
**Holiday Facts & Fun:
Presidents' Day
Second Edition**



Teacher's Guide
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by
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PRESIDENTS' DAY

SECOND EDITION

From the
Holiday Facts & Fun
Series

Grades K-5

Viewing Time: 14:10

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Intended Audience and Uses

Presidents' Day has been produced for students in grades K-5. Using costumed reenactments, along with archival illustrations and photos, the program provides biographical information on George Washington and Abraham Lincoln and discusses how and why Presidents' Day is observed. This video meets McREL K-4 History Standard 1 ("Understands family life...in the past..."); McREL K-4 History Standard 4 ("Understands how democratic values came to be, and how they have been exemplified by people, events and symbols"); McREL U.S. History Standard 6

(“Understands causes of the American Revolution...”); McREL U.S. History Standard 9 (“Understands U.S. territorial expansion between 1801 and 1861.”); and McREL U.S. History Standard 13 (“Understands the causes of the Civil War...”).

Program Synopsis

The program is divided into five sections. After the introduction, the first shows young George Washington doing chores on his family’s farm in colonial Virginia. George also is seen with his mother, brothers and sister as Mrs. Washington provides instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic. The video explains that George’s boyhood idol, his half-brother Lawrence, is a captain in the English Navy. Lawrence is married to the daughter of wealthy landowner William Fairfax. Colonel Fairfax provides George the opportunity to do land surveys as a teenager. The second part picks up the story after Lawrence’s untimely death. George studies military science to take Lawrence’s place. Eventually, he joins the Virginia militia. He then begins a relatively idyllic period in his life – as a gentleman farmer at Mt. Vernon. However, the clouds of war are gathering, and a brief explanation of the events leading to the Revolutionary War is given. George’s role as America’s military leader in the war and his subsequent election as president are covered. The third segment shows Abraham Lincoln’s childhood on a small Indiana farm. The program explains that Abraham’s father moved his family from Kentucky because he did not want to live in a state that allowed slavery. A discussion of slavery in 19th century America follows. The fourth part shows Lincoln’s life after he moved, at age 21, to New Salem, Illinois. He is shown as a store clerk, lawyer and politician. His honesty is highlighted. A brief background to the Civil War is given and Lincoln’s pulling the country from the

brink of destruction is covered, as is his Emancipation Proclamation. The final section shows how Presidents' Day is typically observed – with student plays, speeches and cherry pie.

VIEWER OBJECTIVES

After viewing this video and participating in the suggested activities, viewers should be able to do the following:

1. Briefly recount George Washington's childhood experiences.
2. Explain why Washington was ideally suited to lead America's troops during the Revolutionary War and why he is known as "the father of our country."
3. Discuss Abraham Lincoln's childhood.
4. Tell why Abraham Lincoln was one of our country's greatest presidents.
5. Name at least three ways Presidents' Day is typically observed.
6. Explain what the president does and why his job is so difficult.

The producers encourage you to make adaptations and changes to the following lesson plan whenever you feel it will enhance your students' learning experiences. Only by tailoring the material to your unique classroom situation will you be able to maximize the educational experience afforded by these materials.

SUGGESTED LESSON PLAN

Viewing Strategies

Various strategies may be employed when showing *Presidents' Day* to your class. If you wish to use the

program as a way to give general information about the holiday, you may find it useful to show the entire program in one screening, then follow up with appropriate questions (see the ***Suggested Discussion Questions*** blackline master) and/or activities suggested in this guide. If you would like to focus on George Washington and Abraham Lincoln separately, you could show the first two segments, then the last three – again using the appropriate questions and activities after you have paused or stopped the program. If you would like to spend more time on each stage of Washington’s and Lincoln’s lives (if your class is studying colonial or pioneer life, for example), you may find it useful to show one segment at a time, followed by discussion and activities.

Introduce the Program

List on the chalkboard or overhead projector and discuss the following jobs of the American presidency: (1) Leader of the American people; (2) Boss of all federal government employees; (3) Leader of the American military; (4) One of the main people who decides how the government’s money will be spent. If appropriate, you may want to give some details to each of the above items. After you have discussed these key jobs of the presidency, tell your students they will see a program called ***Presidents’ Day***. Ask why there is a holiday to honor American Presidents. Help your students understand that the presidency is one of the most important jobs in the world, and that a good president can do wonderful things for not only citizens of the United States, but for those elsewhere in the world.

