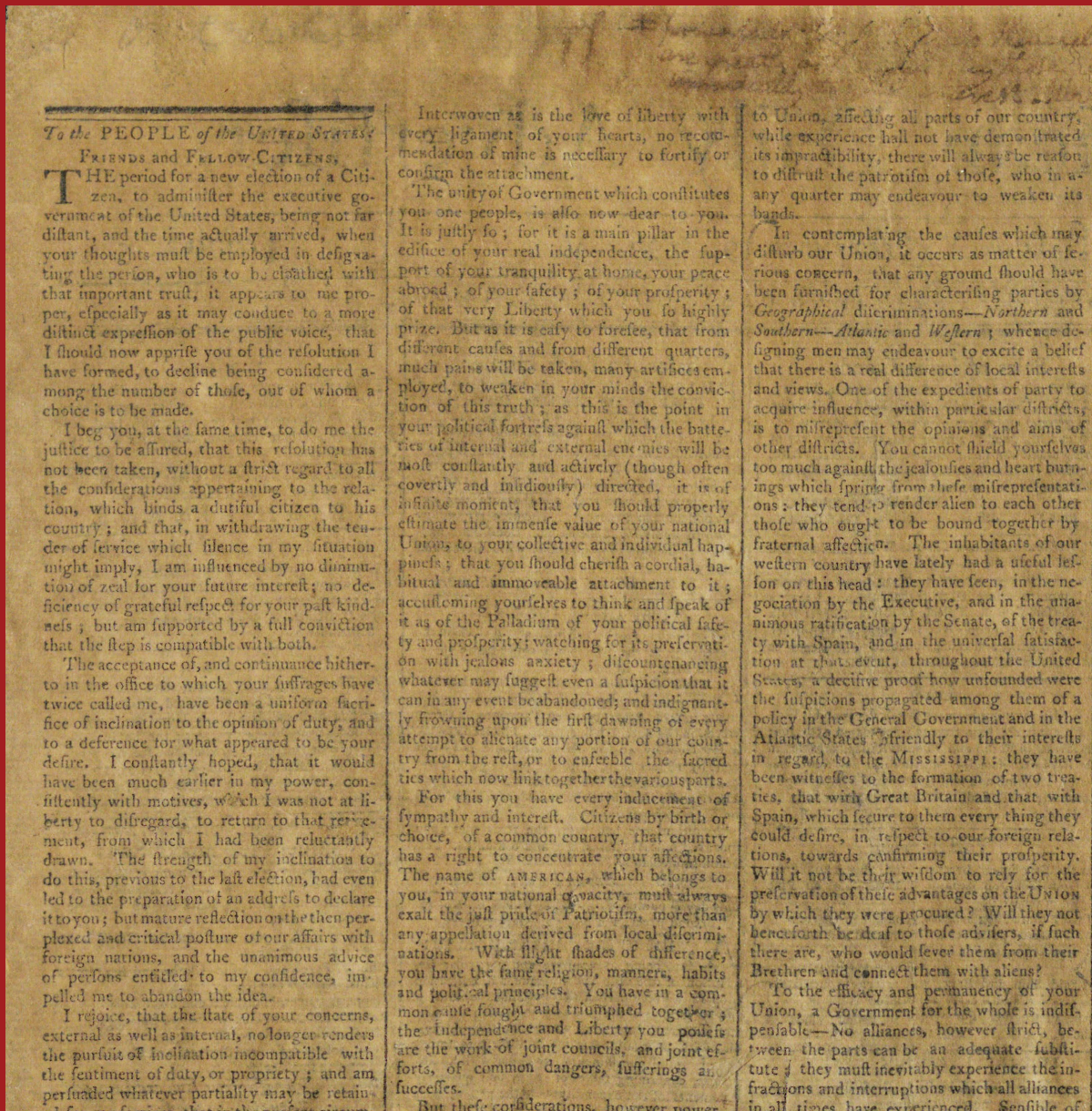


President George Washington's Farewell Address, 1796



George Washington's Farewell Address, Claypoole's Advertiser, Philadelphia, September 19, 1796 (The Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC00185)

President George Washington’s Farewell Address, 1796

BY TIM BAILEY (created in 2012, updated in 2024)

Tim Bailey taught middle school and elementary school in Utah for over two decades. Named the 2009 National History Teacher of the Year, he is the Gilder Lehrman Institute’s director of curriculum development and instructional design.

