

DISCOVER AMERICA

Teacher Guide



United for Liberty: The
Stamp Act Congress and
the Seeds of Revolution

Table of Contents

3	Themes & Values
	Learning Objectives
4	Key Terms
6	Introduction
9	Lesson
13	Activity: Building the Road to Independence
15	Activity: Event Cards for “Building the Road to Independence”
18	Activity: Singing the Road to Freedom
20	Resources
21	Images
26	Notes



Key Themes

- Key Decisions That Shaped Independence
- The Colonists' Fight Against Tyranny
- The Impact of Unfair Laws
- The Role of the Stamp Act in Sparking Change
- Unity Through Shared Challenges

Core Values

- Community
- Life
- Faith
- Liberty



Learning Objectives

Students will be able to

- Identify the concept of freedom and relate it to their own lives.
- Understand what a colony is and why the colonies were controlled by Great Britain.
- Explain how disagreements between the colonies and Great Britain led to growing tensions.
- Recognize the key role of the French and Indian War in creating financial strain on Great Britain.
- Describe the Stamp Act and explain why it upset the colonists.
- Understand the significance of the colonists' slogan "No taxation without representation."
- Analyze how the colonies began to unite to fight for their rights and freedom.

Key Terms

- 0 1 **Boston Tea Party:** a 1773 event in which colonists in Boston, upset about a tax on tea, dressed up as Native Americans and dumped an entire shipment of British tea into the harbor.
- 0 2 **colony:** a piece of land controlled by another country.
- 0 3 **Continental Army:** a group of men from all the colonies who fought against Britain during the Revolutionary War.
- 0 4 **Declaration of Independence:** a document that explained why the colonies were breaking away from Britain.
- 0 5 **freedom:** being able to make your own choices and having the power to decide what's best for yourself, your family, and your community.
- 0 6 **Founding Fathers:** the leaders who helped create the United States and fought for its independence.
- 0 7 **militias:** citizen armies.
- 0 8 **Parliament:** Britain's government.
- 0 9 **repealed:** canceled.
- 1 0 **Revolutionary War:** the fight between the colonies and Great Britain that lasted from 1775 to 1783 and ended with the colonies winning their freedom and becoming the United States of America.
- 1 1 **Stamp Act:** a law created by Great Britain that said the colonists had to pay extra money, called a tax, on things made from paper.
- 1 2 **tax:** extra money people must pay to the government.

Key Terms

- 1 3 **The French and Indian War:** a conflict between Great Britain and France over land in North America, where many Native American tribes helped each side.
- 1 4 **treason:** betraying your country or turning your back on it.
- 1 5 **tyranny:** when a government acts like a bully and doesn't listen to the people.

Introduction

TELL Students

Long before the United States became its own country, the idea of freedom was already starting to grow in the colonies. But what is freedom? **Freedom** means being able to make your own choices and having the power to decide what's best for yourself, your family, and your community. **[Reference Colonists Image]** For the colonists, freedom meant more than just being able to choose what to eat or wear. It meant having a say in important decisions. The colonists wanted the right to speak up for themselves, to work hard for their dreams, and to live without unfair control from people far away in Great Britain. Freedom was about having a fair chance to live the life they wanted, and that idea began to grow stronger every day.

ASK Students

What does freedom mean to you? Can you think of a time when you got to make an important choice for yourself or your family?

TELL Students

Freedom means being able to make your own choices and having a say in what happens around you. For example, choosing what to play at recess or helping decide what to have for dinner are ways you practice freedom. But a long time ago, the colonists didn't always get to make their own choices because they were part of something called a colony. A **colony** is a piece of land controlled by another country. You can think of it like this: Great Britain was like a parent, and the colonies were like kids who had moved away to college to start their own lives. Even though they were far apart, the colonies and Great Britain still had a connection. But when decisions and issues came up, they didn't always agree on which choice to make.

ASK Students

Can you think of a time when you and a friend or family member didn't agree on something? How did you solve the problem?

