

Washington Takes Office

Pgs 282-287

- 1. When did George Washington begin his term as the 1st President of the United States?**
- 2. What is an Inauguration?**
- 3. What is a precedent?**
- 4. Describe the four new positions created in the Executive Branch by Congress. (name of the office, name of the person, what they did? etc)**
- 5. What is the president's cabinet?**
- 6. Explain the importance of the Judiciary Act of 1789.**
- 7. Who was our first Supreme Court Chief Justice?**
- 8. How much debt was the United States in?**
- 9. Describe Hamilton's Financial Plan. (Include all three parts)**
- 10. Who was opposed to Hamilton's plan? Why?**
- 11. Describe the difference between "loose" and "strict" interpretation of the Constitution.**
- 12. Why did Hamilton's Plan call for a high tariff?**
- 13. Describe the Whiskey Rebellion and why it happened.**



Washington Takes Office

Objectives

1. Discuss how the new government was organized during Washington's presidency.
2. Explain why the new nation faced an economic crisis.
3. Identify the three parts of Hamilton's financial plan.
4. Describe how Washington responded to the Whiskey Rebellion.

Prepare to Read

Reading Skill

Identify Similes Similes use the signal words *like* or *as* to connect two items being compared. The comparison helps the reader to imagine the description more fully. For example, "the gunfire echoed like thunder" creates a mental image of the sound of a battle. Look for similes as you read this section.

Vocabulary Builder

High-Use Words

invest, p. 284

impose, p. 285

Key Terms

inauguration, p. 283

precedent, p. 283

bond, p. 284

speculator, p. 284

unconstitutional, p. 285

tariff, p. 286

★ **Background Knowledge** In 1789, the United States was one fourth of its size today. All 13 states were in the East. The nation's western border followed the Mississippi River. The enormous Northwest Territory lay between that river and the Appalachian Mountains. In the North, the Great Lakes formed much of the border separating the United States from British-controlled Canada. In the South, the United States bordered on Spanish-controlled Florida and Louisiana.

The American people had a new Constitution. They now had a new Congress and their first President. In this section, you will learn how the nation's leaders made this brand-new government work.

Main Idea

Congress and the President chose people to run the institutions created by the Constitution.

The First President

In April of 1789, George Washington traveled from Virginia to the nation's capital, New York City, to begin his term as the first President of the United States. Washington's journey along bumpy roads took eight days. Large crowds lined the streets. As one newspaper reported, Americans greatly admired the tall, stately war hero:

“Many persons in the crowd were heard to say they should now die contented—nothing being wanted to complete their happiness . . . but the sight of the savior of his country.”

—*Gazette of the United States*, April 1789

Washington's **inauguration**—a ceremony in which the President takes the oath of office—was held on April 30, 1789. Despite all he had achieved, Washington was anxious. The country divided on many issues. Washington understood how much the new nation depended on him. His actions would set a precedent—an example to be followed by others in the future.

The Executive Branch The Constitution of the United States provided only a general outline for organizing the government. When the President took office, the entire federal government was made up of little more than 75 post offices, a few clerks, and a tiny army of 672 soldiers.

The first job of the President and the Congress, therefore, was to put a working government in place. First, Congress passed laws to set up three departments for the executive branch: Treasury, State, and War. Each department was to be headed by a secretary nominated by the President. The President would also appoint an attorney general to advise him on legal matters.

Washington appointed four well-known men to take the new posts. He chose Alexander Hamilton to be secretary of the treasury. Hamilton was considered one of the country's outstanding leaders and an expert on economic affairs. Thomas Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence, became secretary of state. His task was to manage relations with foreign countries. Henry Knox, a former general, was Washington's choice for secretary of war. Edmund Randolph, who had played an important role at the Constitutional Convention, became attorney general.

Washington soon began meeting regularly with these leaders as a group. Over time, this group became known as the Cabinet.