GRADE LEVELS: 7–12

RECOMMENDED TIME FOR COMPLETION: Five 45-minute class periods (although two lessons may be combined and/or assigned as homework)

UNIT OVERVIEW

This unit is one of the Gilder Lehrman Institute’s Teaching Literacy through History™ (TLTH) resources, designed to align with the Common Core State Standards. Students will learn and practice skills that will help them analyze, assess, and develop knowledgeable and well-reasoned points of view on visual and textual primary source materials. These skills will enable students to understand, summarize, and evaluate documents and other resources of historical significance.

Over the course of five lessons the students will read, analyze, and gain a clear understanding of George Washington’s Farewell Address, which was published on September 19, 1796. The first four lessons require students to read excerpts from the address “like a detective.” Employing summary organizers, practice, review, and discussion, they will master the technique of identifying keywords, creating summaries of excerpts and, as an assessment in the final lesson, writing an argumentative essay.

Students will be able to

- Read and demonstrate understanding of a complex document
- Identify the main ideas and synthesize and draw logical inferences from the text
- Summarize the author’s words and restate the author’s meaning in their own words (e.g., Washington’s Farewell Address)
- Collaborate effectively with classmates
- Write an argumentative essay using evidence from the text to support their ideas

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- According to George Washington, why did he write a farewell address to the nation?
- What actions did George Washington encourage the United States to take?
- What practices did George Washington warn against?

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social studies.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.5: Analyze in detail how a complex primary source is structured, including how key sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text contribute to the whole.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.1.a: Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content; Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the claim(s), and create an organization that logically sequences the claim(s), reasons, and evidence.

MATERIALS

- Excerpts from President George Washington's Farewell Address, 1796, *Founders Online*, National Archives, [founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-20-02-0440-0002](https://www.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-20-02-0440-0002). [Original source: *The Papers of George Washington, Presidential Series*, vol. 20, 1 April–21 September 1796, ed. David R. Hoth and William M. Ferraro. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2019, pp. 703–722.]
- Summary Organizers 1–4
- Creating an Essay: Analyzing Washington's Farewell Address

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

George Washington's Farewell Address

by Denver Brunzman, The George Washington University

On September 19, 1796, the *American Daily Advertiser* newspaper in Philadelphia published George Washington's Farewell Address to the American people. On the same day, President Washington rode from the city back to his Mount Vernon home in Virginia. He would not let anyone convince him to serve another term as president, as his advisors and fellow leaders had in 1792. The Farewell Address would become one of the most influential documents in American history as a statement of American founding principles by its most indispensable founder.

The 1796 address actually counted as Washington's third farewell to the American people. Contemporaries deemed his circular letter to the states in June 1783, at the close of the American Revolutionary War, as Washington's original farewell address. In 1792, with the help of James Madison, Washington composed his second farewell address to mark his intended retirement at the end of his first presidential administration. However, the President never published the address, instead agreeing to serve a second term given the domestic and foreign crises that threatened the young American republic. As political factions developed into America's first political parties, the Federalists and Democratic-Republicans, the French Revolution evolved into a global war. Finally, in 1796, content with the stability of the new United States, Washington sought the help of his first treasury secretary, Alexander Hamilton, to compose his third and final farewell address.