TELL Students

The colonies had to figure out how to deal with conflicts arising from other countries wanting land in North America. Colonies such as Virginia and New York were located far across the Atlantic Ocean from Great Britain. **[Reference Distance Between Great Britain and Colonies Image]**

Introduction

TELL Students (continued)

But Great Britain wasn't the only country interested in the land we now call the United States of America. France also wanted land, and this led to a big fight over land and power called the French and Indian War. The **French and Indian War** was a conflict between Great Britain and France over land in North America, where many Native American tribes helped each side. Great Britain won the war but faced huge costs that later caused issues with the colonies. As we mentioned, it wasn't just British and French soldiers fighting. Many Native American tribes got involved too. Some tribes helped the French, and others helped the British. The colonists also helped Great Britain during the war. These colonial soldiers, sometimes called "Yankee Doodles" by the British, showed great bravery.

ASK Students

Who were the two main countries fighting in the French and Indian War?

TELL Students

After the war, Great Britain decided that the colonists should help pay for it. They passed the Stamp Act. The **Stamp Act** was a law created by Great Britain that said the colonists had to pay extra money, called a tax, on things made from paper. A **tax** is extra money people must pay to the government. For example, if a toy costs \$5, and the government adds a \$1 tax, you would pay \$6. The colonists didn't like this new tax. The Stamp Act taxed newspapers, playing cards, and important documents. To show they had paid the tax, the colonists had to buy special stamps to stick on these items. **[Reference Stamp Image]** The colonists didn't like the Stamp Act because they thought it was unfair to pay taxes without having a say in the British government's decisions. This made them very upset and led them to start working together to fight for their freedom.

ASK Students

How would you feel if you had to pay extra money every time you wanted to buy a toy or a book, but you didn't get to help decide if the rule was fair in the first place?

TELL Students

It wouldn't feel very fair, right? That's exactly how the colonists felt when they had to pay extra taxes.

Introduction

TELL Students (continued)

To make matters worse, they didn't have anyone in the British government to speak up for them or explain why the Stamp Act wasn't right. The colonists became upset because they didn't have a voice in the decisions that affected them. In our last class, we learned how the First Great Awakening united the colonists by bringing people together through faith and shared beliefs. Now, the colonists were finding a new reason for unity. They began to say something important: "No taxation without representation!" This meant they didn't think it was fair to pay taxes if they didn't get to help make the rules. This idea of unity brought the colonies closer. They started to work as a team to stand up to Great Britain. It was the beginning of something big—the fight for their freedom! Let's watch a Star Spangled Adventures episode to learn more!

WATCH

Star Spangled Adventures Cartoon Ep. 38: Stamp Act
Congress/Road to Revolution



Lesson

TELL Students 📷🔑

In Virginia, Patrick Henry, one of America's Founding Fathers gave a strong speech about why the Stamp Act was wrong. **[Reference Patrick Henry Image]** The **Founding Fathers** were the leaders who helped create the United States of America and fought for its independence. During his speech, Patrick Henry yelled, "Treason, treason!" **Treason** means betraying your country or turning your back on it. He also said that **tyranny**—when a government acts like a bully and doesn't listen to the people—must be resisted. What Patrick Henry meant is that the colonists should stand up against unfair rules and leaders who try to control people without caring about their rights. He was saying that if a government becomes a "tyrant," people have a responsibility to challenge it rather than simply accept it.

ASK Students

Why do you think Patrick Henry believed it was so important to speak out against the Stamp Act?

TELL Students 📷🔑

Other colonies were upset about the Stamp Act too. In North Carolina, John Ashe, another Founding Father, is believed to have said, "This law will be resisted in blood and death." Then, leaders in Massachusetts suggested holding a meeting called the Stamp Act Congress in New York in 1765. This meeting would represent the angry colonists and give them a chance to speak up. Nine of the 13 colonies sent representatives, and many of them agreed that, as subjects of Great Britain, they could only be taxed if they approved of it. Since the colonies had no representatives in Britain's government, called **Parliament**, they said they would not obey the Stamp Act. Men across the colonies started forming groups called the Sons of Liberty to stand up to Great Britain. **[Reference Sons of Liberty Image]** The Sons of Liberty warned the people asked to sell the stamped paper not to do it, or they would be treated like traitors. Because of this, not a single sheet of stamped paper was ever sold in the colonies! One Pennsylvania newspaper even printed, "No stamped paper to be had." People marched through the streets shouting, "Liberty, Property, and No Stamps!"

ASK Students

Why do you think the colonists were upset about the Stamp Act? How did they work together to show they didn't agree with it?

