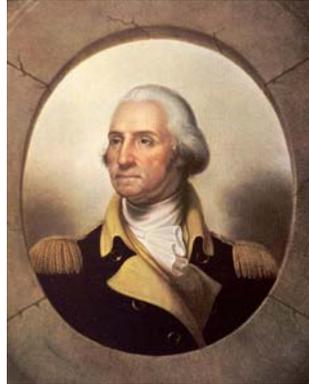


How Much Do You Know About George Washington?



A lot of students have heard of or read stories about George Washington, a key figure in the founding of the United States.

There are, however, lots of myths that have popped up about him.

Let's see what you know and don't know.

1. George Washington chopped down a cherry tree. TRUE | FALSE
2. George Washington had wooden teeth. TRUE | FALSE
3. George Washington once threw a silver dollar across the Potomac River. TRUE | FALSE
4. George Washington was the first president to live in the White House. TRUE | FALSE
5. George Washington wore a wig. TRUE | FALSE
6. George and Martha Washington had 2 children. TRUE | FALSE
7. George Washington was born on February 11, 1732. TRUE | FALSE
8. George Washington attended college. TRUE | FALSE
9. George Washington was the only founding father to free his slaves. TRUE | FALSE

10. George Washington was the first man to sign the U.S Constitution. TRUE
| FALSE

11. George Washington introduced the mule to America. TRUE | FALSE

12. George Washington declined the opportunity to be King. TRUE | FALSE

Answers

1. George Washington chopped down a cherry tree. TRUE | FALSE

The story, known to schoolchildren for generations, seems to have been invented by a man named Mason Weems shortly after Washington's death. Ironically, the story was intended to show how honest Washington was.

2. George Washington had wooden teeth. TRUE | FALSE

He did have false teeth, but they were not made of wood. They were actually made of cow's tooth, one of Washington's own teeth, hippopotamus ivory, metal and springs. They fit poorly, which may be one reason you never see Washington smile in portraits.

3. George Washington once threw a silver dollar across the Potomac River. TRUE | FALSE

The Potomac River is over a mile wide and not even Washington had that good an arm. And, there were no silver dollars when he was a child!

4. George Washington was the first president to live in the White House. TRUE | FALSE

George Washington is the only U.S. President who never lived in the White House. It was not completed until after his presidency, although he did help select the site of the new capital city and the executive mansion. As President, Washington first lived in New York and later, Philadelphia.

5. George Washington wore a wig. TRUE | FALSE

Even though wigs were fashionable, Washington kept his own hair, which he wore long and tied in a pony tail or queue in the back. He did powder his hair, which was the custom of the day.

6. George and Martha Washington had 2 children. TRUE | FALSE

George Washington had no children, however, there were always children at Mount Vernon. Martha was a widow with two young children when they married and her children were raised by Washington as if they were his own. Later, he and Martha raised two of her grandchildren at Mount Vernon, as well. Thus, although there were children at Mount Vernon, there are no direct descendents of George Washington.

7. George Washington was born on February 11, 1732. TRUE | FALSE

George Washington was actually born on February 11, 1732, however, in 1752 the American colonies switched from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar. The switch involved shifting dates by 11 days. Thus George Washington subsequently celebrated his birthday on February 22 and to this day that is the date we celebrate as his birthdate.

8. George Washington attended college. TRUE | FALSE

The death of his father brought an end to his formal schooling. Although he was self-taught, Washington believed education was very important. In fact, he helped establish one of the first free schools in this country in Alexandria, Virginia and left property in his will to establish a national university (which became today's Washington and Lee

University).

9. George Washington was the only founding father to free his slaves. **TRUE | FALSE**
He inherited ten slaves from his father at the age of 11. Slavery had been around for thousands of years and was widely accepted. By the end of Washington's life, over 300 African American slaves lived at Mount Vernon. His attitude toward slavery changed as he grew older. He emancipated his slaves in his will and his estate paid pensions for decades.

10. George Washington was the first man to sign the U.S Constitution. **TRUE | FALSE**
He attended as a delegate from Virginia and was chosen to be the presiding officer of the Constitutional Convention. As such, he was the first to sign the new government charter upon its completion.

11. George Washington introduced the mule to America. **TRUE | FALSE**
George Washington considered himself first and foremost a farmer. His study of agriculture convinced him that mules (the offspring of a donkey and a horse) were better suited to farm work than horses. When he introduced mules to Mount Vernon in the 1780's, he was proven right. Mules soon became the work animal of choice in the United States.

12. George Washington declined the opportunity to be King. **TRUE | FALSE**
At the end of the Revolution, a number of Army officers said America should have a King or Emperor, and wanted to give the job to Washington. He opposed the idea and prevented the officers from carrying out a planned military takeover of the country in 1783. Later that year, Washington and his officers voluntarily resigned their military positions.