Washington's Farewell Address expresses an overarching message of American unity in the face of domestic and global divisions. The address urges Americans to place the common good of the country above their geographical and self-interests. Similarly, it warns about the dangers of partisanship, for political parties, in Washington's estimation, sought benefits for factions or interests at the expense of the whole. As Europe was embroiled in the French Revolutionary Wars, Washington also warned America against forming permanent alliances that would draw the country into foreign conflicts. Sometimes misinterpreted as isolationism, Washington instead presented a vision of foreign affairs in which the United States should foremost pursue its own interests, including by engaging in peaceful commerce with other nations.

Into the twentieth century, Washington's Farewell Address was celebrated as civic scripture, a document that was as widely printed as the Declaration of Independence and studied by generations of schoolchildren. Today, although the influence of the Farewell Address has waned, it is still read annually on the floor of the US Senate to coincide with Washington's birthday (February 22). Democratic and Republican members of the Senate alternate in the reading each year to signify Washington's commitment to union over political party. Washington's decision to retire, as explained in the Farewell Address, also set a long precedent of no president serving more than two terms until the crisis of World War II and Franklin Roosevelt's election as president four times. In 1951, the ratification of the Twenty-Second Amendment to the US Constitution ensured that all future presidents would follow Washington's example and serve no more than two terms.

Denver Brunzman is an associate professor of history at the George Washington University. He is the author of the award-winning book The Evil Necessity: British Naval Impressment in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World (2013), and coauthor of a leading US history textbook, Liberty, Equality, Power: A History of the American People (2016; 2020).

LESSON 1

BY TIM BAILEY (created in 2012, updated in 2024)

OVERVIEW

Students will be asked to “read like a detective” and discover what George Washington was writing about in his Farewell Address by understanding what is explicitly stated and drawing logical inferences. They will demonstrate these skills by writing a succinct summary of the text using keywords and then restating that summary in their own words. This lesson is a whole-class exercise.

Tim Bailey taught middle school and elementary school in Utah for over two decades. Named the 2009 National History Teacher of the Year, he is the Gilder Lehrman Institute’s director of curriculum development and instructional design.

GRADE LEVELS: 7–12

TIME FOR COMPLETION: One 45-minute class period

UNIT OVERVIEW: This unit is one of the Gilder Lehrman Institute’s Teaching Literacy through History™ (TLTH) resources, designed to align with the Common Core State Standards. Students will learn and practice skills that will help them analyze, assess, and develop knowledgeable and well-reasoned points of view on primary source materials. Over the course of five lessons the students will analyze the text of President George Washington’s Farewell Address published on September 19, 1796.

MATERIALS

- Excerpts from President George Washington’s Farewell Address, 1796, *Founders Online*, National Archives, founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-20-02-0440-0002. [Original source: *The Papers of George Washington, Presidential Series*, vol. 20, 1 April–21 September 1796, ed. David R. Hoth and William M. Ferraro. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2019, pp. 703–722.]
- Summary Organizer 1

PROCEDURE

1. Distribute copies of the excerpts from President George Washington’s Farewell Address of 1796 and ask the students to read it silently to themselves. Do not provide additional historical background at this point as the goal is for the students to develop ideas and draw conclusions based solely on Washington’s words.
2. “Share read” the document with the students. This is done by having the students follow along silently while you begin to read aloud, modeling prosody, inflection, and punctuation. Then ask the class to join in with the reading after a few sentences while you continue to read aloud, still serving as the model. This technique will support struggling readers as well as English language learners (ELL).
3. Explain that the students will learn how to do in-depth analysis for themselves by reading, understanding, and summarizing President Washington’s words. In this first lesson, the whole class will work together to summarize the first excerpt from the text.
4. Distribute copies of Summary Organizer 1 and display it in a format large enough for the whole class to see. This activity sheet contains the first section of Washington’s Farewell Address.
5. Describe the process for the class: The first objective is to select “keywords” from the text and use those words to create a summary sentence that gets at the gist of what Washington was saying.
 - a. Guidelines for Selecting the Keywords: Keywords are important contributors to understanding the text. They are usually nouns or verbs. Advise students not to pick “connector” words (*are, is, the, and, so, etc.*). The number of keywords depends on the length of the paragraph. This excerpt is 176 words; therefore, students should select 9 to 10 keywords. Since the students must know the meaning of the words they choose, you will have opportunities to

teach students how to use context clues, word analysis, and dictionary skills to discover word meanings.

