



CHAPTER 1

Meet George Washington

George Washington was the very first president of the United States. He is also known as one of America's Founding Fathers.

During the American Revolution, Washington led the Continental Army to victory. Later, he helped shape the U.S. Constitution. This important document sets up how our government should be run and lists citizens' basic rights. Perhaps most important, as president, he set the standard for how our country should be led.

George Washington had a reputation for honesty and bravery. He served the American people, in many roles, for more than 40 years. Today, many people consider Washington our country's greatest leader.

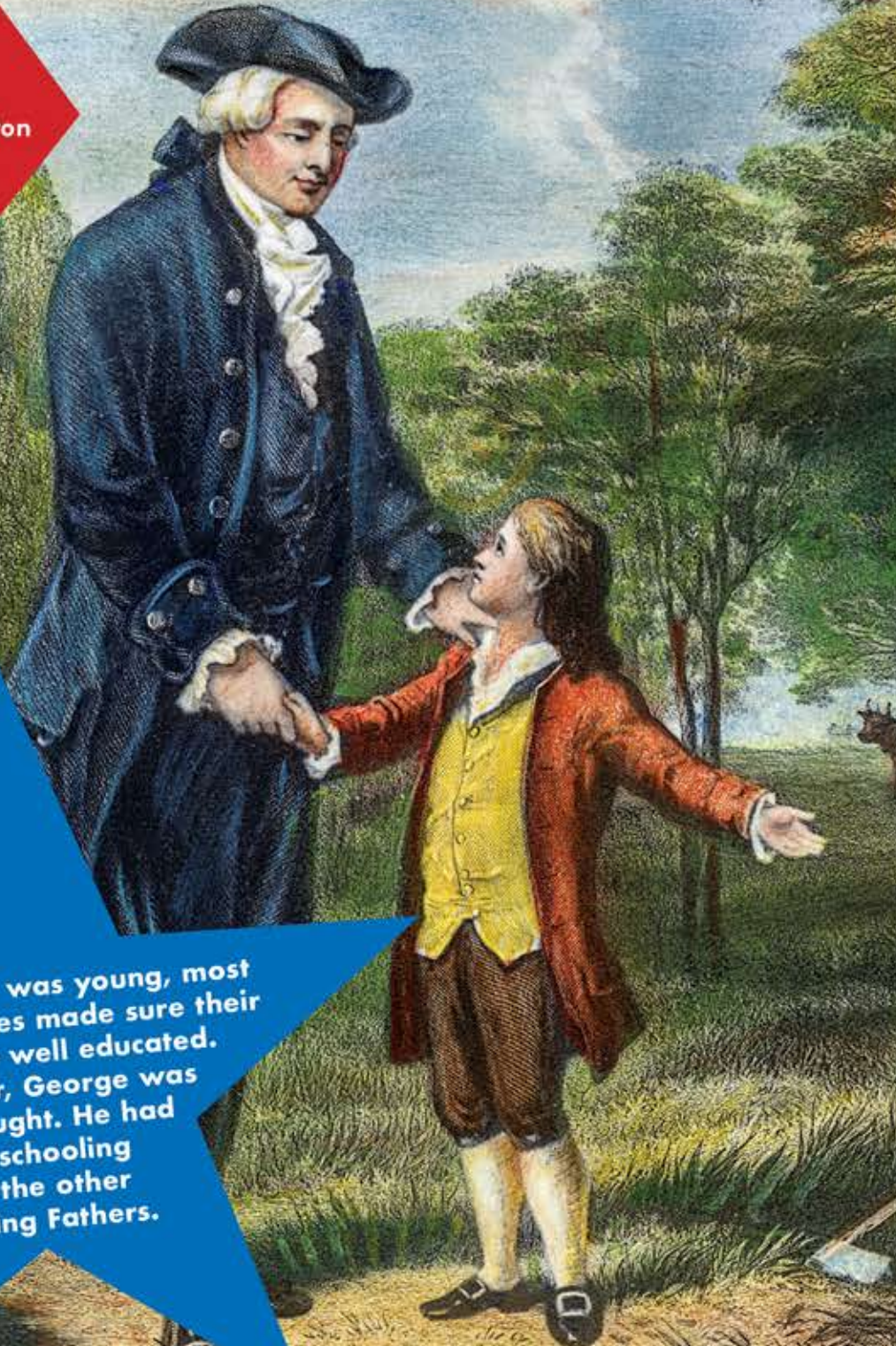


Washington was 57 years old when he took office as president.

“A good moral character is the first essential in a man.”

—George Washington,
December 5, 1790

This illustration shows young George Washington with his father.



When George was young, most wealthy families made sure their sons were well educated. However, George was self-taught. He had less schooling than the other Founding Fathers.

Country Boy from Virginia

George was born in Virginia on February 22, 1732. At the time, Virginia was one of the 13 British **colonies** in North America.

When George was just 11 years old, his father died. He left George a small piece of land and 10 **enslaved** people. George's older brothers had gone to school in England. But there wasn't enough money to send George.

George had always looked up to one of his older brothers, Lawrence. Now Lawrence became a father figure to George. He even introduced George to the man who would give him his first job, making maps.



This is an illustration of the house where Washington was born.

TIMELINE

American History



1744
King George's War, a struggle between Great Britain and France over territory in North America, begins in May. It lasts until 1748.

1754
The French and Indian War begins on July 3, when French soldiers attack Fort Necessity in an area that is now part of Pennsylvania.



1760
On October 25, George III becomes king of England. His policies eventually lead to the American Revolution.



1775
On April 19, the first battle of the American Revolution takes place at Lexington and Concord in Massachusetts. The war officially ends eight years later, on September 3, 1783, with the Treaty of Paris. The United States officially becomes a country.



1787
The U.S. Constitution is accepted and signed on September 17. More than 200 years later, the Constitution is still the framework for our government and laws.

1808
The slave trade is officially outlawed in the United States, beginning January 1. But holding enslaved people is still legal.



George Washington's Life

1732
George Washington is born on February 22 in Westmoreland County, in the colony of Virginia.

1748
Washington accepts an offer to survey the Virginia frontier. The assignment gives Washington his first chance to become a landowner.



1759
George marries Martha Dandridge Custis on January 6. He raises her two children, "Jacky" and "Patsy," as his own.



1775
Washington is chosen to be commander in chief of the Continental Army on June 19.



1789
On April 30, George Washington is sworn in as the first president of the United States. He serves two terms and is succeeded by John Adams.

1799
On December 14, Washington dies in his bed from a throat infection. He is 67 years old.

