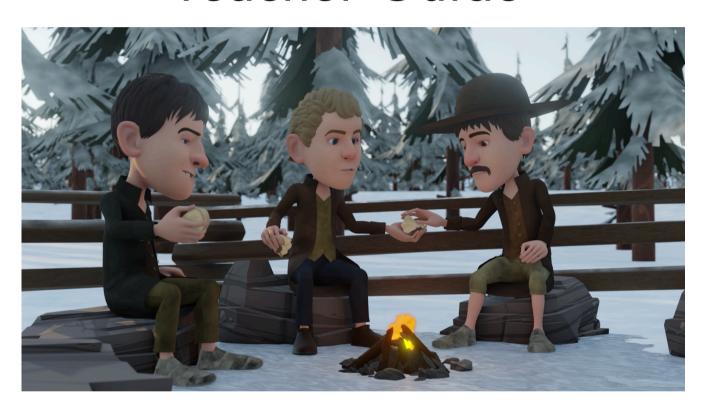
DISCOVER AMERICA

Teacher Guide



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



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Key Themes

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

Core Values

- Community
- Life
- Liberty

Students will be able to

- Identify significant events from 1777 and discuss their impact on American history.
- Analyze the challenges faced by soldiers during the winter of 1777.
- Recognize the contributions of Baron von Steuben to the Continental Army.
- Explain the challenges faced by the Continental Army at Valley Forge and their perseverance.
- Discuss the living conditions and resource challenges at Valley Forge.



Students will be able to

- Describe the leadership and strategic decisions made by General George Washington.
- Explain the strategic importance of Valley Forge's location.
- Understand the dire conditions and resource challenges faced by the soldiers at Valley Forge.

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 **diplomat:** a person whose job is to handle relations with the governments of other countries.
- 0 3 **dire:** describes situations or events that cause great fear and worry.
- 0 4 **inoculation:** a vaccination that prevents illness in the future.
- 0 5 **morale:** the state of mind of a person or group.
- 0 6 **musket:** a heavy gun with a long barrel carried over a soldier's shoulder.
- o 7 **resilience:** the ability to bounce back after challenges and tough times.
- o 8 **scabies:** a skin condition caused by tiny mites that burrow into the skin, leading to intense itching and sores.
- o 9 **smallpox:** a serious and often deadly viral infection that is contagious meaning it spreads from person to person and can cause permanent scarring.

TELL Students

Today, we're going to play a fun game to uncover a mysterious historical event. I have a series of clues, and your job is to work together to figure out what historical event we are learning about.

ASK Students

Are you ready?

TELL Students

Let's make this a bit more exciting. I'm going to dim the lights (or create a dramatic atmosphere). Here is a special envelope labeled "Mystery Clues." Inside, we have the clues that will help you solve the mystery. Let's start with the first clue. [Pull out the first clue card with "1777" written on it.] This clue gives us a year: 1777.

ASK Students

What important events happened in 1777?

TELL Students

Now, let's look at the second clue. [Pull out the second clue card describing a harsh winter with soldiers facing cold and hunger.] This clue talks about a very harsh winter where soldiers were cold and hungry. [Show a picture of a snowy landscape or a log cabin.]

ASK Students

What challenges do you think soldiers might have faced during a winter in 1777?

TELL Students

Here is the third clue. [Pull out the third clue card with a description of a famous leader who later became the first President of the United States.] This clue describes a famous leader who became the first President of the United States. [Show a picture of George Washington.]

ASK Students

Who is this important leader?

TELL Students

That is right! This is George Washington. Let's move on to the fourth clue. [Pull out the fourth clue card describing a Prussian military expert who helped train the soldiers.] This clue mentions a Prussian military expert who trained the soldiers. [Show a picture of Baron von Steuben or a musket replica.]

ASK Students

Who do you think this military expert was, and what was his role?

TELL Students

Now for the final clue. [Pull out the fifth clue card with a map of Pennsylvania and a marker showing a location 18 miles northwest of Philadelphia.] This clue shows a location in Pennsylvania, 18 miles northwest of Philadelphia. [Show a map of Pennsylvania.]

