

- Conduct a presidential scavenger hunt with your class. Encourage students to find the first president to do the following things: live in the White House, be born in a log cabin, marry while in office, have a car at the White House, visit all 50 states, install a bathtub at the White House, give a speech over the radio or visit a foreign country. This search can be expanded with other fun presidential facts.
- Ask students to imagine that they are artists who have been commissioned to design new presidential memorials. Which presidents would they choose to honor and why? What images and designs would these memorials include? How would they reflect the lives and accomplishments of the presidents? Working individually or in small groups, students can draw or build miniature versions of their proposed memorials.
- Ask students to imagine that the White House is being replaced and that a contest is being held for the best design of a new building to replace it. Help students to compile a list of all the functions that the White House serves, from providing offices for the president and his or her staff, to being the president's home, to acting as a symbol of the country. Students can design proposals for the new building that allow for these different functions. Ask the class to vote on a favorite design.
- Using maps and other online and print resources, help students to plan a virtual trip to Washington, D.C. What buildings or monuments would they visit and why? Help students to locate these on a map.

Suggested Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our web site at www.LibraryVideo.com.

- **www.whitehousehistory.org**
This site provides several virtual tours, including a fact-filled, "bird-watching" White House tour for kids.
- **bensguide.gpo.gov/3-5/symbols/**
"Ben's Guide to U.S. Government for Kids" introduces students to government buildings and monuments found in Washington, D.C.
- **www.whitehouse.gov/kids/whlife/index.html**
"Life in the White House" includes activities, games and video tours of the building.
- **kids.dc.gov**
This District of Columbia site contains sections on history, games and sports.
- **www.americanhistory.si.edu/presidency/home.html**
The Smithsonian Institute's "The American Presidency: A Glorious Burden" includes student activities and teacher resources.

Suggested Print Resources

- Curlee, Lynn. *Capital*. Atheneum, New York, NY; 2003.
- Harness, Cheryl. *Ghosts of the White House*. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, New York, NY; 1998.
- Hill, Lee Sullivan. *Monuments Help Us Remember*. Carolrhoda Books, Minneapolis, MN; 2001.
- Roop, Peter and Connie. *Let's Celebrate Presidents' Day*. Millbrook Press, Brookfield, CT; 2001.

TEACHER'S GUIDE

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Washington, D.C.

Grades K-4

Studying history is an essential part of understanding the world we live in today. The history of the United States includes the experiences and accomplishments of diverse peoples, from Native Americans and immigrants to the descendants of European settlers and of Africans brought here by force. Key events such as the Revolutionary War, the writing of the Constitution and the Emancipation Proclamation influenced how the nation developed. The study of history also involves facing painful aspects of the country's past, such as slavery and the treatment of Native Americans. Over time, songs, holidays and other observances have shaped and reflected how Americans see themselves and their country. History provides a framework for interpreting and living in the ever-changing present.



Program Overview

When the United States became a new country, its leaders decided to build a permanent capital city in a special district, the District of Columbia, in what was then a wilderness. Named for President George Washington, the city is now home to many government buildings and important national monuments. The Capitol Building is where Congress meets and makes laws, and the White House is where the current president and his wife, the first lady, live. The Supreme Court Building houses the most important court in the country. There are also many memorials, or monuments, in Washington, D.C. that help us to remember and honor important people and events. Some of them recognize important presidents from the country's history, while others were built in memory of events such as the Vietnam War. Every year, many people visit the busy city of Washington, D.C. to learn about its amazing history and to explore its many important and historic locations.

Vocabulary

Congress — The law-making branch of the federal government, made up of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

capital — The city where a country's central government is located.

district — A geographical area set aside for a specific purpose.

survey — To make detailed measurements of an area.

Mall — The tree-lined grassy park area in Washington where most of the monuments are located.

monument — Something built to remember a person or an event. Also known as a memorial.

obelisk — A four-sided column, such as the Washington Monument.