Lesson

TELL Students

By 1774, the problems between the colonies and Great Britain had gotten worse. The British Parliament passed harsh laws, called the Coercive Acts (also known as the Intolerable Acts), to punish Massachusetts for something called the Boston Tea Party. The **Boston Tea Party** was a 1773 event in which colonists in Boston, upset about a tax on tea, dressed up as Native Americans and dumped a whole shipment of British tea into the harbor. **[Reference Boston Tea Party Image]** They did this to show that they didn't think it was fair to be taxed without having a say in the government. The Coercive Acts, sort of like a punishment for the Boston Tea Party, took a lot of freedom away from the colonists. In response to these harsh laws, the colonies decided to meet and work together. They held a meeting in Philadelphia called the First Continental Congress. It was different from the earlier Stamp Act Congress because 12 out of the 13 colonies sent representatives to discuss how they could stand up to Britain and protect their rights.

ASK Students

Why do you think the colonies decided to work together at the First Continental Congress?

TELL Students

The colonies knew they would be stronger if they worked together, so they met at the First Continental Congress in 1774 to create a plan. There, they wrote a Declaration of Rights and Grievances, telling the British government that the colonists deserved the same rights as people living in Britain. They asked for the unfair laws to be cancelled and made it clear they didn't agree with being taxed without representation. Even though they hoped to remain peaceful, the colonies knew they might need to protect themselves if Britain didn't listen. So, the Congress encouraged each colony to form local **militias**, or small citizen armies, to be ready for any conflict.

[Reference Militia Image] Around this time, Patrick Henry gave his powerful speech in Virginia, declaring, "Give me liberty, or give me death!" His words inspired many colonists to stand up for their rights. The colonies were becoming more united in demanding fair treatment—and more prepared to defend their freedom if they had to.

ASK Students

Why do you think the colonies wrote to King George III and also prepared militias at the same time?

Lesson

TELL Students

Then, on April 19, 1775, British soldiers marched from Boston to the town of Lexington to capture colonial leaders and take weapons the colonists had stored. A group of colonists called Minutemen, who were regular citizens trained to respond quickly, gathered to stop them. No one knows who fired the first shot but someone did! This moment became known as “the shot heard ‘round the world” because it started the Revolutionary War. The **Revolutionary War** was the fight between the colonies and Great Britain that lasted from 1775 to 1783 and ended with the colonies winning their freedom and becoming the United States of America. **[Reference American Flag Image]**

ASK Students

Why was the first shot at Lexington called “the shot heard ‘round the world,” and why was it so important?

TELL Students

The road to America’s freedom didn’t happen all at once. Many things happened that made the colonists feel they were being treated unfairly. One of the first problems was the Stamp Act, which required the colonists to pay taxes even though they didn’t have a say in the rules. Because of unfair laws, punishments, and their wish for freedom, the colonists became more and more upset. This led to the Revolutionary War. The first battle at Lexington started the long war to become an independent country. **[Reference Lexington Image]**

ASK Students

What made the colonists feel it was so important to stand up for their rights and work together for freedom?

TELL Students

In May 1775, after fighting started between the colonies and British soldiers, the colonies held the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia. This meeting was different from the First Continental Congress in 1774, which had been about trying to solve problems peacefully. At the Second Continental Congress, all 13 colonies sent representatives to decide what to do next because the fighting had already begun.

Lesson

TELL Students (continued)

One of the first decisions at the Second Continental Congress was to create the **Continental Army**, a united colonial army, and to choose George Washington as its leader. **[Reference George Washington Image]** This was an important step in getting the colonies ready for war. The Second Continental Congress also took a big step toward independence from Great Britain when five Founding Fathers—Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, and Robert Livingston—were asked to write the Declaration of Independence.

ASK Students

What important decisions did the Second Continental Congress make?

TELL Students 🦋

The Second Continental Congress made some very important decisions to help the colonies during their conflict with Britain. First, they created the Continental Army and chose George Washington as its leader to organize and guide the colonies in battle. Second, they took a big step toward independence by writing the **Declaration of Independence**. A declaration is an official announcement. This document, adopted on July 4, 1776, explained why the colonies were breaking away from Great Britain. It said that all people have the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness and that governments should protect these rights. The Declaration of Independence sent a powerful message to the world: the colonies were no longer under British control. It marked the beginning of a new nation where people could have freedom and fair treatment. Even though Parliament, Britain's government, had **repealed** (or canceled) the Stamp Act years earlier, it still controlled the colonies and kept passing unfair laws. Many events, like the Stamp Act, the Boston Tea Party, and the harsh Coercive Acts, made the colonists angry and led them to declare independence. At first, the colonists had asked for their rights, hoping Parliament and King George III would listen. But when they were ignored, the colonies worked together to fight for independence. Many brave colonists, once separate, joined together, paving the way for the birth of the United States of America.