- b. The students should now select 9 to 10 words that they believe are keywords and circle or highlight them or write them in the Keywords section of the organizer.
 - c. Survey the class to find out what the most popular choices were. You can write them down and have the class discuss the options and vote on the final choice, based on guidance from you. For example, the class could select the following words: *election, executive, government, decline, danger, recommend, much reflection* (short phrases can be selected if they represent a single idea), *observation, all-important, and permanency*. Now, no matter which words the students had previously selected, have them write the words agreed upon by the class or chosen by you into the Keywords section.
6. Explain to the class that they will use these keywords to write a sentence that summarizes the meaning of the first section of President Washington's address. This keyword summary sentence should be developed through a whole-class discussion and negotiation. The students might decide they don't need some of the words to make the sentence even more streamlined. This is part of the negotiation process. Their summary using Washington's words might be "In the upcoming election for the executive branch of the government I will decline to run, but I see danger ahead and would like to recommend to you some thoughts after much reflection and observation." The students will copy the final negotiated sentence into Keyword Summary section of the organizer.
 7. Guide the students in restating the summary sentence in their own words, not having to use the keywords from the text. Again, this is a class negotiation process. They might say, for example, "I will not be running for reelection as president but I would like to give you some advice." This sentence should be copied into the In Your Own Words section of the organizer.
 8. Wrap-up: Discuss vocabulary that the students found confusing or difficult. The students can record these words and their meaning on the back of the organizer or on a separate vocabulary form.

LESSON 2

BY TIM BAILEY (created in 2012, updated in 2024)

OVERVIEW

Students will be asked to “read like a detective” and discover what George Washington was writing about in his Farewell Address by understanding what is explicitly stated and drawing logical inferences. They will demonstrate these skills by writing a succinct summary of the text using keywords and then restating that summary in their own words. Students will work with partners and in small groups.

Tim Bailey taught middle school and elementary school in Utah for over two decades. Named the 2009 National History Teacher of the Year, he is the Gilder Lehrman Institute’s director of curriculum development and instructional design.

GRADE LEVELS: 7–12

TIME FOR COMPLETION: One 45-minute class period

UNIT OVERVIEW: This unit is one of the Gilder Lehrman Institute’s Teaching Literacy through History™ (TLTH) resources, designed to align with the Common Core State Standards. Students will learn and practice skills that will help them analyze, assess, and develop knowledgeable and well-reasoned points of view on primary source materials. Over the course of five lessons the students will analyze the text of President George Washington’s Farewell Address published on September 19, 1796.

MATERIALS

- Summary Organizer 2

PROCEDURE

1. Lead a discussion of what the class learned in the previous lesson and what they determined was the meaning of the first excerpt from President Washington’s Farewell Address. Explain that they will be continuing to work on the address with partners and in small groups.
2. Distribute Summary Organizer 2 and share read the text as described in Lesson 1.
3. Review the procedure from Lesson 1, reminding students that they will select keywords from the text, use the keywords to summarize the text, and then restate the summary in their own words. Because this excerpt is longer (229 words), the students should select up to 10 keywords.
4. Pair students up to complete the first task. Each pair should negotiate the selection of 10 keywords and write their list in the Keywords section of the organizer.
5. Now put each pair of students into a group of four. These groups should then repeat the same negotiation process to finalize a list of 10 keywords and write that new list into the Keywords section. Circulate to ensure that all groups are negotiating successfully and choosing appropriate words.
6. Each group will use the selected words to build a sentence that summarizes Washington’s message in this part of the text. Circulate among the groups to monitor their progress and to make sure that all students are contributing to the activity.
7. Have the groups share out their summary sentences. This should act as a catalyst for a discussion that points out the qualities of the various sentences: How careful were the students to use Washington’s keywords in the summary? How successful were the students in recognizing Washington’s main ideas?
8. Each group will now restate the summary sentence in their own words. Again, this is a group negotiation process. After they have decided on a sentence, they should write the final version into their organizers.
9. Have the groups share out and discuss the clarity and quality of the restatements.
10. Wrap-up: Discuss vocabulary that the students found confusing or difficult. The students can record these words and their meaning on the back of the organizer or on a separate vocabulary form.