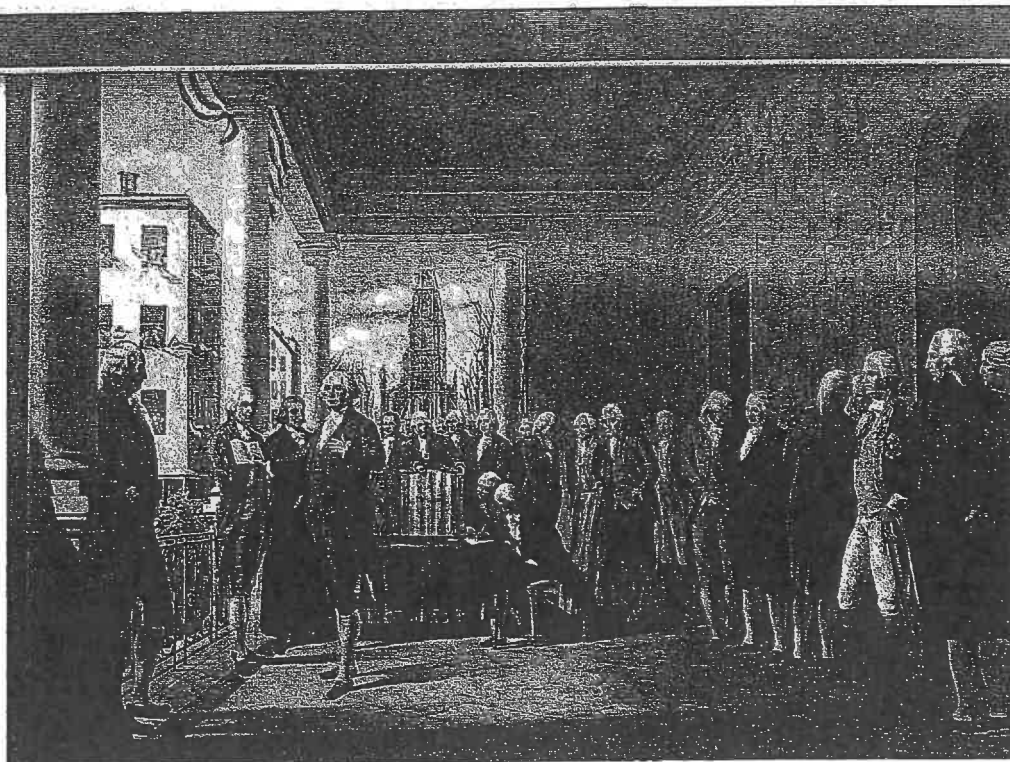
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To learn more about George Washington's presidency, view the video.

Washington's Inauguration

George Washington took the oath of office on a balcony of Federal Hall in New York City as well-wishers watched from the street below. **Critical Thinking: Link Past and Present** Who attended Washington's oath-taking? How would a modern-day President's inauguration be different?



Establishing the Judiciary The Constitution also called for a judiciary, or court system. The Judiciary Act of 1789 provided for a Supreme Court of 6 justices. Under the Supreme Court were 3 circuit courts and 13 district courts. The main job of the federal courts was to hear appeals from the state courts. Washington appointed John Jay of New York as the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

Checkpoint What were the new executive departments?

Main Idea

The federal government owed millions of dollars but lacked money with which to pay its debts.

Vocabulary Builder

invest (ihh VEHS) v. to purchase something with the hope that its value will grow

The Nation's First Economic Crisis

The American Revolution had left the nation deeply in debt. The federal government owed \$52 million. That debt was mainly in the form of bonds. A **bond** is a certificate issued by a government for an amount of money that the government promises to pay back with interest. Both Americans and foreigners had **invested** in bonds to help the war effort. Would the government pay back this debt?

The issue was complicated because most people who had originally bought the bonds had sold them for less than they were worth. The buyers were **speculators**—people who invest in a risky venture in the hope of making a large profit. It seemed **unfair** to many Americans that speculators would make a profit after the original bondholders had lost money. Also in dispute was whether or not the federal government should pay back state debts.

The government was operating on a shoestring. It did not even have the money for George Washington's move to New York. Washington had to borrow \$3,000 to pay his moving expenses.

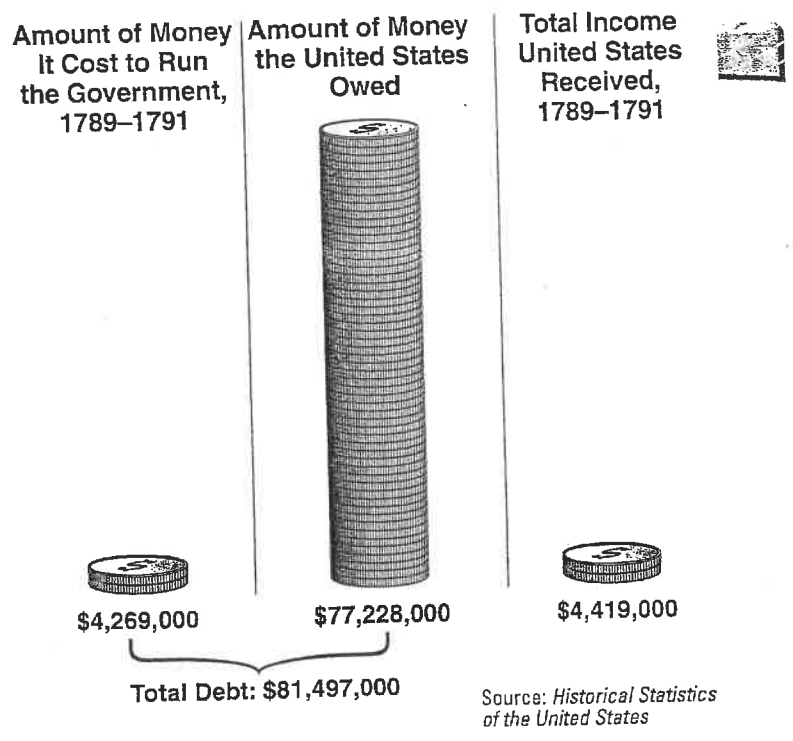
Checkpoint Why was there such a large public debt?

