George Washington

What is George Washington most known for?

One of the most popular Presidents of the United States, George Washington is known for leading the Continental Army in victory over the British in the American Revolution. He also was the first President of the United States and helped to define what the role of the president would be going forward.

Growing Up

George grew up in Colonial Virginia. His father, a landowner and planter, died when George was just 11 years old. Fortunately, George had an older brother named Lawrence who took good care of him. When George turned 16 he went to work as a surveyor, where he took measurements of new lands, mapping them out in detail. A few years later George became a leader with the Virginia militia and became involved in the start of the French and Indian War.

Before the Revolution

After the French and Indian War, George settled down and married the widow Martha Dandridge. George and Martha never had kids of their own. He became a large landowner and was elected to the Virginian legislature. Soon George and his fellow landowners became upset with unfair treatment by their British rulers. They began to argue and fight for their rights. When the British refused they decided to go to war.

The American Revolution and Leading the Army

George was one of Virginia's delegates at the First and Second Continental Congress. This was a group of representatives from each colony who decided to fight the British together. In May of 1775 they appointed Washington as general of the Continental Army. Over the course of six years George led the army to victory over the British. His victories include the famous crossing of the Delaware River on Christmas and the final victory at Yorktown, Virginia. The British Army surrendered in Yorktown on October 17, 1781.
Washington's Presidency

The two terms that Washington served as president were peaceful times. During this time, George established many roles and traditions of the President of the United States that still stand today. He helped build and guide the formation of the actual U.S. Government from the words of the Constitution. He formed the first presidential cabinet which included his friends Thomas Jefferson (Secretary of State) and Alexander Hamilton (Secretary of the Treasury). George stepped down from the presidency after 8 years, or two terms. He felt it was important that the president not become powerful or rule too long, like a king. Since then only one president, Franklin D. Roosevelt, has served more than two terms.

How did he die?

Just a few years after leaving the office of president, Washington caught a bad cold. He was soon very sick with a throat infection and died on December 14, 1799.

Fun Facts about George Washington

- He was the only president unanimously elected. Meaning all of the state representatives voted for him.
- He never served as president in Washington D.C., the capital that was named for him. In his first year the capital was in New York City, and then moved to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- He was six feet tall, which was very tall for the 1700s.
- The story of George Washington chopping down his father's cherry tree is considered fiction and likely never happened.
- George Washington did not have wooden teeth, but did wear dentures made from ivory.
- Washington gave freedom to his slaves in his will.

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https://www.ducksters.com/biography/uspresidents/georgewashington.php (online article)
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