Pre-Viewing Activities

The producers encourage you to prescreen the program to familiarize yourself with its content.

Tell the class that the program discusses two of the most honored presidents in our country's history. Does anyone know who they might be? After it has been determined that they are George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, ask the class if anyone knows when these two men lived. Draw a time line that illustrates that George Washington lived in the late 18th century and Abraham Lincoln in the mid-19th century. Tell the class that they will see many differences between those times and today.

Post-Viewing Activities

Discuss the program, using the *Suggested Discussion Questions*, if you prefer. Pass out *My Life and George Washington's Life* and *My Life and Abraham Lincoln's Life*. Do these as a class activity, or assign them as seat work or committee work. When they're completed, discuss the answers. As another class activity – perhaps coordinated with your art teacher – have the children make log cabins from Popsicle sticks, or have them make log buildings from the sticks and construct a small pioneer village, similar to New Salem village seen in the program. A map can be found under the “tour” section at Lincoln's New Salem Village web site, www.lincolnsnewsalem.com. Your students may also find it interesting to take the online tour of Mount Vernon found at www.mountvernon.org.

Description of Blackline Masters

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS – Gives questions that may be asked after each segment is viewed.

MY LIFE & GEORGE WASHINGTON'S LIFE – Helps students compare and contrast present-day life with a child's life on a colonial farm.

MY LIFE & ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S LIFE – Helps students compare and contrast present-day life with a child's life in pioneer America.

ANSWER KEY

Video Quiz: 1. They help remind us of the story of George Washington cutting down a cherry tree and admitting that he had done it. 2. England 3. Surveyor, farmer, politician (president). 4. He was taxing Americans too heavily and told them they had to keep English soldiers in their houses. 5. Because he was a trained military leader and he knew the lands American soldiers would be fighting on 6. Because he didn't want to live in a state that allowed slavery 7. Read by the fireplace 8. Slaves being sold 9. He walked more than 10 miles to a woman's house to give her the tea she had forgotten at the store where he worked. 10. The Confederate States of America

My Life & George Washington's Life: Answers will vary.

My Life & Abraham Lincoln's Life: Answers will vary.

TRANSCRIPT OF THE VIDEO

Every so often, the children at Winkleman School have a special treat. Today, it's *extra* special.

You see, it's Presidents' Day. So they're going to have sweet, delicious cherry pie! The pie helps everyone remember George Washington, our country's first president.

You see, there's a story about George cutting down a cherry tree when he was a boy and then admitting to his father that he was the one who had done it.

The story shows how honest George was, but it never really happened.

Even so, he was honest. And he had many other fine qualities.

Part I: George Washington's Boyhood

George Washington lived long ago, in colonial times. In those days, British soldiers marched down village streets throughout the land.

For America was ruled by a king in England, a country across the Atlantic Ocean.

Young George lived on a farm in what would some day be the state of Virginia.

Back then, farm children usually didn't go to school. So George's mother taught him – and his little sister and brothers – how to read, write and do arithmetic.

George especially liked arithmetic. And he enjoyed measuring things.

His favorite person in the whole world was his big half-brother, Lawrence, a captain in the English navy.

George admired him, and thought that he, too, would like to be a military officer when he grew up.

Lawrence was married to Anne Fairfax.

Her father, Colonel William Fairfax, was well known throughout Virginia. He was wealthy and respected.

And he liked George, who, by the time he was in his teens, had learned how to measure, or "survey," land.

Many people, including Anne's father, were impressed by George's ability to pay close attention to details. George made sure that everything was perfect.

And so, Colonel Fairfax asked George to be a surveyor to measure land where practically nobody lived – a land full of trees, deep rivers and wild animals.

George did such a good job in those dangerous places, he was hired to do many other land surveys, even though he was still only a teenager.

Part II: Farmer, Soldier, President

Some years later, something terrible happened. Lawrence came down with tuberculosis, a disease that can be cured today, but

couldn't be cured then. And so he died.

As you can imagine, George was very sad. In his sadness, George decided that he would take his brother's place as a military officer.

He read many books written about military science. If he was going to be a soldier, he wanted to be a good one.

George's studies would be rewarded. In time, he would become an officer in the Virginia militia, which was like a small army.