Capitol Building — The building in which the U.S. Congress meets.

rotunda — A round hall or large round room.

dome — A round roof that covers a rotunda.

inaugurated — Formally sworn in to begin serving in a high office, such as president.

Oval Office — The president's oval-shaped office in the White House.

Tidal Basin — Washington's water area that is like a lake, and that is part of the Potomac River.

Supreme Court — One of the three branches of the federal government, made up of nine judges.

Chief Justice — The member of the Supreme Court who is in charge of running the courtroom.

Pre-viewing Discussion

- Ask students to discuss everything they know about Washington, D.C. What is it? Where is it? Who lives and works there? Who is it named after and why? If any students have visited this city, ask them to tell the class what they remember about their visits.
- Remind students that the federal government is made up of three parts: Congress, the president and the Supreme Court. Discuss briefly with students what they know about the three branches. Ask students to describe the kind of buildings that they imagine each branch probably works in.
- Memorials are structures built to remember and honor important people and events. Ask students what people and what events from U.S. history they believe deserve to have memorials. Why?
- Who was George Washington? What things can students think of that are named after Washington?

Focus Questions

1. Why did the early leaders of our country decide to place the capital in a special district rather than in one of the states?
2. Describe how the Capitol Building changed over time.
3. What groups meet in the Capitol Building?
4. What improvements have been made to the White House since it was first built?
5. What is Abraham Lincoln best remembered for?
6. Describe the Jefferson Memorial.
7. How is the Vietnam Veterans Memorial different from other memorials on the Mall?
8. Who meets in the Supreme Court Building? What do these people do?

Follow-up Discussion

- Point out the location of Washington, D.C. on a map of the United States and ask students to explain why the capital city was placed so close to one end of the country rather than somewhere near its center. Ask students if they think the capital city of the U.S. ought to be relocated to a different spot, now that the nation has fifty states and has expanded in size and in shape.
- Discuss how the White House is a symbol of the United States. What other symbols of the U.S. can students think of? How are these symbols alike and different? Ask students which symbols they feel best represent the country and why.

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- Some monuments, such as the Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials, include a sculpture of the person being memorialized, while others, such as the Washington Monument, represent the person in other ways. Ask students to compare and contrast these monuments and the ways each one represents a specific president. Does one seem more effective? Why?
- Ask students if they feel that it was appropriate to name the capital city after George Washington. Why or why not? What else could Washington, D.C. have been called?

Follow-up Activities

- Both the Capitol Building and the White House were set on fire by invading British troops during the War of 1812. Have students investigate the War of 1812 and create a time line of events.
- Share with your class short biographies of famous first ladies, such as Martha Washington, Dolley Madison, Abigail Adams, Lady Bird Johnson, Nancy Reagan and Hillary Clinton. Ask students to write several basic facts about each person. As a follow-up, ask students to create posters showing the accomplishments of these important women.
- Pretend that the class has been appointed by Congress to recommend keeping the capital city in Washington, D.C. or to select a location for a new capital city nearer the center of the country. Have students discuss the pros and cons of moving the capital and make recommendations for Congress to vote on.
- The Jefferson Memorial uses many of the same architectural elements as Thomas Jefferson used when he designed his own house, Monticello. Jefferson also filled his home with many interesting ideas to make life more convenient, such as beds that were built into walls to save space and dumbwaiters built under the dining room to carry things up from the basement. Ask students to use their creative skills to design a dream house that includes features that they think would make their own lives easier.
- Ask students to name any people or events they would wish to honor with a memorial in their schools or local communities and to make a design for such a memorial.
- Share Eve Bunting's *The Wall* with your students (Clarion Books, 1990). This picture book tells the fictional story of a father who brings his son to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. to find the name of the child's grandfather who died in the Vietnam War. Discuss with students why they think war memorials are important. Encourage students to research other memorials dedicated to U.S. soldiers. As an extension, students can write letters or cards to U.S. military veterans.

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