DISCOVER AMERICA

Teacher Guide



Winter Trials at Valley Forge: Courage and Resilience in America's History



Table of Contents

3	Themes & Values
	Learning Objectives
4	Key Terms
5	Introduction
9	Lesson
15	Activity: Journey to Valley Forge
18	Assessment: Create a Soldier's Shelter
20	Resources
21	Images
25	Notes



Key Themes

- Resilience and Endurance
- Unity and Camaraderie
- Adversity and Sacrifice
- Innovation and Survival
- Leadership and Strategy

Core Values

- Community
- Life
- Liberty

Students will be able to

- Visualize themselves as soldiers in General George
 Washington's army, understanding the challenges of walking
 through snowy fields and thick forests with heavy gear.
- Recognize what a musket is and understand its use by soldiers during the American Revolutionary War.
- Summarize the challenges faced by General Washington and his soldiers during the winter at Valley Forge, including shortages of food and clothing and harsh living conditions.
- Evaluate the importance of General Washington's leadership during the winter at Valley Forge in shaping American history, considering his resilience and determination.

Key Terms

- O 1 **Conway Cabal:** a loosely organized attempt by a group of military officers and members of Congress to remove General George Washington from command of the Continental Army and replace him with Major General Horatio Gates.
- 0 2 **inoculation:** a vaccination that prevents illness in the future.
- 0 3 **morale:** the state of mind of a person or group.
- 0 4 **musket:** a heavy gun with a long barrel carried over a soldier's shoulder.
- 0 5 **resilience:** the ability to bounce back after challenges and tough times.
- o 6 **smallpox:** a serious viral infection that is contagious meaning it spreads from person to person and can cause permanent scarring and even death.

TELL Students

Today we are going to travel back in time to the year 1777. Imagine you are not in our classroom, but you're stepping into a snowy winter with General George Washington's army.

ASK Students

Are you ready for an adventure?

TELL Students **P**

First, let's all stand up and pretend we are carrying heavy muskets and backpacks. [Pause for students to get ready.] A **musket** is a heavy gun with a long barrel carried over a soldier's shoulder. Now, start marching in place like you're walking through snowy fields and forests. [March in place, shiver, and pretend to feel the cold.]

ASK Students

Can you feel the cold air on your face?

TELL Students

After days of marching, you finally see a place in the distance. It's Valley Forge! Let's all take a big step forward together and imagine we've just arrived at Valley Forge. [Step forward together.] As you get closer to the camp, you see smoke from small log houses made quickly by tired hands. The ground is frozen, and every step is like a fight with the cold. You hear orders shouted, the sound of metal hitting wood as houses are built, and sometimes laughter or songs. Even in tough times, there are moments of friendship.

ASK Students

What are some sounds that you may have heard at Valley Forge?

TELL Students

At Valley Forge, there are no cozy houses to keep us warm. We have to build our own log cabins! Let's pretend to gather logs and build a cabin. [Mime picking up logs and stacking them.] Now that we have our cabins, we need to stay warm.

TELL Students (continued)

Rub your hands together and blow on them to keep them warm. [Rub hands and blow warm air.] But oh no! We don't have enough food or warm clothes. Let's pretend our tummies are growling from hunger. [Rub tummies and make growling sounds.]

ASK Students

How do you think the soldiers felt as they headed to Valley Forge?

TELL Students

Even though it's really hard, we have a great leader, General George Washington. Let's give a big cheer for General Washington! [Cheer together.]

ASK Students

What do you know about George Washington?

TELL Students

That is right! George Washington was a great leader, general, and the first President of the United States. Today, we go back to Valley Forge to learn about what the soldiers went through. We want to understand their bravery and hard work that helped shape our country's history. While we're at Valley Forge, a man named Baron von Steuben comes to help us. He doesn't speak English very well, but he's an expert in training soldiers. Let's practice marching and using our pretend muskets with him. Ready? [March in place and pretend to hold a musket.] Baron von Steuben teaches us well, and we get stronger and more organized every day. Let's show our muscles to see how strong we've become. [Flex muscles.] Finally, spring arrives, and we are ready to leave Valley Forge. We are no longer just ordinary soldiers — we are a strong and brave army! Let's march proudly out of Valley Forge. [March in place proudly.] Thanks to our hard work and determination, we go on to win America's independence from Britain. Let's give ourselves a big round of applause for our bravery! [Applaud together.]