But that didn't take very much of his time, so he was able to take care of Mt. Vernon, the large farm George's father had left to Lawrence. Now it became George's farm.

For the next 15 years, he, his wife Martha and their two children lived happily at Mt. Vernon.

But not everyone at that time was as happy as the Washington family. People were becoming upset at the king of England, who was taxing Americans more and more heavily.

They were also upset because the king told them that they had to keep English soldiers in their houses.

The Americans thought the rules and taxes were unfair. But the king just wouldn't listen to their side of the story.

So many Americans decided to break away from England.

But that would mean war!

People discussed who could lead America against England, whose army, at that time, was the best in the world!

George Washington was selected. As a surveyor, he knew the lands where battles might be fought – and that would certainly help American soldiers.

And as an officer who had studied military science, he could make clever battle plans.

The American soldiers went through many hardships during the war, and perhaps most generals would have given up.

But not General George Washington. He was an excellent leader – courageous and clever.

The war lasted for five long years.

But the Americans finally won, and a new nation – the United States of America – was founded. It had 13 states.

And who could be its leader? That's right! George Washington. He became our nation's first president. And he led the country with wisdom and honor.

Part III: Abraham Lincoln's Childhood

Over the years, the United States grew. New states were added.

One of them was Kentucky, where another great president, Abraham Lincoln, was born.

He lived in a small log cabin when he was very young.

When Abraham was seven, his family moved to Indiana. His father, Thomas Lincoln, felt he could no longer live in a state, such as Kentucky, that allowed white people to own black slaves.

In those days, many African-Americans were slaves. They weren't paid for their work, often picking cotton under a blazing, hot sun. They couldn't come and go as they wished.

And they were treated very poorly in many other ways, too.

The Lincolns, like many other poor pioneer families, lived a very hard life, also. But it was certainly better than a slave family's life.

Young Abraham, for example, went to school – but only in late fall and winter, when there were fewer chores to be done around the house and farm.

His little, one-room school house was a two-hour walk to and from his home.

Besides being a time for school, the cold months were also time to read by the warm, cozy fireplace. Abraham loved to read and learn about new things.

Several years after the Lincolns moved to Indiana, Abraham's mother became very sick and died.

Abraham's father then married Sally Johnston. Sally's husband also had died, and left her with three children.

Sally and Abraham liked each other immediately.

In time, she would learn that her stepson was very smart. So she made certain that he went to school whenever possible.

Time passed, and Abraham became well known in his little Indiana community as a scholar.

He also became known as a hard-working – and very strong – young man.

When he was 19, he and a friend traveled down the Mississippi River to take a load of farm crops to the city of New Orleans.

There, he saw a slave market, a place where African-Americans were bought and sold. The market saddened and deeply troubled Abraham. He couldn't understand how people could treat their fellow human beings so terribly.

Part IV: Shopkeeper, Lawyer, President

Two years later, the Lincolns moved to New Salem, Illinois. Now Abraham was 21, and ready to set out on his own.

He worked as a clerk in a small store, and like George Washington, surveyed land.

And he became known for his honesty. Once, a customer left behind a small amount of tea she had bought. It was worth only a few pennies. But when Abe discovered the tea, he walked more than ten miles to the woman's house to make certain that she got it.

In a short time, he became known far and wide as "Honest Abe."

He continued to read and study, particularly law books. You see, Abraham Lincoln decided that he wanted to be a lawyer. And that's what happened.

He helped many people as a lawyer. And he became even more well liked and respected.

In time, the citizens of New Salem, and other nearby communities, elected him to the state legislature of Illinois, where "Honest Abe" helped decide what laws should be made for that state.

Then they elected him to the United States congress, where laws are made for the entire country.

At that time, congress was divided over an important question: when new states were established, should they allow slavery?

Abraham Lincoln said slavery should not be allowed. He knew that it was wrong.

As in congress, people all over the country discussed whether slavery should be stopped.

One group who wanted slavery outlawed – they called themselves "Republicans" – asked "Honest Abe" to run for president. He did, and he won!

But there was little time to celebrate. Within months, the states that wanted slavery, called "The Confederate States of America," broke away from the United States.

And a terrible war followed.

President Lincoln said that the states could not break away just because they wanted to keep slavery.

Then he said the slaves must be set free.