ASK Students

Can you identify this location? Now, put all the clues together and tell me what you think the historical event is.

TELL Students @ A

That's right! The event is the winter encampment at Valley Forge during the American Revolutionary War. Let's discuss why Valley Forge is significant in American history. Imagine going back to a cold day in 1777. Picture yourself as a soldier with General George Washington's army. You've walked for miles through snowy fields and thick forests. You carry a musket and feel your heavy gear on your tired shoulders. A **musket** is a heavy gun with a long barrel carried over a soldier's shoulder. The air is chilly, and as you come over a hill, you see Valley Forge ahead. This is how soldiers felt as they walked toward Valley Forge. Valley Forge is more than just a spot on a map. [Reference Valley Forge Image] It's a very important time in American history. It was a big test for the soldiers in the Continental Army to be strong, brave, and work together. [Show students Pennsylvania on a U.S. map.] Here in Pennsylvania, you and the other soldiers are about to face one of the hardest parts of the Revolutionary War.

ASK Students

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

TELL Students

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 @

Valley Forge is a place where hope and bravery are as bright as the fires in those log houses. Here, General Washington and his soldiers will go through a tough winter, not having enough food and clothes, and not knowing what will happen next. [Reference George Washington Image] But they will also make strong bonds of loyalty and courage that will help them through the hardest times of the war.

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 independence from Britain, General Washington and 12,000 soldiers arrived at Valley Forge on December 19, 1777. 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.

[Reference Log Cabin Image] They made about 1,500 cabins to keep 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.

TELL Students (continued)

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

WATCH O

Star Spangled Adventures Cartoon Ep. 31: Valley Forge





TELL Students

In the fall of 1777, the colonies were deeply engaged in their fight for independence from Great Britain. This struggle began with the Battles of Lexington and Concord in April 1775, but the roots of dissatisfaction with British rule went back even further. In July 1776, the Second Continental Congress formally declared independence by adopting the Declaration of Independence. Despite the colonists' desire to become their own country, Britain was strongly against losing its valuable North American colonies. Having recently won the Seven Years' War and gained territories from France, Britain was determined to keep control of the colonies. The colonists understood that they had to fight hard for their independence, especially as the harsh winter of 1777 approached.

ASK Students

Why did the colonies want to become their own country in 1776, and why did Britain oppose it?

TELL Students

Please read the following passage with a neighbor to learn more. [Please print and distribute fourth grade student text to each student.]

One of the big challenges was their army's lack of experience compared to the well-trained British soldiers. Leading the Continental Army was General George Washington, a wise leader from Virginia. Less than a year earlier, he had surprised the British with a victory in Trenton on Christmas night. But after this victory, the British aimed to crush the colonists' spirit by capturing Philadelphia. In August 1777, British troops under General William Howe marched towards Philadelphia and took control of it. The Continental Congress had to flee to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and things looked grim for the Americans. Losing their capital city made winning the war seem almost impossible. However, General Washington was determined to use the winter months, when fighting was difficult due to the weather, to train his army and plan for future victories.

ASK Students

Why was General George Washington determined to train his army during the winter of 1777?

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.

TELL Students (continued)

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.

ASK Students

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

TELL Students

Upon arriving at Valley Forge, General Washington instructed his soldiers to build wooden huts for themselves. He provided detailed instructions for building the huts and each would house 12 men. He hoped the huts would keep the soldiers warm during the cold winter. 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 **P**

In the spring, conditions at Valley Forge began to improve slightly after members of Congress visited and witnessed the situation firsthand. However, despite their efforts, sickness continued to spread due to the lack of adequate food and clean water. Soldiers suffered from scabies and lice infestations, both of which contributed to poor health and discomfort. **Scabies** is a skin condition caused by tiny mites that burrow into the skin, leading to intense itching and sores. In addition to these issues, many soldiers contracted serious illnesses such as typhus, typhoid fever, dysentery, pneumonia, and influenza.

TELL Students (continued)

The presence of dead horses, which were not properly disposed of, exacerbated the unsanitary conditions and created a bad smell throughout the camp. To combat these health hazards, General Washington implemented strict rules regarding sanitation, including designated areas for waste disposal to prevent the spread of disease and maintain some level of hygiene among the troops.