TELL Students

Remember, Valley Forge is a place where soldiers faced great challenges but never gave up. Just like them, we can overcome any obstacle with hard work, teamwork, and determination. Now, let's sit back down and learn more about this amazing part of history!

ASK Students

Are you ready to join the ranks of history, to learn from those who braved the cold and uncertainty at Valley Forge?

TELL Students

During the Revolutionary War for America's independence from Britain, General Washington and 12,000 soldiers arrived at Valley Forge on December 19, 1777. **[Reference Washington Image]** They were tired but hopeful, knowing they faced a tough winter ahead. They knew it would be tough, but they were proud of how far they had come in the war. The first thing they did at Valley Forge was build log cabins to live in. They made about 1,500 cabins to keep warm.

[Reference Cabin Image]

ASK Students

What are some things you need to stay warm during the winter?

TELL Students

That's right! When you are outside in winter, you need shelter, warm clothes, and campfires to stay warm. At first, the soldiers at Valley Forge had enough food and warm clothes. But soon they didn't have enough supplies. It was hard to bring food and clothes to Valley Forge because it was far away and there wasn't much money. Some days, the soldiers didn't have enough to eat. They didn't have warm clothes either. General Washington saw soldiers without clothes, blankets, or shoes. He saw their bloody footprints in the snow.

ASK Students

How do you think the soldiers felt during this time?

TELL Students

Let's watch another episode of Star Spangled Adventures to learn more about the brave soldiers at Valley Forge.

WATCH

Star Spangled Adventures Cartoon Ep. 31: Valley Forge





TELL Students @

In late October, General Washington asked local officers and leaders for help in choosing a place for his soldiers to spend the winter. He wanted a location near Philadelphia but far enough away from the British. After talking to many people, Washington considered Wilmington, Delaware; Lancaster, Pennsylvania; and Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. He decided on Valley Forge, which was 18 miles northwest of Philadelphia. Valley Forge had high ground to see if enemies were coming and was close to the Schuylkill River, which flowed toward Philadelphia. [Reference Valley

Forge Image]

ASK Students

Why do you think General Washington decided on Valley Forge as the winter camp for his soldiers instead of Wilmington or Lancaster?

TELL Students

In the early days of winter at Valley Forge, the soldiers had enough supplies to keep warm and well-fed. However, as the war continued, financial resources dwindled and it became difficult to transport supplies to the camp. This led to soldiers without enough food or warm clothing. General Washington witnessed firsthand the hardships: soldiers lacking clothes, blankets, and shoes.

ASK Students

What challenges did George Washington and his troops face at Valley Forge?

TELL Students

In the spring, things got a little better after some people from Congress came to Valley Forge and saw how bad it was. But sickness spread because there wasn't enough food or clean water. Soldiers got lice. Some had other diseases like typhus, typhoid, dysentery, pneumonia, or the flu. Dead horses were left out, making the camp smell really bad. General Washington even had to make rules about where soldiers could go to the bathroom to keep everyone healthy.

ASK Students

Why did sickness spread at Valley Forge, even though some help came from Congress in the spring?

TELL Students A

To stop smallpox from spreading, General Washington told his soldiers to get a shot in January 1777. **Smallpox** is a serious and often deadly viral infection that is contagious — meaning it spreads from person to person — and can cause permanent scarring. General Washington made sure everyone got the shot to prevent the soldiers from getting sick. Even with all these efforts, about 2,000 soldiers died from sickness during the six months at Valley Forge. It was a very sad time, and no other camp in the war had more soldiers die than at Valley Forge.

ASK Students

Why did General Washington want his soldiers to get a shot in 1777?