Links to Economics

The Debt Problem

The U.S. government was collecting enough in taxes to pay its expenses, but hardly enough to pay back the debt. Hamilton's financial plan sought to find new sources of income to repay the debt.

Critical Thinking: Identifying Economic Costs Without the amount of money owed, how much would the government have had left over after paying its costs?



Hamilton's Financial Plan

The person responsible for developing a plan to solve the country's financial crisis was Alexander Hamilton, the secretary of the treasury.

Hamilton's program had three parts: (1) The U.S. government would fully assume, or agree to pay, all federal *and* state debts. (2) The U.S. government would charter a national bank for depositing government funds. (3) The government would impose a high tax on goods imported into the country.

Paying the Debt Hamilton knew that paying the debt would be a huge burden on the U.S. government. However, he wanted to prove to people here and abroad that the United States would honor its debts in full. Then, people would be willing to invest again in the future.

Many southerners opposed the plan to repay state debts. Several southern states had paid off their wartime debts on their own. Southerners thought other states should do the same.

Congress debated the plan for six months in 1790. Then, an agreement was reached. Southerners would support Hamilton's plan to have the federal government repay the wartime debt. In return, the government would build its new capital city in the South. The capital would rise along the banks of the Potomac River, between Virginia and Maryland.

National Bank The second part of Hamilton's plan called for the creation of a privately owned bank of the United States. It would provide a safe place to deposit government funds. The bank would be able to issue paper money that would serve as a national currency.

The debate over the bank of the United States went beyond the bank itself and focused on the powers the government had under the Constitution. Opponents of the bank, such as Thomas Jefferson, insisted that the law establishing the bank was unconstitutional—contrary to what is permitted by the Constitution.

Jefferson argued that nowhere in the Constitution was there a provision allowing Congress to set up a national bank. Jefferson's view, that the Constitution permits only what it specifically says, is called a "strict" interpretation of the Constitution. Hamilton argued for a "loose" interpretation. He pointed out that Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution gave Congress the power to make all laws "necessary and proper" for fulfilling its duties. This suggested that there were things not directly permitted by the Constitution that Congress could do.

Main Idea

Alexander Hamilton proposed a three-part plan to address the economic crisis.

Vocabulary Builder

impose (ihm POHZ) v. to place a burden on something or someone

Biography Quest



Alexander Hamilton
1755–1804

If not for Aaron Burr, Alexander Hamilton might have made even greater contributions to the nation. In 1804, Burr ran for governor of New York. Hamilton opposed Burr and criticized his character. After losing the election, Burr challenged Hamilton to a duel. Hamilton was against dueling because his son had been killed in a duel. He purposely missed his shot at Burr. However, Burr took careful aim and killed Hamilton.

Biography Quest Online

Why did Hamilton defend Loyalists in court after the American Revolution?

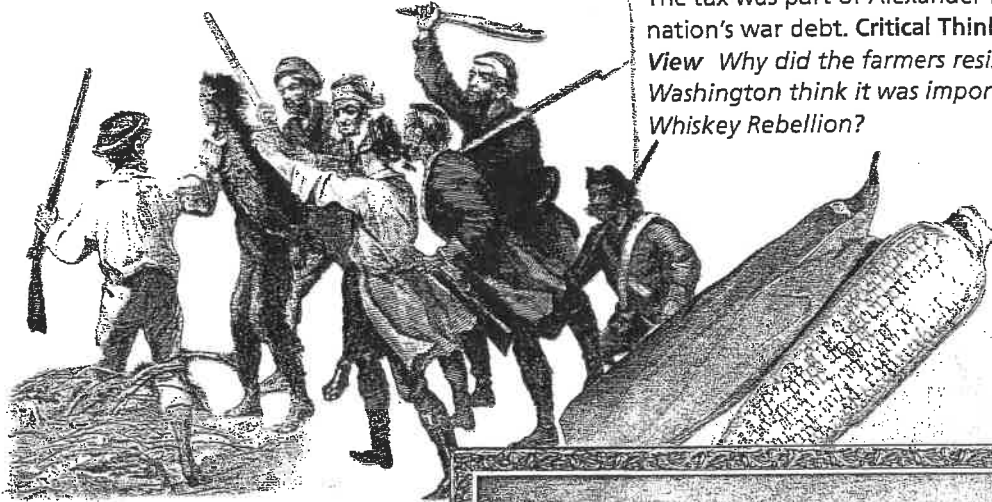
For: The answer to the question about Hamilton

