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George Washington and His Legacy: Myths, Symbols and
Reality

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Final Project: Lessons on George Washington

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Even before the Institute started, I wanted to create a project that would be useful for my students. Last year, a SmartBoard projector was installed in my classroom, and one of my professional goals was to create a Powerpoint presentation for each unit. This year, I am planning to update and improve the lessons previously made. The following Powerpoint and supplementary lessons are intended to reach that goal.

Background Information:

The Powerpoint and worksheets are designed for a College level (mid-level) United States History I high school class. The students will have studied the Colonial Era, the American Revolution, and the Articles of Confederation. Typically, I go into depth about George Washington just before we learn about the Constitutional Convention. However, it is possible to use these activities anywhere in the units that George Washington is studied.

Table of Contents:

- 1) Powerpoint presentation: George Washington: An Indispensable Man.
- 2) How Much Do You Know About George Washington? "Quiz."
- 3) George Washington's Early Life and Career: A Reading.
- 4) George Washington's Rules of Civility: A Reading and Worksheet.

Objectives:

- 1) Students will better understand why George Washington is an American icon.
- 2) Students will be informed about whether myths surrounding Washington are true or false.
- 3) Students will explore the early life of Washington – an area of his life not commonly discussed in the US I curriculum.

- 4) Students will better understand the formative events of Washington's life and political philosophy.
- 5) Students will think about Washington's legacy.

Activities:

- 1) Powerpoint presentation: *George Washington: An Indispensable Man*.
 - The teacher should go through the slides, using them as both instructional tools and to promote discussion. Among other things, there are several discussion questions, new facts, a hyperlink to a short video clip, a link to an interactive Gilbert Stuart painting, many portraits of Washington, and prompts to three worksheets. Most of the facts, pictures, and clips were items that I learned about in this Institute.
- 2) How Much Do You Know About George Washington? "Quiz."
 - This "quiz" is intended to encourage students to confront common misconceptions about Washington in a familiar, fun format. I have used this exercise before, and I have found that students enjoy it. At the same time, it serves the practical purpose of educating them about Washington.
- 3) George Washington's Early Life and Career: A Reading.
 - Compiled from www.mountvernon.org, this summary of Washington's early life is intended to fill a gap that many students have in their knowledge of Washington's early life.
- 5) George Washington's Rules of Civility: A Reading and Worksheet.
 - This activity is intended to help students understand the world that Washington moved in, and the rules that might have helped guide his character and behavior. Students will compare the rules to the rules that guide their lives.

Summary:

The Institute greatly informed the instruction that I will conduct in my classroom about George Washington. It has inspired me to continue my study, not only of Washington, but also of the entire era. As a student of history myself, it reminded me that there are many ways of approaching a figure like Washington, and also to be vigilant about the sources of information for my lessons.