LESSON 3

BY TIM BAILEY (created in 2012, updated in 2024)

OVERVIEW

Students will be asked to “read like a detective” and discover what George Washington was writing about in his Farewell Address by understanding what is explicitly stated and drawing logical inferences. They will demonstrate these skills by writing a succinct summary of the text and then restating that summary in their own words. In this lesson the students will work individually unless you believe they need another day of additional support from a partner or small group.

MATERIALS

- Summary Organizer 3

PROCEDURE

1. Briefly discuss the text summaries the students came up with in the previous lessons and the meaning of Washington’s Farewell Address to this point.
2. You may choose to have the students work individually or with a partner if they need the extra support.
3. Hand out Summary Organizer 3, which contains the third excerpt from of President Washington’s Farewell Address. They can read the text to themselves or you can share read the text as described in Lesson 1.
4. Review the process of selecting keywords, writing a summary using those keywords, and then restating the summary in their own words.
5. Because this excerpt is 217 words, the students can pick 8 to 10 keywords.
6. Have the students select their keywords and write their keyword summaries and restatements.
7. Have the students share out their restated summaries and discuss the clarity and quality of the different interpretations of Washington’s address.
8. Wrap-up: Discuss vocabulary that the students found confusing or difficult; the students can record these words and their meaning on the back of the organizer or a separate vocabulary form.

Tim Bailey taught middle school and elementary school in Utah for over two decades. Named the 2009 National History Teacher of the Year, he is the Gilder Lehrman Institute’s director of curriculum development and instructional design.

GRADE LEVELS: 7–12

TIME FOR COMPLETION: One 45-minute class period

UNIT OVERVIEW: This unit is one of the Gilder Lehrman Institute’s Teaching Literacy through History™ (TLTH) resources, designed to align with the Common Core State Standards. Students will learn and practice skills that will help them analyze, assess, and develop knowledgeable and well-reasoned points of view on primary source materials. Over the course of five lessons the students will analyze the text of President George Washington’s Farewell Address published on September 19, 1796.

LESSON 4

BY TIM BAILEY (created in 2012, updated in 2024)

OVERVIEW

Students will be asked to “read like a detective” and discover what George Washington was writing about in his Farewell Address by understanding what is explicitly stated and drawing logical inferences. They will demonstrate these skills by writing a succinct summary of the text and then restating that summary in their own words. In this lesson the students will be working individually.

MATERIALS

- Summary Organizer 4

PROCEDURE

1. Briefly discuss the summaries the students came up with in the previous three lessons.
2. Hand out Summary Organizer 4, which contains the fourth excerpt from President Washington’s Farewell Address. They can read the text to themselves or you can share read the text as described in Lesson 1.
3. Review the process of selecting keywords, writing a summary using those keywords, and then restating the summary in their own words. Tell the students that they will be working on their own again to summarize this part of the text.
4. Because this paragraph is 208 words in length, the students can pick up to 10 keywords.
5. Have the students share out their restated summaries and discuss the clarity and quality of the different interpretations of Washington’s views.
6. Wrap-up: Discuss vocabulary that the students found confusing or difficult. The students can record these words and their meaning on the back of the organizer or a separate vocabulary form.

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GRADE LEVELS: 7–12

TIME FOR COMPLETION: One 45-minute class period

UNIT OVERVIEW: This unit is one of the Gilder Lehrman Institute’s Teaching Literacy through History™ (TLTH) resources, designed to align with the Common Core State Standards. Students will learn and practice skills that will help them analyze, assess, and develop knowledgeable and well-reasoned points of view on primary source materials. Over the course of five lessons the students will analyze the text of President George Washington’s Farewell Address published on September 19, 1796.