TELL Students

General Washington wanted his soldiers to get a shot in 1777 to protect them from getting sick with smallpox. By getting the shot, called an inoculation, the soldiers were less likely to get sick with smallpox during the hard winter at Valley Forge. An **inoculation** is a vaccination that prevents illness in the future. This helped keep more soldiers healthy so they could keep fighting for freedom. During this harsh winter at Valley Forge, the soldiers faced many difficulties. They didn't have enough food or warm clothes, and sickness spread through the camp. General Washington and his officers worked hard to keep everyone strong and hopeful. **[Reference Soldiers Image]**

ASK Students

What challenges did soldiers face at Valley Forge?

TELL Students @

Meanwhile, General Washington faced a new challenge: some leaders doubted his ability to lead. Despite support from his soldiers, including those fighting under his command, certain military officials and members of Congress started to question General Washington's leadership.

[Reference Horatio Gates Image]

TELL Students (continued)

In October 1777, General Horatio Gates won an important battle at Saratoga, which made some people think he should lead instead. They even created a Board of War to supervise General Washington. Major General Thomas Conway, believing Gates was stronger, wrote letters criticizing Washington's leadership. This disagreement ended when a letter was leaked by one of Washington's friends. Even so, General Washington felt pressure to prove he was a strong leader and earn the trust of everyone who doubted him.

ASK Students

Why do you think some leaders doubted General Washington's ability to lead, even though his soldiers supported him?

TELL Students @

In February 1778, a man named Baron Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben came to Valley Forge from Europe. He was a general from Prussia, a country in Europe. [Reference Baron von Steuben Image] Baron von Steuben was already a military expert, with more than 30 years of experience. Benjamin Franklin, who was in charge of talking to other countries for America, had sent a letter saying Steuben could help. When Baron von Steuben arrived, he saw how tough things were for the soldiers. There weren't enough supplies, and the camp was dirty and messy. He even joked that no army from Europe could stay strong in such tough conditions. General Washington saw that Steuben knew a lot about leading soldiers, so he made Steuben a temporary leader to help teach the soldiers how to fight better.

ASK Students

Who was Baron von Steuben and how did he help at Valley Forge?

TELL Students

Even though Steuben didn't speak English well, he wrote down drills and ways to fight. Alexander Hamilton and other helpers translated these into English so the soldiers could learn. Steuben worked right alongside the soldiers, teaching them new ways to fight and stay strong. He was kind and helpful, and the soldiers really liked him. Because of Baron von Steuben's hard work and teaching, the soldiers started to feel more hopeful.

TELL Students (continued)

They became more organized and learned how to work together.

ASK Students

How did Baron von Steuben teach the soldiers at Valley Forge, even though he didn't speak English well?

TELL Students

Steuben also wrote a special book called *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States*. This book helped train American soldiers for many years after Valley Forge. Baron von Steuben's time at Valley Forge showed how important it is to work together and learn from others, even if they come from far away. His efforts helped the soldiers become stronger and ready to keep fighting for freedom.

ASK Students

How did Baron von Steuben's book help American soldiers after Valley Forge, and what do you think General Washington thought about its importance?

TELL Students 🚳 🔑

During the difficult winter at Valley Forge, Martha Washington joined her husband, General George Washington, at the camp. [Reference Martha Washington Image] She played a crucial role as his advisor and supporter, helping to run their household and boosting the morale of the soldiers. Morale means the state of mind of a person or group. Despite the challenging conditions at Valley Forge, Martha showed great bravery and strength by staying with her husband in such a difficult place.

ASK Students

What role did Martha Washington play at Valley Forge?

TELL Students

Meanwhile, General Howe, who led the British army, stayed in Philadelphia instead of attacking Valley Forge.

TELL Students (continued)

This decision gave General Washington and his soldiers a chance to focus on training under the guidance of Baron von Steuben. After enduring a long and harsh winter, the Continental Army finally left Valley Forge on June 19, 1778, exactly six months after they had arrived. They were now better trained and more organized than before. Their first major test came at the Battle of Monmouth, where they faced a larger British force. Under General Washington's leadership, the Continental Army fought bravely and showed their newfound strength. [Reference Soldiers Image]

ASK Students

Why did General Howe's decision to stay in Philadelphia instead of attacking Valley Forge help General Washington and his soldiers get ready for the Battle of Monmouth?