ASK Students

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

TELL Students **P**

To stop smallpox from spreading, General Washington told his soldiers to get a shot in January 1777. **Smallpox** is a serious viral infection that is contagious — meaning it spreads from person to person — and can cause permanent scarring and even death. George Washington had gotten smallpox when he was 19 years old while visiting Barbados. This helped provide immunity from further smallpox attacks later in his life. However, many colonists were not exposed to the disease which created a widespread epidemic in the army ranks. The deadly disease greatly impacted the army's effectiveness, so General Washington made the controversial decision to inoculate the army. This was one of the first times in American history that a lot of people got shots to stay healthy. Even with all these efforts, about 2,000 soldiers died from sickness during the six months at Valley Forge.

ASK Students

Why did General Washington want his soldiers to get inoculated in 1777, and how did it help during the hard winter at Valley Forge?

TELL Students A

An **inoculation** is a vaccination that prevents illness in the future. General Washington wanted his soldiers to get inoculated against smallpox in 1777 to protect them from getting sick with the disease.

TELL Students (continued)

By getting the shot, called an inoculation, the soldiers were less likely to get sick with smallpox during the hard winter at Valley Forge. This helped keep more soldiers healthy so they could keep fighting for America's 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.

ASK Students

What challenges did soldiers face at Valley Forge?

TELL Students

Please read the following passage independently to learn more.

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. 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 arrived at Valley Forge from Europe. He was a general from Prussia, a country in Europe known for its strong military tradition. [Reference Baron von Steuben Image] Baron von Steuben was already a seasoned military expert, with more than 30 years of experience. His arrival was thanks to Benjamin Franklin, who was in charge of securing international support.

TELL Students (continued) *P*

Franklin, who was serving as the diplomat to France, had sent a letter to the Continental Congress recommending Steuben. A **diplomat** is a person whose job is to handle relations with the governments of other countries. Franklin understood the importance of having skilled military leaders to train the Continental Army and knew that Steuben's experience could be invaluable.

ASK Students

Why did Benjamin Franklin think it was important to bring skilled military leaders like Baron von Steuben to help the Continental Army at Valley Forge?

TELL Students A

When Baron von Steuben arrived at Valley Forge, he immediately recognized the dire conditions the soldiers were enduring. **Dire** refers to situations or events that cause great fear and worry. There were severe shortages of supplies, and the camp was dirty and disorganized. Steuben even remarked that no European army could have survived in such conditions. Observing Steuben's deep understanding of military leadership, General Washington appointed him as a temporary inspector general to help train the soldiers.

ASK Students

What did Baron von Steuben notice about the conditions at Valley Forge, and how did General Washington respond to Steuben's arrival?

TELL Students

Steuben brought with him rigorous European military drills and techniques, which he began teaching to the Continental Army. Despite the language barrier — Steuben spoke little English — he managed to effectively communicate with the soldiers through the help of interpreters like Alexander Hamilton. His training focused on discipline, battlefield tactics, and the efficient use of weapons. Steuben's impact was profound, transforming the ragtag Continental Army into a more professional and effective fighting force.

ASK Students

How did Baron von Steuben train the soldiers at Valley Forge despite not speaking much English, and what was the result of his training?

TELL Students

Despite Baron von Steuben's limited English skills, he carefully documented military drills and combat techniques. Alexander Hamilton and other aides translated these instructions into English so that the soldiers could understand and implement them effectively. Steuben fully immersed himself in the training process, working closely with the soldiers and teaching them new methods of warfare and resilience. His hands-on approach and friendly nature made the soldiers like him, fostering a sense of respect. Thanks to Baron von Steuben's efforts and instruction, the soldiers significantly improved. They became more disciplined, and capable in coordinating their efforts, ultimately transforming into an efficient fighting force.

