DISCOVER AMERICA

Teacher Guide



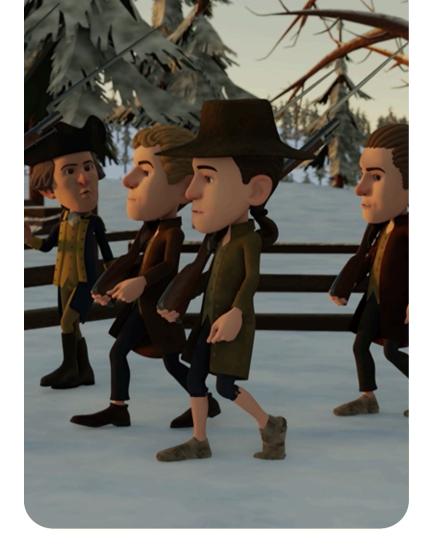
Winter Trials at Valley Forge: Courage and Resilience in America's History



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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

- Recognize what a musket is and understand its use by soldiers during the American Revolutionary War.
- Reflect on how soldiers might have felt during their journey to Valley Forge and while staying there, discussing emotions and experiences.
- Analyze the role of Baron von Steuben and Martha
 Washington at Valley Forge, discussing their contributions
 to the soldiers and their morale.



Students will be able to

- 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.

Introduction

TELL Students **P**

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.

ASK Students

Is it easy to walk through the cold carrying a musket?

TELL Students

That is right! It is hard work and is not very comfortable. 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.

Introduction

TELL Students (continued)

Here, General Washington and his soldiers will go through tough winters, 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

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.

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. 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 Log 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.

Introduction

TELL Students (continued)

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 Ep. 31: Valley Forge







TELL Students

In the fall of 1777, the colonies were deeply involved 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 discontent with British rule stretched back even further. In July 1776, the Second Continental Congress formally declared independence through the Declaration of Independence. Despite the colonists' wish to become their own country, Britain strongly opposed losing its valuable North American colonies. Just recently, Britain had won the Seven Years' War, gaining land from France. They were determined to keep control. The colonists knew they had to fight hard for their independence, especially with winter approaching in 1777.

ASK Students

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

TELL Students

One of the big challenges was the 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 their spirit by capturing Philadelphia, the new country's capital. 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 difficult for the colonists. 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. He wanted a location near Philadelphia but far enough away from the British.

TELL Students (continued)

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 when 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, which made them itch. 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. [Reference Soldiers Image]

ASK Students

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

TELL Students A

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 prevent smallpox from spreading. 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 A

General Washington wanted his soldiers to get inoculated 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.

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 General Gates Image] 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.

TELL Students (continued)

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. 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 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 🚳 🔑

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. 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 @ A

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.

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!

WATCH •

Learn More with Liberty: George Washington and Leadership

Patriot of the Week: Baron von Steuben









Objective:

To help second graders understand the challenges faced by soldiers during the winter at Valley Forge and to engage them in a hands-on learning experience.

Materials Needed:

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

Introduction:

Begin by explaining to the students that they will experience a simulation of what it might have been like for soldiers during the winter at Valley Forge. Show pictures or drawings of Valley Forge and briefly describe it as a historic camp where soldiers faced many challenges.

Preparing for the March:

- Ask the students to imagine they are soldiers in General George Washington's army.
- Distribute lightweight backpacks or bags to each student, symbolizing the gear soldiers carried.
- Explain that these soldiers had to walk long distances in harsh conditions.

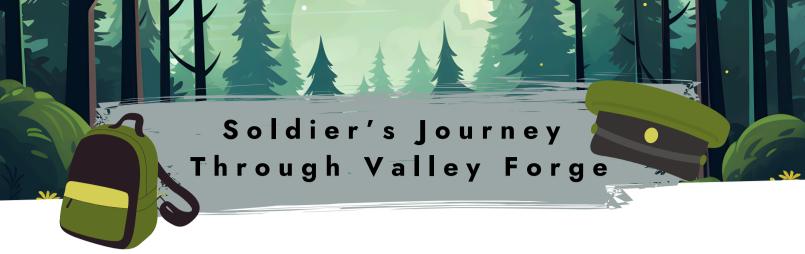
The March Begins:

Set up a path or course in the large open space with different stations representing various challenges soldiers faced:

- Station 1: Cold Water Crossing (optional containers of cold water)
- Station 2: Uphill Climb (use mats or ramps)
- Station 3: Muddy Path (use brown paper or mats)

Instruct students to walk through the course with their backpacks. Time them using a stopwatch or timer to complete the course.





Reflection and Discussion:

- After completing the march, gather students together.
- Ask them to share their experiences and how they felt navigating through each station.
- Discuss the challenges soldiers might have faced during their march to Valley Forge.
- Emphasize the soldiers' bravery and resilience in enduring these hardships.

Learning About Valley Forge:

- Show pictures or drawings of Valley Forge and explain its significance in American history.
- Discuss the harsh winter conditions and lack of supplies soldiers faced.
- Highlight General George Washington's leadership and how he inspired his troops during this challenging time.

Wrap-Up:

- Conclude by summarizing what the students have learned about the soldiers' experiences at Valley Forge.
- Reinforce key concepts of resilience and leadership.
- Thank students for participating and encourage them to remember the sacrifices made by soldiers during the American Revolutionary War.

Extension Activity (Optional):

- Have students create simple dioramas or drawings depicting scenes from Valley Forge based on what they learned.
- Encourage them to write or dictate short stories about a day in the life of a soldier at Valley Forge.



Valley Forge Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down Activity

NAME:	DATE
Instructions: Read each statement below all based on what you learned. Circle 🖒 for tr	bout Valley Forge. Decide if the statement is true or false rue and 🖵 for false.
1. General George Washington arrived at Valley Forge in the spring of 1777.	2. Valley Forge was a comfortable place with plenty of supplies for the soldiers.
3. The soldiers at Valley Forge had to build log cabins to stay warm during the winter.	4. Martha Washington played an important role at Valley Forge by supporting her husband and boosting soldier morale.

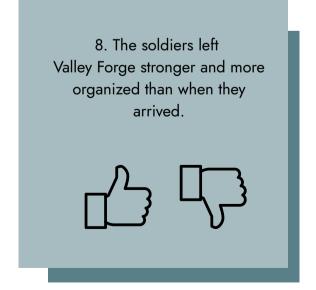


Valley Forge Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down Activity

NAME: DATE

Instructions: Read each statement below about Valley Forge. Decide if the statement is true or false based on what you learned. Circle \Box for true and \bigtriangledown for false.						
5. General Washington faced criticism from some leaders who doubted his ability to lead.	6. Smallpox was a deadly disease that spread through the soldiers at Valley Forge.					

7. Baron von Steuben helped train the soldiers at Valley Forge even though he didn't speak English well.





Valley Forge Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down Activity

NAME:	DATE

Instructions: Read each statement below about Valley Forge. Decide if the statement is true or false based on what you learned. Circle for true and \P for false.

 General Washington led the Continental Army to victory at the Battle of Monmouth after leaving Valley Forge.



 The winter at Valley Forge showed the resilience of General Washington and his soldiers.





Discussion

After completing the worksheet, discuss your answers with a teacher or parent. Explain why each statement is true or false based on what you learned about Valley Forge. What did you find most interesting about this period in American history?



Answer Key: Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down Activity

1. General George Washington arrived at Valley Forge in the spring of 1777.
rue
2. Valley Forge was a comfortable place with plenty of supplies for the soldiers.
▽False
3. The soldiers at Valley Forge had to build log cabins to stay warm during the winter.
☆True
4. Martha Washington played an important role at Valley Forge by supporting her husband and
boosting soldier morale.
☆True
5. General Washington faced criticism from some leaders who doubted his ability to lead.
r∆True
6. Smallpox was a deadly disease that spread through the soldiers at Valley Forge.
True
7. Baron von Steuben helped train the soldiers at Valley Forge even though he didn't speak English
well.
rue
8. The soldiers left Valley Forge stronger and more organized than when they arrived.
☆True
9. General Washington led the Continental Army to victory at the Battle of Monmouth after leaving
Valley Forge.
☆True
10. The winter at Valley Forge showed the resilience of General Washington and his soldiers.
rue True



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
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- https://www.nps.gov/people/general-von-steuben.htm
- https://www.nps.gov/vafo/learn/historyculture/valleyforgewomen.htm
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 html=true

Washington



Credit: National Art Gallery

Cabin



Credit: Canva Pro.

Valley Forge



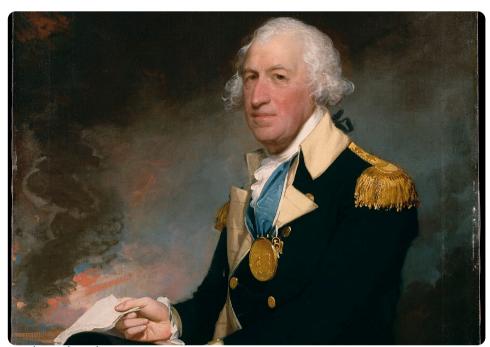
Credit: Wikipedia

Soldiers



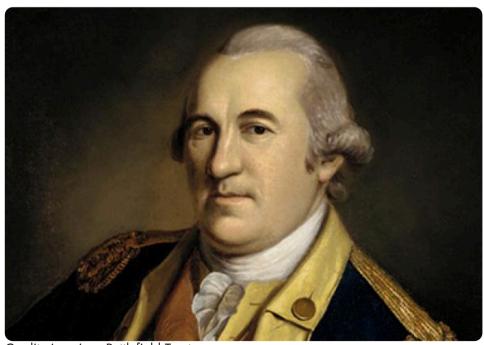
Credit: Canva Pro.

Horatio Gates



Credit: Wikipedia

Baron von Steuben



Credit: American Battlefield Trust

Martha Washinton



Credit: Wikipedia.

Notes