TELL Students A

The Battle of Monmouth was a turning point. Congress, who had once questioned General Washington's abilities, praised him for leading the army to victory. This victory silenced any doubts people had about him, including those who had been part of the Conway Cabal. The Conway Cabal refers to a loosely organized attempt by a group of military officers and members of Congress to remove General George Washington from command of the Continental Army and replace him with Major General Horatio Gates.

ASK Students

What was the Conway Cabal?

TELL Students

The winter at Valley Forge tested General Washington's determination and leadership skills. Despite shortages of food and supplies and the spread of disease among the soldiers, he never gave up. His leadership inspired the soldiers to keep going, and they emerged from Valley Forge stronger and more united. Under General Washington's leadership, the Continental Army continued to fight against the British. Eventually, their determination paid off, and the British surrendered.

TELL Students (continued) •

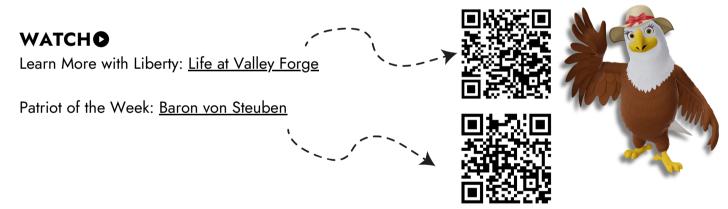
This victory led to America gaining its independence, showing the world the strength and resilience of the American people under General Washington's command. **Resilience** is the ability to bounce back after challenges and tough times.

ASK Students

What did General Washington do to help his soldiers at Valley Forge, and why was his leadership important for America's independence?

TELL Students

The winter at Valley Forge is an important part of American history. Let's watch an episode of Learn More with Liberty and a Patriot of the Week to learn more!





Objective:

To engage first graders in learning about the challenges faced by soldiers during the winter at Valley Forge and to foster empathy for historical experiences.

Materials Needed:

- Large open space (classroom, gym, or outdoor area)
- Backpacks or bags filled with lightweight items (books, stuffed animals)
- Pictures or drawings of Valley Forge and soldiers
- Optional: Containers of cold water (for sensory experience)

Introduction:

Show pictures or drawings of Valley Forge and explain that it was a place where soldiers from the American Revolutionary War faced many challenges during the winter. Use simple language to describe the cold weather, lack of supplies, and hardships they endured.

Marching to Valley Forge:

- Divide students into groups and give each group a backpack or bag filled with lightweight items.
- Ask them to pretend they are soldiers marching to Valley Forge. Guide them to march around the room or outdoor space, emphasizing the weight and difficulty of carrying the backpacks.
- Optionally, set up containers of cold water for them to walk through, simulating the tough conditions soldiers faced. Encourage them to discuss how it feels to march with the heavy bags and through the cold water.

Discussion:

Gather students together and ask them questions about their experience:

- "How did it feel to march with the heavy backpacks?"
- "What do you think soldiers at Valley Forge felt?"
- "Why do you think Valley Forge was an important time in American history?"





Reflection and Art Activity:

Provide paper and crayons/markers. Ask students to draw a picture of what they learned about Valley Forge or write a sentence about what they would have felt if they were a soldier there.

Conclusion:

Summarize the activity by highlighting the bravery and determination of the soldiers at Valley Forge. Reinforce the idea that their hard work and sacrifices helped shape America's history and freedom.

Extension:

Encourage students to share their drawings or sentences with the class, promoting discussion and further understanding of Valley Forge and its significance in American history.