Objective

Kindergarten students will understand that many events led the colonists to declare independence by participating in a collaborative timeline-building activity.

Materials Needed

- Large poster board or wall space labeled "Road to Independence"
- Event cards (prepared beforehand with key events, such as the Stamp Act, Boston Tea Party, First Continental Congress, Petition, etc.)
- Velcro, magnets, or tape for attaching cards to the board
- Markers or crayons

Instructions

1. Set the Scene:

- a. Begin by explaining to the students that the journey to independence wasn't just one event but a series of events that built upon each other. Each event played an important role in leading the colonists to declare independence.

2. Divide into Groups:

- a. Split the class into small groups and give each group one event card.

3. Discuss the Event:

- a. Each group will read their card (with teacher support as needed) and discuss why their event was important. Simplify explanations and encourage groups to draw or write a quick symbol or sentence representing the event. For example, a tea cup for the Boston Tea Party or a stamp for the Stamp Act.

4. Build the Timeline:

- a. One by one, groups will come up to the "Road to Independence" timeline. Each group will place their card in order on the timeline and explain to the class what their event was and why it mattered.

5. Connect the Events:

- a. After all the events are placed, use yarn or markers to connect the cards visually. Talk about how these events led step-by-step to the Declaration of Independence.

6. Reflect:

End the activity with a group discussion:

- Why did the colonists decide to declare independence?
- How did each event play a part in their decision?



Building the Road to Independence

- How can working together, like the colonies did, help solve big problems?

Extension Option

Have students create their own “mini timeline” on paper by drawing pictures of the events they learned and arranging them in order. This helps reinforce the idea that freedom and independence were achieved through many connected events.

Event Cards for “Building the Road to Independence”

Instructions

Print and cut out cards.. Each card includes the event name and a brief, simplified description for students to read or discuss.

Event 1: French and Indian War

The British won the war but spent a lot of money. To pay for it, they taxed the colonies, which made the colonists upset.

Event 2: Stamp Act

The British created a law that taxed paper goods like newspapers and playing cards. The colonists thought it was unfair because they didn't have a say in the decision.

Event 3: Boston Tea Party

Colonists in Boston, angry about a tax on tea, dressed as Native Americans and threw British tea into the harbor.

Event Cards for “Building the Road to Independence”

Event 4: First Continental Congress

Leaders from 12 colonies met to discuss how to respond to unfair British laws. They wrote a petition to the king and planned ways to work together.

Event 5: Coercive Acts (Intolerable Acts)

The British Parliament passed harsh laws, called the Coercive Acts (also known as the Intolerable Acts), to punish Massachusetts for something called the Boston Tea Party.

Event 6: Petition

The colonists sent a letter to King George III asking for fair treatment and peace, but the king ignored it.

Event Cards for “Building the Road to Independence”

Event 7: “No Taxation Without Representation”

The colonists believed they shouldn't be taxed unless they had representatives in Britain's government to speak for them.

Event 8: Second Continental Congress

All 13 colonies met to organize an army and plan for independence. They chose George Washington as the leader of the Continental Army.

Event 9: Declaration of Independence

The colonists wrote a document explaining why they wanted to be free from Britain. It was adopted on July 4, 1776, and declared the United States an independent nation.



Singing the Road to Freedom

Objective

Kindergarten students will learn about the events leading to America's independence through a simple, interactive song set to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat." This activity will help them remember key ideas in a fun and engaging way.

Song Lyrics (to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat")

Verse 1:

Tax, tax, pay the tax,
The Stamp Act made us frown.
"No more tax without a say!"
The colonies stood their ground.

Verse 2:

Tea, tea, dump the tea,
The harbor was our stage.
The Boston Tea Party showed the king,
The colonies were enraged.