Visit: PHSchool.com

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The Whiskey Rebellion

Farmers thought that having to pay a tax on the whiskey they produced from their corn was too heavy a burden. The tax was part of Alexander Hamilton's plan to pay the nation's war debt. **Critical Thinking: Detect Points of View** Why did the farmers resist the tax? Why did George Washington think it was important to put down the Whiskey Rebellion?



"We Won't Pay the Tax" ▲
Angry Pennsylvania farmers and militia members tar and feather a would-be tax collector (second from left). Farmers thought it was unfair to tax their "liquid corn," or whiskey.

No Tolerance for Rebellion ►
George Washington reviews U.S. troops as they start off to Pennsylvania to put down the rebellion. He said the farmers' actions threatened both "the just authority of government" and "the rights of individuals."



In 1791, Congress did pass a law establishing the bank, and the President signed it. However, to this day Americans disagree about whether the Constitution should be interpreted strictly or loosely.

A High Tariff The final part of Hamilton's plan called for a high tariff—a tax on imported goods. It would raise money for the federal government. It would also protect U.S. manufacturers from foreign competition.

The tariff was the only part of Hamilton's plan that Congress did not pass, and that was because southerners opposed it. They argued that a high tariff would help the North, where most industries were located, while making southerners pay more for the goods they bought.

Checkpoint How did Congress respond to Hamilton's plan?

The Whiskey Rebellion

In 1791, Congress imposed a tax on all whiskey made and sold in the United States. Hamilton hoped this tax would raise funds for the Treasury. Instead, it led to a revolt that tested the strength of the new government.

Many backcountry farmers made extra money by turning the corn they grew into whiskey. Therefore, they bitterly resented the new whiskey tax. Farmers compared it to the hated taxes that Britain had imposed on the colonies before the Revolution. Many farmers organized protests and refused to pay the tax.

In 1794, officials in western Pennsylvania tried to collect the tax. Farmers rebelled, burning down the home of a tax collector. Soon, a large, angry mob was marching through Pittsburgh like a gathering storm. The violent protest became known as the Whiskey Rebellion.

Washington responded quickly to this challenge to federal authority. He sent the militia to Pennsylvania. When the rebels heard that 13,000 troops were marching against them, they quickly scattered. Washington later pardoned the leaders of the rebellion.

The Whiskey Rebellion tested the will of the new government. Washington's forceful response showed Americans that armed rebellion was not acceptable in a republic.

Checkpoint What was the cause of the Whiskey Rebellion?

Looking Back and Ahead George Washington set a firm course for the federal government, while Alexander Hamilton began to attack the debt problem. In the next section, you will read how the nation's first political parties developed.

Main Idea

When Pennsylvania farmers rebelled against a federal tax on whiskey, President Washington responded with armed force.



Identify Similes

Find the simile in this paragraph. What two things are being compared?

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Comprehension and Critical Thinking

- (a) **Describe** How did Washington's inauguration reflect the nation's deep respect for him?

(b) **Organize Information** Create a chart showing the top posts in the executive branch and judiciary at this time. Define each position and name the first person to occupy each post.
- (a) **Recall** What was the nation's first economic crisis? How was it further complicated?

(b) **Explain Problems** What was Hamilton's plan to solve the crisis? Why was it controversial?

Reading Skill

- Identify Similes** Identify the simile in this sentence: The new President was as tough as nails. What two things does it compare?

Vocabulary Builder

- Write two definitions for each key term: inauguration, precedent, bond, speculator, unconstitutional, tariff. First, write a formal definition for your teacher. Second, write a definition in everyday English for a classmate.

Writing

- A newspaper account of George Washington's inauguration referred to him as "the savior of his country." That was a reference to Washington's service as commander in chief during the Revolutionary War. If you were to begin reading an essay about the life of George Washington, list five questions you would like it to answer.