LESSON 5

BY TIM BAILEY (created in 2012, updated in 2024)

OVERVIEW

This lesson has two objectives. First, the students will synthesize the work of the last four lessons and demonstrate that they understand President George Washington's Farewell Address of 1796. Second, they will answer a question in a short persuasive or argumentative essay that requires them to make inferences and support their conclusions with explicit information from the text.

MATERIALS

- Excerpts from President George Washington's Farewell Address, 1796
- Completed Summary Organizers 1–4
- Creating an Essay: Analyzing Washington's Farewell Address

Tim Bailey taught middle school and elementary school in Utah for over two decades. Named the 2009 National History Teacher of the Year, he is the Gilder Lehrman Institute's director of curriculum development and instructional design.

GRADE LEVELS: 7–12

TIME FOR COMPLETION: One 45-minute class period

UNIT OVERVIEW: This unit is one of the Gilder Lehrman Institute's Teaching Literacy through History™ (TLTH) resources, designed to align with the Common Core State Standards. Students will learn and practice skills that will help them analyze, assess, and develop knowledgeable and well-reasoned points of view on primary source materials. Over the course of five lessons the students will analyze the text of President George Washington's Farewell Address published on September 19, 1796.

PROCEDURE

1. Distribute the excerpts from President George Washington's Farewell Address and ask the students to read it silently to themselves.
2. Ask the students for their best summary of the first excerpt. This is done as a class discussion. You may write this short sentence on the overhead or similar device. Follow the same procedure for the other three excerpts from the text. When you are finished, the students will have a summary of the Farewell Address that will help them organize their essay.
3. Each student will write a short persuasive or argumentative essay addressing one of the prompts below, using evidence from the Farewell Address:

Prompts

- a. What did President Washington suggest was a danger to the success of the newly formed United States of America?
- b. What arguments did Washington use to support his statement that government is the “main pillar” of independence? Why is the government so important, and how can it be protected?
- c. Washington wrote that in foreign policy “our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course.” What course of action did he argue the United States should take?

You may choose to distribute the Creating an Essay activity sheet to help the students organize their arguments and evidence.

Excerpts from President George Washington's Farewell Address, September 19, 1796

Friends and Fellow Citizens

United States 19th September, 1796

The period for a new election of a Citizen, to Administer the Executive government of the United States, being not far distant, and the time actually arrived, when your thoughts must be employed in designating the person, who is to be clothed with that important trust, it appears to me proper, especially as it may conduce to a more distinct expression of the public voice, that I should now apprise you of the resolution I have formed, to decline being considered among the number of those, out of whom a choice is to be made. . . . Here, perhaps, I ought to stop. But a solicitude for your welfare, which cannot end but with my life, and the apprehension of danger, natural to that solicitude, urge me on an occasion like the present, to offer to your solemn contemplation, and to recommend to your frequent review, some sentiments; which are the result of much reflection, of no inconsiderable observation, and which appear to me all important to the permanency of your felicity as a people. . . .

The Unity of Government which constitutes you one people is also now dear to you. It is justly so; for it is a main Pillar in the Edifice of your real independence, the support of your tranquility at home, your peace abroad; of your safety; of your prosperity; of that very Liberty which you so highly prize. But as it is easy to foresee, that from different causes & from different quarters, much pains will be taken, many artifices employed, to weaken in your minds the conviction of this truth; as this is the point in your political fortress against which the batteries of internal and external enemies will be most constantly and actively (though often covertly & insidiously) directed, it is of infinite moment, that you should properly estimate the immense value of your national Union, to your collective & individual happiness; that you should cherish a cordial, habitual & immovable attachment to it; accustoming yourselves to think and speak of it as of the Palladium of your political safety and prosperity; watching for its preservation with jealous anxiety; discountenancing whatever may suggest even a suspicion that it can in any event be abandoned; and indignantly frowning upon the first dawning of every attempt to alienate any portion of our Country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties which now link together the various parts. . . .