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 more ready to keep fighting for America's 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 @ P

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, the leader of the British army, opted to remain in Philadelphia rather than launch an attack on Valley Forge. This strategic decision allowed General Washington and his troops the opportunity to concentrate on training under the expert guidance of Baron von Steuben. After enduring a long and harsh winter, the Continental Army emerged from Valley Forge on June 19, 1778, exactly six months after their arrival. The soldiers were now significantly better trained and more organized than before. Their first major test came soon at the Battle of Monmouth, where they faced a considerably larger British force. Under General Washington's leadership, the Continental Army fought with renewed vigor and discipline, demonstrating the effectiveness of the rigorous training they had undergone. This battle showed how strong the soldiers had become, proving that their time spent at Valley Forge had helped transform them into a more powerful and effective army.

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 **P**

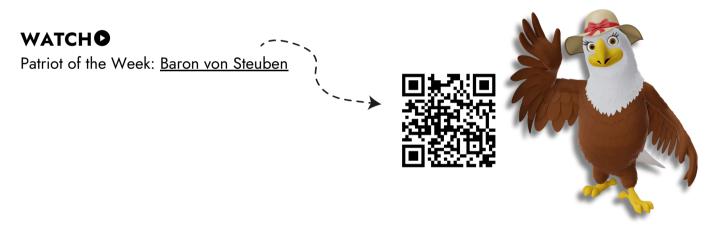
The Battle of Monmouth was a turning point. Congress, which had once questioned General Washington's abilities, praised him for leading the army to victory. This victory silenced any doubts people had about him, including those who had been part of the Conway Cabal. The Conway Cabal refers to a loosely 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 **P**

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. 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. Let's watch another Patriot of the Week to learn more!





Objective:

To engage fourth graders in understanding the difficult decisions faced by soldiers and leaders at Valley Forge through an interactive, decision-making activity.

Materials Needed:

- Large open space (classroom, gym, or outdoor area)
- Scenario cards with different decisions and outcomes
- Simple costumes or props (hats, scarves, paper badges)
- Notebooks and pencils
- A map of Valley Forge and its surroundings

Introduction:

- Explain to the students that they will experience what it was like to make important decisions at Valley Forge.
- Show pictures or drawings of Valley Forge and give a brief overview of its historical significance.

Group Division and Character Assignment:

- Divide the students into small groups and assign roles: soldiers, General George Washington, and advisors.
- Provide simple costumes or props to help them get into character.

Scenario Setup:

- Explain that each group will receive scenario cards presenting different challenges and decisions they must make.
- Each decision will have different possible outcomes, and the students must choose what they think is the best course of action.





Scenario 1: Lack of Supplies:

- Present the first scenario: "The soldiers are running out of food and warm clothing. What should you do?"
 - Option A: Send a group to nearby farms to request supplies.
 - o Option B: Ration the remaining supplies strictly.
 - Option C: Move to a different location with more resources.
- Have each group discuss and choose an option, then reveal the outcome based on their choice.

Scenario 2: Disease Outbreak:

- Present the second scenario: "Many soldiers are getting sick with scabies and other diseases. What should you do?"
 - o Option A: Set up a separate area for the sick soldiers.
 - Option B: Request medical supplies and doctors from nearby towns.
 - o Option C: Allow the soldiers to rest and hope they recover.
- Have each group discuss and choose an option, then reveal the outcome based on their choice.

Scenario 3: Disease Outbreak:

- Present the third scenario: "The soldiers are tired and their morale is low. How can you improve their spirits and skills?
 - Option A: Organize games and activities to boost morale.
 - o Option B: Increase the training drills to keep them focused.
 - o Option C: Allow them to write letters home and have some rest time.
- Have each group discuss and choose an option, then reveal the outcome based on their choice.

Reflection and Discussion:

- Gather the students together and ask each group to share the decisions they made and the outcomes.
- Discuss the challenges and responsibilities faced by leaders and soldiers at Valley Forge.
- Highlight the importance of making thoughtful and strategic decisions in difficult situations.





Creative Activity:

- Provide notebooks and pencils.
- Ask students to write a short reflection on what they learned about decision-making at Valley Forge.
- Encourage them to describe a decision they found particularly challenging and what they learned from it.

Sharing and Conclusion:

- Allow a few students to share their reflections with the class.
- Summarize the activity by discussing the impact of leadership and decision-making on the survival and success of the soldiers at Valley Forge.
- Emphasize the importance of resilience, teamwork, and strategic thinking.

Extension Activity:

- Create a display in the classroom with the students' reflections, scenario cards, and any props they used.
- Invite other classes or parents to visit the display and learn about the decisions made at Valley Forge.

This interactive decision-making activity will help fourth graders engage with the history of Valley Forge, understand the complexities of leadership, and appreciate the importance of strategic thinking and teamwork.



Comprehension Work: Learning about Baron von Steuben

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Instructions: Read the passage about Baron von Steuben carefully, then answer the questions below.

Despite Baron von Steuben's limited English skills, he carefully wrote down military drills and combat techniques. Alexander Hamilton and other aides translated these instructions into English so that the soldiers could understand and use them. Steuben worked closely with the soldiers, teaching them new ways to fight and stay strong. His friendly and helpful attitude made the soldiers like him a lot. Because of Baron von Steuben's hard work and teaching, the soldiers felt more hopeful. They became more disciplined, worked better together, and became a stronger and more effective fighting force.

- 1. Who was Baron von Steuben?
 - A) A soldier in the Continental Army
 - B) A military leader from Prussia
 - C) An English translator
 - D) A British general
- 2. What did Baron von Steuben do despite his limited English skills?
 - A) Wrote letters home
 - B) Taught soldiers how to cook
 - C) Documented military drills and combat techniques
 - D) Built log cabins
- 3. Who helped translate Steuben's instructions into English?
 - A) George Washington
 - B) Alexander Hamilton and other aides
 - C) Martha Washington
 - D) British soldiers



Comprehension Work: Learning about Baron von Steuben

NAME:	DATE
 4. How did Steuben work with the solo A) He cooked meals for them B) He trained them closely, teaching C) He built their cabins D) He read stories to them 5. Why did the soldiers like Baron von 	diers? g new fighting techniques
A) He gave them extra food B) He had a friendly and helpful atti C) He spoke English very well D) He was strict and mean	
 6. What effect did Steuben's training h A) They became more hopeful B) They worked better together C) They became a stronger and mo D) All of the above 	
Short Answer Questions	
7. Why was it important for Steuben's	instructions to be translated into English?



Comprehension Work: Learning about Baron von Steuben

NAME:	DATE
8. Describe one way Baron von Steuben's train	ning helped the soldiers at Valley Forge.
	ds the soldiers contribute to their improvement?
10. What can we learn from Baron von Steuber working together?	n's experience about overcoming language barriers and



Answer Key: Comprehension Work

- 1. B) A military leader from Prussia
- 2. C) Documented military drills and combat techniques
- 3. B) Alexander Hamilton and other aides
- 4. B) He trained them closely, teaching new fighting techniques
- 5. B) He had a friendly and helpful attitude
- 6. D) All of the above
- 7. It was important for Steuben's instructions to be translated into English so the soldiers could understand and follow them effectively.
- 8. One way Baron von Steuben's training helped the soldiers was by teaching them new fighting techniques that made them more disciplined and effective.
- 9. Baron von Steuben's friendly and helpful attitude made the soldiers like and respect him, which motivated them to learn and improve.
- 10. Baron von Steuben's experience teaches us that overcoming language barriers and working together can lead to great success and improvement.



Student Text

Please read the following paragraph to learn more.

One of the big challenges was their army's lack of experience compared to the well-trained British soldiers. Leading the Continental Army was General George Washington, a wise leader from Virginia. Less than a year earlier, he had surprised the British with a victory in Trenton on Christmas night. But after this victory, the British aimed to crush the colonists' spirit by capturing Philadelphia. In August 1777, British troops under General William Howe marched towards Philadelphia and took control of it. The Continental Congress had to flee to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and things looked grim for the Americans. Losing their capital city made winning the war seem almost impossible. However, General Washington was determined to use the winter months, when fighting was difficult due to the weather, to train his army and plan for future victories.

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. 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.



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
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 html=true

Images

Washington



Credit: National Art Gallery

Valley Forge



Credit: Wikipedia

Images

Soldiers



Credit: Canva Pro.

Horatio Gates



Credit: Wikipedia

Images

Baron von Steuben



Credit: American Battlefield Trust

Martha Washinton



Credit: Wikipedia.

Notes