Verse 3:

Meet, meet, come and meet,
The Congress had a plan.
Together we'll stand for what is right,
Freedom across the land.



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Singing the Road to Freedom

Instructions for the Activity

1. Introduce the Song:

- Teach the students the song one verse at a time. Sing it slowly and encourage them to repeat after you. Use gestures to make it more interactive (e.g., pretend to dump tea for Verse 2, or point to an imaginary map for Verse 3).

2. Add Movements:

- **Verse 1:** Pretend to shake your head in disapproval while mimicking stamping papers.
- **Verse 2:** Pretend to lift a crate and throw it into water.
- **Verse 3:** Pretend to shake hands with a friend to show unity.

3. Create Visual Aids:

- Use simple drawings or printed images of key events (e.g., stamps, tea crates, and Congress meetings) to display while singing. Point to these visuals to reinforce the ideas in the song.

4. Sing as a Group:

- a. Once the students are familiar with the song, sing it together as a class. Encourage enthusiasm and participation

5. Sign the Freedom Song Poster:

- Create a large poster with the title "Our Freedom Song" and leave space for students to sign their names. After singing the song together, have each student "sign" the poster as a way to connect with the idea of unity and teamwork, just like the colonies working together.

Extension

For added fun, let the students perform the song for another class or their families to showcase what they've learned!

Resources

- <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/1658hpr-9260362296ba000/>
- https://northcarolinagenealogy.org/statewide/stamp_act.htm
- https://www.si.edu/object/1p-stamp-act-1765-proof%3Anpm_0.022044.1
- <https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbpe.34604500/>
- <https://constitutioncenter.org/blog/no-taxation-without-representation>
- https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/patrick.asp
- <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/revolutionary-war/battles/lexington-and-concord>
- <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript>

Images

Colonists



Credit: Canva Pro.

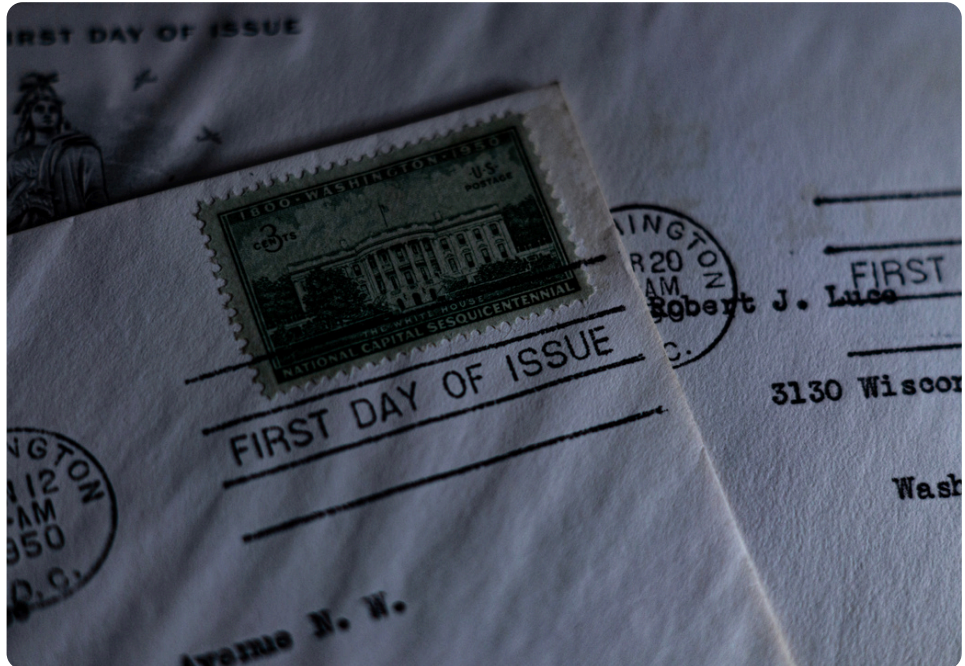
Distance Between Great Britain and Colonies



Credit: Canva Pro.

Images

Stamp



Credit: Canva Pro.

Patrick Henry



Credit: Wikipedia.

Images

Sons of Liberty



Credit: Wikipedia.

Boston Tea Party



Credit: Wikipedia.

Images

Militia



Credit: Canva Pro.

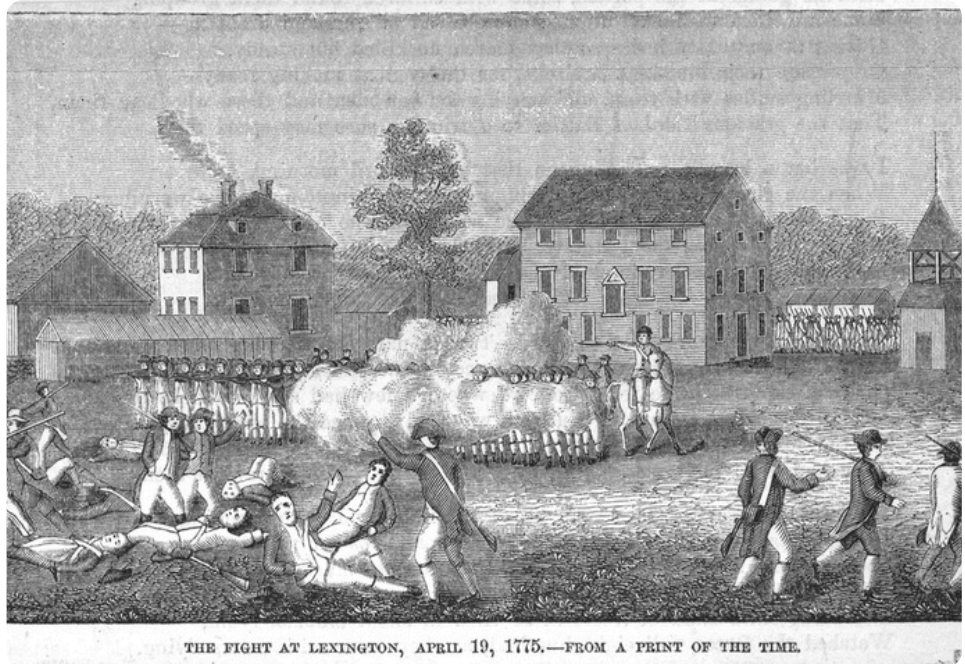
American Flag



Credit: Canva Pro.

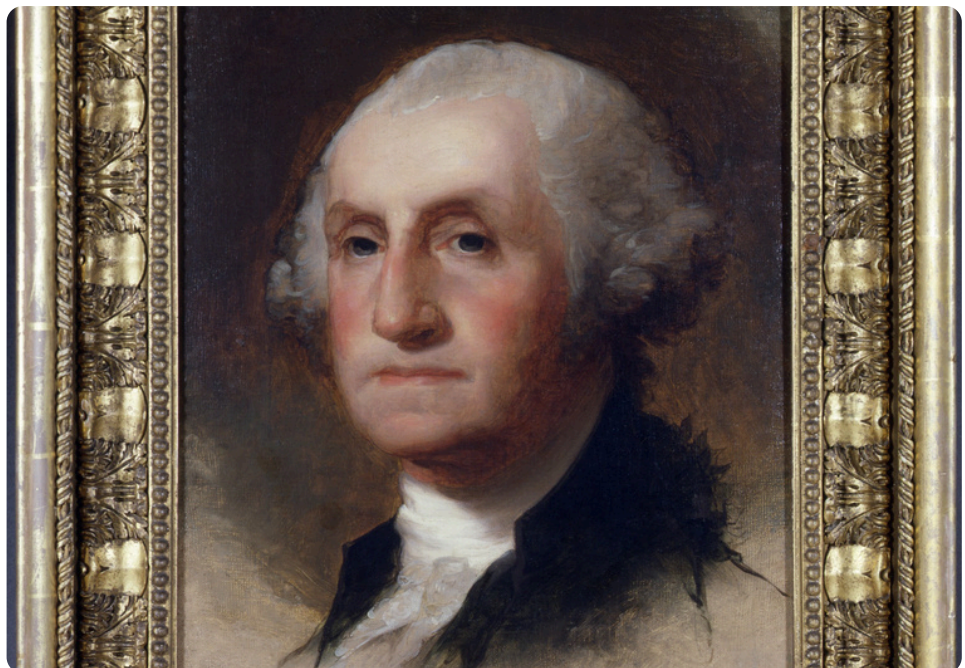
Images

Lexington



Credit: Canva Pro.

George Washington



Credit: Canva Pro.

Notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.