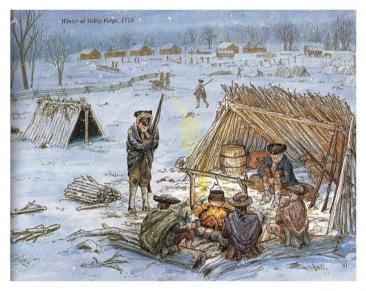


















Objective:

To engage first graders in learning about the challenges faced by soldiers during the winter at Valley Forge through a hands-on activity.

Materials Needed:

- Construction paper or cardstock
- Scissors
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- Glue
- Cotton balls or small pieces of cotton
- Optional: Popsicle sticks or small twigs

Introduction:

Explain that soldiers at Valley Forge faced a tough winter without proper shelter. Discuss the importance of shelter in keeping warm during cold weather.

Building the Shelter:

- Provide each child with construction paper or cardstock and scissors.
- Guide them to fold the paper to make a tent or small house shape, emphasizing the basic structures soldiers might have built.
- Let the children decorate their shelters with markers, crayons, or colored pencils to make them unique.
- Use glue to attach cotton balls or small pieces of cotton to represent snow or insulation on the roof of the shelter.
- Optional: If available, use popsicle sticks or small twigs to create a frame for the shelter before attaching the construction paper.

Discussion:

Once the shelters are complete, gather the children together to discuss their creations:

- "Why did soldiers at Valley Forge need shelters?"
- "How do you think these shelters helped them during the winter?"
- "What challenges might soldiers have faced when building these shelters?"





Show and Tell:

Allow students to share their shelter with the class. Encourage them to explain their design choices and how they imagine soldiers might have felt living in such shelters.

Conclusion:

Wrap up the activity by summarizing what students have learned about Valley Forge and the importance of shelter during winter. Emphasize the resilience and bravery of the soldiers who faced these challenges.

Extension:

Display student's shelters in the classroom or create a small diorama depicting Valley Forge using the shelters as part of the scene. This can further reinforce their understanding of the historical context and the living conditions at Valley Forge.



Resources

- https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/essays/british-occupation-ofphiladelphia/#:~:text=Howe%20was%20responsible%20for%20the,line%20to%20the%20occu pied%20city.
- https://founders.archives.gov/?q=%20Dates-From%3A1777-10-29&s=1111311111&r=4
- https://www.nps.gov/vafo/learn/historyculture/valley-forge-history-and-significance.htm
- https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-13-02-0355
- https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-14-02-0525
- https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-14-02-0469
- https://books.google.com/books?id=EnauK2PI_9sC&q=the+first+large-scale%2C+state-sponsored+immunization+campaign+in+history#v=snippet&q=the%20first%20large-scale%2C%20state-sponsored%20immunization%20campaign%20in%20history&f=false
- https://www.nps.gov/vafo/learn/historyculture/valley-forge-history-and-significance.htm
- https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/conway-cabal/
- https://www.nps.gov/vafo/learn/historyculture/vonsteuben.htm
- https://www.nps.gov/people/general-von-steuben.htm
- https://www.nps.gov/vafo/learn/historyculture/valleyforgewomen.htm
- https://oll.libertyfund.org/title/ford-the-writings-of-george-washington-vol-vii-1778-1779?
 html=true

Washington



Credit: National Art Gallery

Cabin



Credit: Canva Pro.

Valley Forge



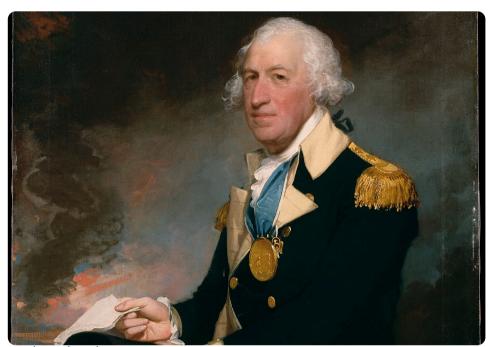
Credit: Wikipedia

Soldiers



Credit: Canva Pro.

Horatio Gates



Credit: Wikipedia

Baron von Steuben



Credit: American Battlefield Trust

Martha Washinton



Credit: Wikipedia.

General Howe



Credit: Wikipedia

Notes
