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George Washington

1st President of the United States

Term: 1789-1797

Party: Federalist



★ **1732:** George Washington was born on February 22 at Pope's Creek in Westmoreland County, Virginia.

★ **1752:** He inherited the rights to his family's Mount Vernon plantation upon the death of his brother Lawrence Washington.

★ **1759:** He married Martha Dandridge Custis, a wealthy widow with two young children.

★ **1776-1783:** As an Army General, Washington helped the 13 colonies win the Revolutionary War against the British. The colonists formed the American Continental Army and Congress unanimously selected Washington as commander in chief.

The soldiers were not well trained, lacked adequate food, weapons and uniforms. Their enemy, the British, were strong, well-equipped and disciplined. Washington organized his troops, motivated them, and against all odds was victorious. Now the colonists could focus on building a new nation.

★ **1787:** Washington presided over the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia during which the U.S. Constitution was written.

★ **1789:** On April 14, at age 57, Washington was notified that he had been elected first President of the United States. He received the unanimous vote of the electors. He was inaugurated on April 30 in New York City, then the capital of the United States.

★ **1790:** On July 16, Washington signed plans Congress had approved for a U.S. capital on the Potomac.

The first national census began. It showed just under four million people in the United States.



★ **1791:** On December 15, the Bill of Rights became law. As the first 10 amendments to the Constitution, they guarantee basic liberties to Americans.

★ **1792:** Washington was unanimously re-elected by the electors as President for a second term. He was inaugurated in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, which was the capital of the United States from 1790 to 1800. Rival national political parties began developing in the United States.

★ **1794:** Washington sent federal troops to crush an uprising by Pennsylvania farmers. This was the first test of federal power.

★ **1795:** Washington signed the unpopular Jay Treaty to maintain trade with Great Britain.

★ **1796:** On September 19, Washington published his farewell address refusing to run for a third term.

★ **1797:** Washington returned home to Mount Vernon in Fairfax County, Virginia.

★ **1799:** After riding his horse around his property for five hours in a snowstorm, Washington caught a cold and his throat became infected. He died at his home on December 14 at the age of 67.

★ **1802:** According to Washington's will, upon Martha's death all of Mount Vernon's slaves were freed.

After his death, the nation's capital was moved from Philadelphia to a location on the border of Virginia and Maryland near Washington's home. It was named Washington, District of Columbia, in his honor.





John Adams

2nd President of the United States

Term: 1797-1801

Party: Federalist



★ **1735:** John Adams was born on October 30 in Braintree, Massachusetts. The Braintree of 1735 is now called Quincy.

★ **1751:** Although Adams was a poor student and did not like to read, he was accepted at Harvard College where he learned to enjoy school. Here he developed a gift for public speaking.

★ **1755:** After graduating from Harvard, he studied law with an attorney in Massachusetts.

★ **1758:** He began his own law practice and gradually built a good clientele in and around Boston.

★ **1764:** Adams married Abigail Quincy Smith of Boston, a woman who had strong views on law, politics and the rights of women.

★ **1774-1775:** Adams was elected as representative from Massachusetts to the First and Second Continental Congresses in Philadelphia. He joined Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and other delegates to draft the Declaration of Independence.

★ **1777:** He was elected commissioner to France.

★ **1780:** He was elected minister to the Netherlands.

★ **1785-1788:** Adams was appointed as the first U.S. minister to Great Britain where he lived with Abigail.

★ **1789-1797:** Having received the second highest amount of electoral votes, Adams served two terms as Washington's Vice President, a job he described as "the most insignificant office . . ."