Let me . . . warn you in the most solemn manner against the baneful effects of the Spirit of [political] Party, generally. This spirit, unfortunately, is inseparable from our nature, having its root in the strongest passions of the human Mind. It exists under different shapes in all Governments, more or less stifled, controlled, or repressed; but in those of the popular form it is seen in its greatest rankness and is truly their worst enemy. The alternate domination of one faction over another, sharpened by the spirit of revenge natural to party dissention, which in different ages & countries has perpetrated the most horrid enormities, is itself a frightful despotism. But this leads at length to a more formal and permanent despotism. The disorders & miseries, which result, gradually incline the minds of men to seek security & repose in the absolute power of an Individual; and sooner or later the chief of some prevailing faction more able or more fortunate than his competitors, turns this disposition to the purposes of his own elevation, on the ruins of Public Liberty. . . . It serves always to distract the Public Councils and enfeeble the Public Administration. It agitates the Community with ill founded jealousies and false alarms, kindles the animosity of one part against another, foment occasionally riot & insurrection. . . .

Observe good faith & justice towards all Nations cultivate peace & harmony with all. . . . Antipathy in one Nation against another disposes each more readily to offer insult and injury, to lay hold of slight causes of umbrage, and to be haughty and intractable, when accidental or trifling occasions of dispute occur. . . . So likewise, a passionate attachment of one Nation for another produces a variety of evils. Sympathy for the favourite nation, facilitating the illusion of an imaginary common interest, in cases where no real common interest exists . . . betrays the former into a participation in the quarrels & Wars of the latter. . . . Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence (I conjure you to believe me fellow

citizens) the jealousy of a free people ought to be *constantly* awake; since history and experience prove that foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of Republican Government. . . . Our detached & distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course. If we remain one People, under an efficient government . . . we may defy material injury from external annoyance. . . . In offering to you, my Countrymen, these counsels of an old and affectionate friend, I dare not hope they will make the strong and lasting impression, I could wish—that they will controul the usual current of the passions, or prevent our Nation from running the course which has hitherto marked the Destiny of Nations. . . .

Source: *Founders Online*, National Archives, founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-20-02-0440-0002. [Original source: *The Papers of George Washington, Presidential Series*, vol. 20, *1 April–21 September 1796*, ed. David R. Hoth and William M. Ferraro. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2019, pp. 703–722.]

NAME _____

PERIOD DATE _____

Summary Organizer 1: Washington's Farewell Address, 1796

Original Text

The period for a new election of a Citizen, to Administer the Executive government of the United States, being not far distant, and the time actually arrived, when your thoughts must be employed in designating the person, who is to be clothed with that important trust, it appears to me proper, especially as it may conduce to a more distinct expression of the public voice, that I should now apprise you of the resolution I have formed, to decline being considered among the number of those, out of whom a choice is to be made. . . . Here, perhaps, I ought to stop. But a solicitude for your welfare, which cannot end but with my life, and the apprehension of danger, natural to that solicitude, urge me on an occasion like the present, to offer to your solemn contemplation, and to recommend to your frequent review, some sentiments; which are the result of much reflection, of no inconsiderable observation, and which appear to me all important to the permanency of your felicity as a people. . . .

Source: *Founders Online*, National Archives, founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-20-02-0440-0002.

