

## Lesson Outline: The First Constitutional President

### Introduction

- Welcome and overview of the pivotal events following the ratification of the Constitution.
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### I. The First Elections and Inauguration (1788–1789)

- **Formation of the Government:**
    - Voters elected members of the House of Representatives.
    - State legislatures elected Senate members and selected electors for the president.
  - **Electoral College:**
    - Unanimously elected George Washington as the first president.
    - John Adams elected vice president.
  - **Washington's Inauguration (April 30, 1789):**
    - Held in New York City, then the nation's capital.
    - Washington took the oath on a Bible and added, "So help me God," starting a tradition.
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### II. Washington's Leadership and the Establishment of Precedents

- **Presidential Cabinet:**
    - Key members included Alexander Hamilton (Treasury), Thomas Jefferson (State), Henry Knox (War), and Edmund Randolph (Attorney General).
  - **Judiciary Act of 1789:**
    - Created the federal court system, Supreme Court, district, and circuit courts.
    - John Jay became the first Chief Justice.
  - **Promoting Innovation:**
    - Patent Office established in 1790 to protect inventions.
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### III. Slavery and Early Resistance

- **Fugitive Slave Law (1793):**
    - Allowed slave owners to retrieve escaped slaves from free states.
    - Faced resistance, especially in northern states like Wisconsin.
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### IV. Hamilton's Financial Program

- **Addressing War Debts:**
    - Funded through land sales, tariffs, and excise taxes.
  - **Whiskey Rebellion (1794):**
    - Farmers in Pennsylvania resisted excise taxes on whiskey.
    - Washington deployed troops, solidifying federal authority.
  - **National Bank and Currency:**
    - Creation of the First Bank of the United States (1791).
    - Mint Act (1792) established a federal mint and bimetallic standard.
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### V. Rise of Political Parties

- **Federalists (Hamilton):**
    - Advocated for an expanding central government and a national bank.
  - **Democratic-Republicans (Jefferson):**
    - Championed state sovereignty and opposed expansive federal powers.
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## VI. Foreign Policy Challenges

- **French Revolution (1789–1799):**
    - Americans initially supported but later divided in opinion.
    - Washington declared neutrality in 1793 to avoid entanglement in European wars.
  - **Jay Treaty (1795):**
    - Settled disputes with Britain but faced criticism for unaddressed issues.
  - **Pinckney Treaty (1795):**
    - Secured navigation rights on the Mississippi River and access to New Orleans.
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## VII. Establishing a National Capital

- **Washington, D.C.:**
    - Selected along the Potomac River as part of a compromise.
    - Designed by Pierre L'Enfant, completed by Ellicott and Banneker.
    - Became operational in 1800 during John Adams' presidency.
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## VIII. Washington's Farewell (1797)

- Declined a third term, setting a precedent.
  - Farewell Address emphasized:
    - National unity.
    - Neutrality in foreign affairs.
    - Respect for religion and morality.
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## Closing Remarks

- Washington's leadership established foundational principles for the new republic.
- His humility and vision set the tone for future presidents.

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## Multiple Choice Questions

- 1. Who was elected as the first president under the U.S. Constitution?**
  - a) Thomas Jefferson
  - b) John Adams
  - c) George Washington
  - d) Alexander Hamilton\
- 2. What year did George Washington take the oath of office?**
  - a) 1787
  - b) 1789
  - c) 1791
  - d) 1793
- 3. Where was George Washington inaugurated as the first president?**
  - a) Washington, D.C.
  - b) Philadelphia
  - c) Boston
  - d) New York City
- 4. What was the primary purpose of the Judiciary Act of 1789?**
  - a) To create a national bank
  - b) To establish the federal court system
  - c) To sign the Constitution into law
  - d) To elect the first Congress
- 5. What was the main cause of the Whiskey Rebellion?**
  - a) Opposition to tariffs on foreign goods
  - b) Resistance to an excise tax on whiskey
  - c) Anger over land sales in the West
  - d) Disputes over state sovereignty
- 6. Which two individuals were at the center of the debate over the national bank?**
  - a) Thomas Jefferson and George Washington
  - b) Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson
  - c) John Adams and Alexander Hamilton
  - d) George Washington and John Jay
- 7. What treaty settled boundary disputes with Spain and gave Americans access to the Mississippi River?**
  - a) Jay Treaty
  - b) Treaty of Paris

- c) Pinckney Treaty
- d) Treaty of Ghent

**8. What political party did Alexander Hamilton lead?**

- a) Federalists
- b) Democratic-Republicans
- c) Whigs
- d) Anti-Federalists

**9. Which event demonstrated George Washington's willingness to enforce federal laws?**

- a) The French Revolution
- b) The Whiskey Rebellion
- c) The signing of the Jay Treaty
- d) The Pinckney Treaty

**10. Why did George Washington decline to run for a third term as president?**

- a) He was in poor health.
- b) He wanted to set an example of limited presidential power.
- c) He lost the support of Congress.
- d) He preferred to serve as a Supreme Court Justice.

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**Answer Key**

- 1. c) George Washington
- 2. b) 1789
- 3. d) New York City
- 4. b) To establish the federal court system
- 5. b) Resistance to an excise tax on whiskey
- 6. b) Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson
- 7. c) Pinckney Treaty
- 8. a) Federalists
- 9. b) The Whiskey Rebellion
- 10. b) He wanted to set an example of limited presidential power

### **Discussion Questions**

- 1. Why do you think George Washington chose not to serve a third term as president? How does this decision reflect his leadership style and values?**
- 2. What were some of the challenges faced by the new U.S. government after the Constitution was adopted, and how did leaders like Washington, Hamilton, and Jefferson address them?**
- 3. The Whiskey Rebellion was one of the first tests of federal authority. Do you think Washington was right to use military force to stop the rebellion? Why or why not?**
- 4. Hamilton and Jefferson had very different ideas about the role of government. If you were alive during this time, whose ideas do you think you would support, and why?**
- 5. How do you think George Washington's decision to include the words "So help me God" in his oath and wear an American-made suit for his inauguration influenced how people viewed him as a leader?**