The sounds of war echoed across the land for four years. When the war ended, President Lincoln's side won. The United States was saved!

And African-Americans, now no longer slaves, began their long march toward full rights under the law.

Part V: Celebrating Presidents' Day

The United States has had many wonderful presidents over the years, and we honor them on Presidents' Day, the third Monday of every February.

Even so, George Washington, our first president and the man known as "the father of our country," and Abraham Lincoln, the man who saved the country and freed the slaves, are the two we remember and honor the most – not only because both were born in February, but also because, to many Americans, they were our two greatest leaders.

And so, on that day, we watch plays about their interesting lives, recite their well-known speeches (such as Lincoln's Gettysburg Address) – and, of course, eat delicious cherry pie!

Web Resources

Abraham Lincoln Research Site
members.aol.com/RVSNorton/Lincoln2.html
An excellent place to start to get a wide array of information on Abraham Lincoln.

George Washington's Mt. Vernon Estate and Gardens
www.mountvernon.org/
Visit George Washington's famous home.

Education World's Presidents' Day Site
www.education-world.com/a_lesson/lesson223.shtml
Suggestions for many different kinds of holiday activities.

Presidential Coloring Pages

www.primarygames.com/holidays/presidents/coloring.htm

Presidential portraits that can be printed for distribution to students.

Discussion Questions – Presidents' Day, 2nd Edition

For Segment One

1. Why is cherry pie often served on Presidents' Day? (to remind us of the story of Washington cutting down a cherry tree and admitting it)
2. Who ruled America when George Washington was a boy? (England)
3. Who taught George how to read, write and do arithmetic? (His mother)
4. Who was George's favorite person when he was a boy? (Lawrence)
5. What was Lawrence's job?" (naval officer)
6. To whom was Lawrence married? (Anne Fairfax)
7. Who asked George to survey land for him? (Anne's father, Col. Fairfax)

For Segment Two

1. What was the name of George's farm? (Mt. Vernon)
2. How did George get the farm? (inherited it when Lawrence died)
3. Why were people upset at the King of England? (He taxed them unfairly and required they keep soldiers in their houses.)
4. What did the colonists decide to do when the king wouldn't listen to them? (break away from England)
5. Who was chosen to lead America's soldiers? (George Washington)
6. Why was George Washington such a good choice to lead America's troops? (knew lands where battles would take place, was experienced and trained)

7. Who became America's first president? (George Washington)

For Segment Three

1. In what state was Abraham Lincoln born? (Kentucky)
2. Where did the Lincoln family move when Abraham was seven? (Indiana)
3. Why did they move there? (His father didn't want to live in a state that allowed slavery.)
4. What was it like to be a slave? (not paid for work, had to work very hard, couldn't come and go as they wished)
5. When did Abraham go to school? (fall, winter)
6. What happened several years after the Lincolns moved to Indiana? (Abe's mother died.)
7. When Abraham was 19, where did he go and what did he see? (New Orleans, a slave market)

For Segment Four

1. Where did Abraham move when he was 21? (New Salem, Illinois)
2. Where did Abe work in New Salem? (in a small store)
3. Why did he become known as being so honest? (once walked more than 10 miles to deliver tea left at store)
4. What did Abraham say about slavery? (It should not be allowed.)

(more on next page)

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5. What was the name of the group of states that broke away from the United States? (Confederate States of America)
6. How long the did the war last and which side won? (4 years, Lincoln’s side)

For Segment Five

1. When is Presidents’ Day held? (3rd Monday in February)
2. Why are George Washington and Abraham Lincoln the two presidents most honored on Presidents’ Day? (Both were born in February. Washington was our first president and known as the “father of our country.” Lincoln saved country and freed the slaves.)
3. In what ways are Presidents’ Day most often celebrated? (Plays are presented. Speeches are given. Cherry pie is eaten.)

Name _____

My Life and George Washington's Life

Directions: In the spaces provided, compare and contrast your life with George Washington's life when he was a child. Think about what you saw in the video to complete this activity.



One of George's Chores

Chores

School

Games and Toys

Name _____

My Life and Abraham Lincoln's Life

Directions: In the spaces provided, compare and contrast your life with Abraham Lincoln's life when he was a child. Think about what you saw in the video to complete this activity.



Abraham liked to read.

Chores

School

Leisure Time Activities