Keywords

Keyword Summary

In Your Own Words

NAME _____

PERIOD DATE _____

Summary Organizer 2: Washington’s Farewell Address, 1796

Original Text

The Unity of Government which constitutes you one people is also now dear to you. It is justly so; for it is a main Pillar in the Edifice of your real independence, the support of your tranquility at home, your peace abroad; of your safety; of your prosperity; of that very Liberty which you so highly prize. But as it is easy to foresee, that from different causes & from different quarters, much pains will be taken, many artifices employed, to weaken in your minds the conviction of this truth; as this is the point in your political fortress against which the batteries of internal and external enemies will be most constantly and actively (though often covertly & insidiously) directed, it is of infinite moment, that you should properly estimate the immense value of your national Union, to your collective & individual happiness; that you should cherish a cordial, habitual & immovable attachment to it; accustoming yourselves to think and speak of it as of the Palladium of your political safety and prosperity; watching for its preservation with jealous anxiety; discountenancing whatever may suggest even a suspicion that it can in any event be abandoned; and indignantly frowning upon the first dawning of every attempt to alienate any portion of our Country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties which now link together the various parts. . . .

Source: *Founders Online*, National Archives, founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-20-02-0440-0002.

Keywords

Keyword Summary

In Your Own Words

NAME _____

PERIOD DATE _____

Summary Organizer 3: Washington's Farewell Address, 1796

Original Text

Let me . . . warn you in the most solemn manner against the baneful effects of the Spirit of [political] Party, generally. This spirit, unfortunately, is inseparable from our nature, having its root in the strongest passions of the human Mind. It exists under different shapes in all Governments, more or less stifled, controlled, or repressed; but in those of the popular form it is seen in its greatest rankness and is truly their worst enemy. The alternate domination of one faction over another, sharpened by the spirit of revenge natural to party dissention, which in different ages & countries has perpetrated the most horrid enormities, is itself a frightful despotism. But this leads at length to a more formal and permanent despotism. The disorders & miseries, which result, gradually incline the minds of men to seek security & repose in the absolute power of an Individual; and sooner or later the chief of some prevailing faction more able or more fortunate than his competitors, turns this disposition to the purposes of his own elevation, on the ruins of Public Liberty. . . . It serves always to distract the Public Councils and enfeeble the Public Administration. It agitates the Community with ill founded jealousies and false alarms, kindles the animosity of one part against another, foment occasionally riot & insurrection. . . .

Source: *Founders Online*, National Archives, founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-20-02-0440-0002.

Keywords

Keyword Summary

In Your Own Words

NAME _____

PERIOD DATE _____

Summary Organizer 4: Washington's Farewell Address, 1796

Original Text

Observe good faith & justice towards all Nations cultivate peace & harmony with all. . . . Antipathy in one Nation against another disposes each more readily to offer insult and injury, to lay hold of slight causes of umbrage, and to be haughty and intractable, when accidental or trifling occasions of dispute occur. . . . So likewise, a passionate attachment of one Nation for another produces a variety of evils. Sympathy for the favourite nation, facilitating the illusion of an imaginary common interest, in cases where no real common interest exists . . . betrays the former into a participation in the quarrels & Wars of the latter. . . . Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence (I conjure you to believe me fellow citizens) the jealousy of a free people ought to be *constantly* awake; since history and experience prove that foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of Republican Government. . . . Our detached & distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course. If we remain one People, under an efficient government . . . we may defy material injury from external annoyance. . . . In offering to you, my Countrymen, these counsels of an old and affectionate friend, I dare not hope they will make the strong and lasting impression, I could wish—that they will controul the usual current of the passions, or prevent our Nation from running the course which has hitherto marked the Destiny of Nations. . . .

Source: *Founders Online*, National Archives, founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-20-02-0440-0002.

Keywords

Keyword Summary

In Your Own Words

NAME

PERIOD DATE

Creating an Essay: Analyzing Washington's Farewell Address

Select one of the following questions as an essay prompt. Support your response with evidence from the address.

1. What did President Washington suggest was a danger to the success of the newly formed United States of America?
2. What arguments did Washington use to support his statement that government is the “main pillar” of independence? Why is the government so important, and how can it be protected?
3. Washington wrote that in foreign policy “our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course.” What course of action did he argue the United States should take?

Topic Sentence or Paragraph:

Evidence:

Evidence:

Evidence:

Concluding Sentence or Paragraph: