### 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

- Recognize what a musket is and understand its use by soldiers during the American Revolutionary War.
- Explain why General Washington chose Valley Forge over other locations for the winter encampment, considering factors such as proximity to Philadelphia and strategic advantages.
- Reflect on how soldiers might have felt during their journey to Valley Forge and while staying there, discussing emotions and experiences.



### Students will be able to

- Analyze the role of Baron von Steuben and Martha
   Washington at Valley Forge, discussing their contributions
  to the soldiers and their morale.
- 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 **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.
- smallpox: a serious and often deadly viral infection that is contagious meaning it spreads from person to person and can cause permanent scarring.

## 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.

#### **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 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 colonist's 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 colonies 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

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 difficult. 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.

### **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. [Reference Soldiers Image]

### **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, which made them itch. 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

**Smallpox** is a serious viral infection that is contagious — meaning it spreads from person to person — and can cause permanent scarring and even death. Smallpox was a major threat to the army because the soldiers could not fight if they were sick. So General Washington made the decision to inoculate the army against smallpox. 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 inoculated 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 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. [Reference General Gates Image] 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.

### **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 @ P

In February 1778, a man named Baron Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben arrived at Valley Forge from Europe. [General Baron von Steuben Image] He was a general from Prussia, a country in Europe known for its strong military tradition. 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 for America. Franklin, who was serving as the American 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 von 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

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.

### **TELL** Students (continued)

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, 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, 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 after 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.

#### **ASK** Students

What did General Washington do to help his soldiers at Valley Forge, and why was his leadership important?

### **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 Patriot of the Week to learn more!

### WATCH •

Learn More with Liberty: Impact of Valley Forge

Patriot of the Week: Baron von Steuben









### **Objective:**

To engage third graders in learning about Valley Forge by having them create and present stories from the perspectives of a soldier, General George Washington, or Baron von Steuben.

### **Materials Needed:**

- Large open space (classroom, gym, or outdoor area)
- Simple costumes or props (hats, scarves, paper badges)
- Pictures or drawings of Valley Forge, General Washington, Baron von Steuben, and soldiers
- Notebooks and pencils
- Construction paper, markers, crayons

### Introduction:

- Explain that the students will be creating and presenting stories about life at Valley Forge from the
  perspective of different characters.
- Show pictures or drawings of Valley Forge, General Washington, Baron von Steuben, and soldiers to give context.

### **Group Division and Character Assignment:**

- Divide the students into small groups of 4-5.
- Assign each group a character: a soldier, General George Washington, or Baron von Steuben.
- Explain that each group will create a story from their character's perspective.

### **Story Creation:**

- Provide each group with notebooks, pencils, construction paper, markers, and crayons.
- Instruct the groups to brainstorm and create a story that includes:
- The challenges their character faced at Valley Forge
- How their character contributed to the camp
- Any important events their character experienced
- Encourage creativity and detail in their stories. They can write dialogues, draw scenes, or use props.





### **Story Practice:**

- Allow each group time to practice presenting their story.
- Encourage them to use props and costumes to enhance their presentation.

### **Presentations:**

- Have each group present their story to the class.
- After each presentation, ask the audience (the rest of the class) a few questions about the story to ensure engagement and understanding:
- What challenges did the character face?
- How did the character contribute to the camp?
- What was the most interesting part of the story?

### Reflection and Discussion:

- After all the presentations, gather the class for a discussion.
- Ask students to reflect on what they learned about Valley Forge from different perspectives.
- Discuss the importance of each character's role and how they worked together to overcome challenges.

### **Conclusion:**

- Summarize the activity by highlighting the key lessons learned about Valley Forge.
- Emphasize the importance of resilience, teamwork, and leadership during challenging times.
- Thank the students for their creativity and participation

### **Extension Activity (Optional):**

- Create a display in the classroom with the students' stories, drawings, and any props they used.
- Invite other classes or parents to visit the display and listen to the students' stories about Valley Forge.

This interactive activity will help third graders engage deeply with the history of Valley Forge, understand the different perspectives of those who lived through it, and develop their storytelling and presentation skills.



### Valley Forge Multiple Choice Quiz

NAME:	DATE	
Instructions: Read each question	carefully and circle the correct answer.	
1. Why did the colonies want to be	ecome their own country in 1776?	
A) They wanted to join another o	country.	
B) They were unhappy with Britis	sh rule.	
C) They wanted to move to a dif	ferent continent.	
D) They liked the British king.		
2. Who led the Continental Army o	during the winter at Valley Forge?	
A) Benjamin Franklin		
B) General George Washington		
C) Baron von Steuben		

- 3. What did the soldiers at Valley Forge build to stay warm?
  - A) Stone castles

D) Thomas Jefferson

- B) Log cabins
- C) Igloos
- D) Tents
- 4. Why was it difficult to bring food and clothes to Valley Forge?
  - A) It was very far away and there wasn't much money.
  - B) The soldiers didn't want any supplies.
  - C) The British soldiers blocked the roads.
  - D) The supplies were too heavy to carry.
- 5. What did General Washington see that showed how tough the conditions were at Valley Forge?
  - A) Soldiers playing games
  - B) Soldiers with no clothes, blankets, or shoes
  - C) Soldiers eating a big feast
  - D) Soldiers sleeping comfortably



### Valley Forge Multiple Choice Quiz

NAME:	DATE	

- 6. Who helped train the soldiers at Valley Forge with European military drills?
  - A) Benjamin Franklin
  - B) General Horatio Gates
  - C) Baron von Steuben
  - D) Thomas Mifflin
- 7. Why did Benjamin Franklin think it was important to bring skilled military leaders like Baron von Steuben to help the Continental Army?
  - A) To make the soldiers happier
  - B) To improve the soldiers' fighting skills
  - C) To teach the soldiers how to cook
  - D) To build new log cabins
- 8. What did Baron von Steuben notice about the conditions at Valley Forge?
  - A) The camp was clean and well-organized
  - B) There were severe shortages of supplies and the camp was disorganized
  - C) The soldiers were very well-fed
  - D) The soldiers were not working hard
- 9. How did Baron von Steuben train the soldiers at Valley Forge despite not speaking much English?
  - A) He used hand signals
  - B) He wrote down drills in French and used interpreters like Alexander Hamilton
  - C) He spoke in German
  - D) He drew pictures
- 10. What role did Martha Washington play at Valley Forge?
  - A) She led the soldiers into battle
  - B) She served as an advisor and supporter, boosting morale
  - C) She cooked all the meals
  - D) She trained the soldiers



### Valley Forge Multiple Choice Quiz

NAME: DATE	N 1 A N 4 <del>-</del>	5 · TF
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- 11. Why did General Howe's decision to stay in Philadelphia instead of attacking Valley Forge help General Washington and his soldiers?
  - A) It gave them time to celebrate
  - B) It allowed them to focus on training and getting stronger
  - C) It helped them find more food
  - D) It let them build new houses
- 12. What was the Conway Cabal?
  - A) An attempt to support General Washington
  - B) An attempt to remove General Washington from command
  - C) A celebration at Valley Forge
  - D) A new type of log cabin
- 13. What did General Washington do to help his soldiers at Valley Forge during the harsh winter?
  - A) He gave them all new clothes
  - B) He led by example, inspired them, and ensured they were trained
  - C) He moved them to a warmer place
  - D) He gave them extra food
- 14. Why was General Washington determined to train his army during the winter of 1777?
  - A) To prepare them for a big holiday celebration
  - B) To make them stronger and more organized for future battles
  - C) To let them rest more
  - D) To help them build better log cabins
- 15. How did Baron von Steuben's book help American soldiers after Valley Forge?
  - A) It taught them how to cook better
  - B) It provided guidelines for training and discipline
  - C) It helped them build log cabins
  - D) It showed them new ways to celebrate



### Answer Key: Valley Forge Multiple Choice Quiz

- 1. B
- 2. B
- 3. B
- 4. A
- 5. B
- 6. C
- 7. B
- 8. B
- 9. B
- 10. B
- 11. B
- 12. B
- 13. B
- 14. B
- 15. B



## Resources

- https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/essays/british-occupation-ofphiladelphia/#:~:text=Howe%20was%20responsible%20for%20the,line%20to%20the%20occu pied%20city.
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- 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
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- 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

### **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
