

## George Washington's Farewell Address

### Background

By the time George Washington was preparing to leave office, the young United States was firmly entrenched with political parties (Federalists and Democratic-Republicans) and was having some troubles with its foreign policy. Washington used his farewell address to tackle both topics, giving firm warnings about political parties and giving guidelines for international relations. Since he wanted all of America to "hear" his speech, he had it printed in newspapers, rather than delivering it. What follows is an excerpt of his thoughts on foreign policy.

*Observe good faith and justice toward all nations; cultivate peace and harmony with all. Who can doubt, that, in the course of time and things, the fruits of such a plan would richly repay any temporary advantages, which might be lost by a steady adherence to it?*

*In the execution of such a plan, nothing is more essential, that that [ill feelings] against particular Nations, and passionate attachments for others, should be excluded; and that in place of them, just and amicable (friendly) feelings towards all should be cultivated. The Nation, which indulges towards another an habitual hatred, or an habitual fondness, is in some degree a slave. It is a slave to its animosity (ill feelings) or to its affection, either which is sufficient to lead it astray from its duty and its interest...*

*The great rule of conduct for us, in regard to foreign nations, is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements, let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith. Here let us stop...*

*It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world, so far, I mean, as we are now at liberty to do it; for let me not be understood as capable of patronizing infidelity to existing engagements. I hold the maxim no less applicable to public than to private affairs that honesty is always the best policy. I repeat, therefore, let those engagements be observed in their genuine sense. But in my opinion it is unnecessary and would be unwise to extend them...*

### Questions

1. What is better according to Washington, animosity towards other nations or passion toward other nations? Does he suggest an alternative, if so, what is it?
2. What policy does Washington advise regarding commercial and political relations with other nations?
3. Do you think Washington's advice for the nation is good or bad? Prepare a statement for or against his views using current day examples.

# Grading the President: George Washington

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_



CATEGORY	4	3	2	1	Why did you choose this rating?
Contributions To our new nations-pres	Contributes to society in a positive way. A strong and responsible leader.	Contributes to society in a positive way. A satisfactory leader.	Makes few contributions to society. A mediocre leader.	Does not contribute to society. An awful leader.	
Domestic Policy— Handling of Whiskey Rebellion, allowing creation of national bank, etc...	Always shows concern for America and its people. Makes improvements to the quality of life of the American Citizens.	Shows concern for America and minor improvement to the quality of life of the American Citizens.	Shows little regard for Americans and its people. Makes no improvement to the quality of the life of the American Citizens.	Shows no regard for America. Hurts the quality of life of American Citizens.	
Foreign Policy— Dealings with Britain, France and Spain	Almost always listens to, shares with and supports the efforts of other nations. Tries to keep people working well together.	Usually listens to, shares with and supports the efforts of others. Does not cause "waves" in the group.	Usually listens to, shares with and supports the efforts of others. Sometimes is not a good "team" member.	Rarely listens to, shares with and supports the efforts of others. Often is not a good team player.	
Problem Solving for the Future— Message in Farewell address.	Actively looks for and suggests solutions to problems that are realistic and possible.	Refines solutions suggested by others with an open mind.	Does not suggest or refine solutions, but is willing to try out solutions suggested by others.	Does not try to solve problems or help others solve problems. Unrealistic expectations.	

Overall Rating: