DISCOVER AMERICA Teacher Guide



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



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THE WINTER AT VALLEY FORGE -KINDERGARTEN

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

- Describe the hardships soldiers endured, such as shortages of food and clothing and harsh winter conditions.
- Explain how General Washington's leadership and determination helped the soldiers persevere and grow stronger.
- Discuss how figures like Baron von Steuben and Martha Washington supported the troops and boosted morale during difficult times.

Key Terms

- 0 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.
- 0 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're 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 have 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 is 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 have 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 O

Star Spangled Adventures Cartoon <u>Ep. 31: Valley Forge</u>





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. **[Reference Soldiers Image]** But sickness spread because there wasn't enough food or clean water. Soldiers got lice. 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?

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. General Washington made sure everyone got the shot to help 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, and how did it help during the hard winter at Valley Forge?

TELL Students *P*

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 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 🙆

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.

TELL Students (continued)

Because of Baron von Steuben's hard work and teaching, the soldiers started to feel more hopeful. 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 America's freedom.

ASK Students

How did Baron von Steuben's book help American soldiers after Valley Forge?

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. **[Reference General Howe Image]**

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.

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 🖊

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 🖊

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.

ASK Students

What did General Washington do to help his soldiers at Valley Forge?

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!

WATCHO

Learn More with Liberty: Introduction to Valley Forge

Patriot of the Week: Baron von Steuben









Objective:

To help kindergarten students understand how soldiers at Valley Forge built log cabins to survive the winter.

Materials Needed:

- Craft sticks or popsicle sticks (for logs)
- Construction paper (for roof)
- Glue
- Crayons or markers
- Scissors
- Large piece of cardboard or paper (for the base)

Introduction:

Start by briefly explaining to the students that during the winter at Valley Forge, soldiers built log cabins to live in because they needed shelter from the cold.

Craft Activity:

- Lay the large piece of blue fabric or paper on the floor, representing the ocean.
- Give each student a piece of cardboard or paper as the base for their cabin.
- Provide craft sticks or popsicle sticks and demonstrate how to stack them vertically to represent the logs of a cabin. Help them glue the sticks together to form the walls of the cabin.
- Cut construction paper into a triangular shape to create the roof of the cabin. Help the students glue the roof on top of their log walls.
- Encourage students to decorate their log cabins with crayons or markers.

Discussion:

- While students are working on their cabins, talk about why shelters like these were important during the winter. Discuss how the soldiers stayed warm inside and why it was better than sleeping outside.
- Emphasize teamwork and how everyone had to help build the cabins, just like how soldiers worked together at Valley Forge.





Wrap Up:

- After the activity, gather students together and ask them to share their log cabins. Encourage them to explain what they learned about the soldiers at Valley Forge.
- Summarize the activity by reinforcing the importance of working together and being creative, just like the soldiers did during that challenging winter.

Extension Ideas:

- Create a simple storytelling session where students can act out being soldiers at Valley Forge and describe their cabins.
- Discuss other challenges the soldiers faced, such as food shortages and illnesses, in an age-appropriate manner.
- Display the finished log cabins in the classroom as a reminder of what they learned about Valley Forge.



The Winter at Valley Forge

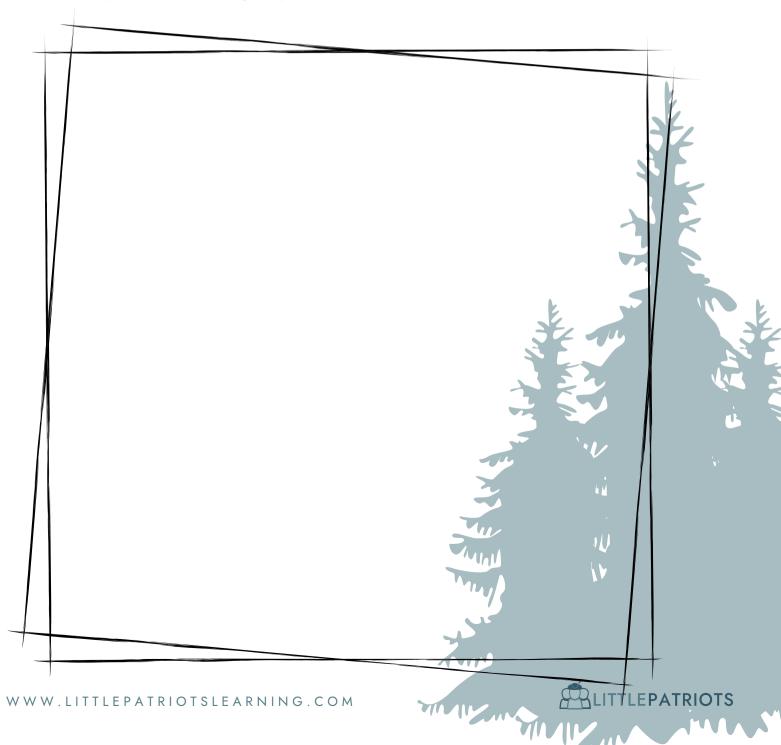
NAME: _____

DATE _____

Instructions:

1. Draw a picture of a log cabin like the ones the soldiers built at Valley Forge.

2. Color your picture using crayons or markers.



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+statesponsored+immunization+campaign+in+history#v=snippet&q=the%20first%20largescale%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/conwaycabal/
- 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

Images

Washington



Credit: National Art Gallery

Cabin



Credit: Canva Pro.

Images

Washington



Credit: Canva Pro.

Baron von Steuben



Credit: American Battlefield Trust

Images

Martha Washinton



Credit: Wikipedia.

General Howe



Credit: Wikipedia