

Challenges for the New Nation

If YOU were there...

You are the captain of an American merchant ship in the 1790s. Your ship has just picked up cargo in the French West Indies. You are headed back to your home port of Philadelphia. Suddenly, a British warship pulls alongside your ship. Marines swarm aboard. They order you into the nearest harbor and seize your goods.

How would this incident affect your views of Great Britain?

BUILDING BACKGROUND As the new nation tried to get organized, it faced economic problems and internal divisions. Even more difficult challenges came from conflicts in Europe. The United States could not avoid being caught up in fighting between France and Great Britain.

Remaining Neutral

Tensions between France and Britain began to build after the French people rebelled against their king. On July 14, 1789, citizens of Paris attacked and captured the Bastille, a hated fortress and prison that stood as a mighty symbol of royal power.

The storming of the Bastille was one of the first acts of the **French Revolution**—a rebellion of French people against their king in 1789. The French people overthrew their king and created a republican government.

French revolutionaries storm the Bastille.



What You Will Learn...

Main Ideas

1. The United States tried to remain neutral regarding events in Europe.
2. The United States and Native Americans came into conflict in the Northwest Territory.
3. The Whiskey Rebellion tested Washington's administration.
4. In his Farewell Address, Washington advised the nation.

The Big Idea

The United States faced significant foreign and domestic challenges under Washington.

Key Terms and People

French Revolution, p. 243
Neutrality Proclamation, p. 244
privateers, p. 244
Jay's Treaty, p. 245
Pinckney's Treaty, p. 245
Little Turtle, p. 246
Battle of Fallen Timbers, p. 247
Treaty of Greenville, p. 247
Whiskey Rebellion, p. 247

TAKING NOTES

As you read, take notes on the challenges faced by the new nation during Washington's administration.



FOCUS ON READING

What can you tell about France before 1793 using this paragraph and what you already know about democracies?

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

neutral

unbiased, not favoring either side in a conflict

Many French citizens had been inspired to take action by the American Revolution. Many Americans, in turn, supported the French Revolution. They thought that France was creating the same kind of democracy as the United States.

Some Americans worried about the French Revolution's violent riots and attacks on traditional authority. Revolutionaries shocked many Americans by beheading King Louis XVI in January 1793 and Queen Marie-Antoinette later that year.

A few years after the French Revolution started, France and Great Britain went to war. Some Americans supported the French, while others backed the British. Some wanted to remain neutral.

The Neutrality Proclamation

The debate divided Congress and Washington's cabinet. Washington presented his opinion to Congress on April 22, 1793:

“The duty and interest of the United States require that they should with sincerity and good faith adopt and pursue a conduct friendly and impartial [unbiased] towards the belligerent [fighting] powers.”

—George Washington, quoted in *The Real George Washington* by Parry et al.

This **Neutrality Proclamation** stated that the United States would not take sides with any European countries that were at war. Washington believed his plan was the safest for the long run, but not everyone agreed.

Some members of Congress criticized Washington's ideas. James Madison believed that the president had gone beyond his authority. He questioned Washington's right to issue the proclamation without the approval of Congress.

The French Question

France's new representative to the United States, Edmond Genet (zhuh-NAY), asked American sailors to help France fight England by commanding **privateers**. Privateers were private ships hired by a country to attack its enemies. Washington told Genet that using American privateers violated U.S. neutrality. Jefferson wanted the French revolutionaries to succeed, but even he agreed that allowing France to use American privateers against England was a bad idea.

Jefferson was still upset by U.S. policy toward France. He believed that the United States should back France because France had supported the United States during the Revolutionary War. Hamilton, on the other hand, was pro-British. He hoped to strengthen trading ties with Britain—the most powerful trading nation in the world at the time. Jefferson thought that Hamilton had too much influence on the president's foreign policy and that Hamilton consequently interfered with Jefferson's role as secretary of state. Jefferson decided to resign from Washington's cabinet in 1793.

Time Line

The Struggle for Neutrality

1789

April 1789 George Washington becomes president.

July 1789

French citizens storm the Bastille.



October 1790

British-backed Little Turtle defeats U.S. forces under General Josiah Harmar.

1793

April 1793 President Washington issues the Neutrality Proclamation.

November 1794

Jay's Treaty sparks protest throughout the United States.



Jay's Treaty

There were other threats to U.S. neutrality. In late 1793 the British seized ships carrying food to the French West Indies. Hundreds of the ships were neutral American merchant ships. Also, British officers were helping Native Americans fight settlers.

Washington wanted to prevent another war with the British. He sent Chief Justice John Jay to London to work out a compromise. The British knew the United States lacked a strong navy and that U.S. businesses relied heavily on British trade. However, the British did not want to fight another war in America.

In November 1794 the two sides signed Jay's Treaty. **Jay's Treaty settled the disputes that had arisen between the United States and Great Britain in the early 1790s.** The British would pay damages on seized American ships and abandon their forts on the northwestern frontier. The United States agreed to pay debts it owed the British.

The treaty was unpopular and sparked violent protests. Citizens and congressional leaders thought the treaty hurt trade and did not punish Britain enough for some of its actions. Southerners were especially angry that the treaty did not ask Britain to repay them for slaves that Britain had set free during the Revolutionary War. Washington did not like the treaty but believed it was the most that could be done. At his urging the Senate approved the treaty.

Pinckney's Treaty

American businesses faced problems as well. The Spanish disputed the border between the United States and Florida. Spain closed the port of New Orleans to U.S. trade in 1784. This hurt the American economy because all goods moving down the Mississippi to places in the East or overseas had to pass through New Orleans.

Washington asked Ambassador Thomas Pinckney to meet with Spanish officials to discuss the problem. He asked the Spaniards to reopen New Orleans to U.S. trade. Pinckney also asked for the right of deposit in New Orleans. This right would allow American boats to transfer goods in New Orleans without paying cargo fees.

Spanish minister Manuel de Godoy (goh-THOY) tried to delay reaching an agreement, hoping Pinckney would become desperate and sign a treaty that favored the Spanish. He was worried that the United States and Great Britain might join against Spain after signing Jay's Treaty. Pinckney was patient, however, and his patience was rewarded.

In October 1795, Godoy agreed to **Pinckney's Treaty, which settled the border and trade disputes with Spain.** Under the treaty Spain agreed to recognize the U.S. southern boundary as 31°N latitude. Spain's government also reopened the port at

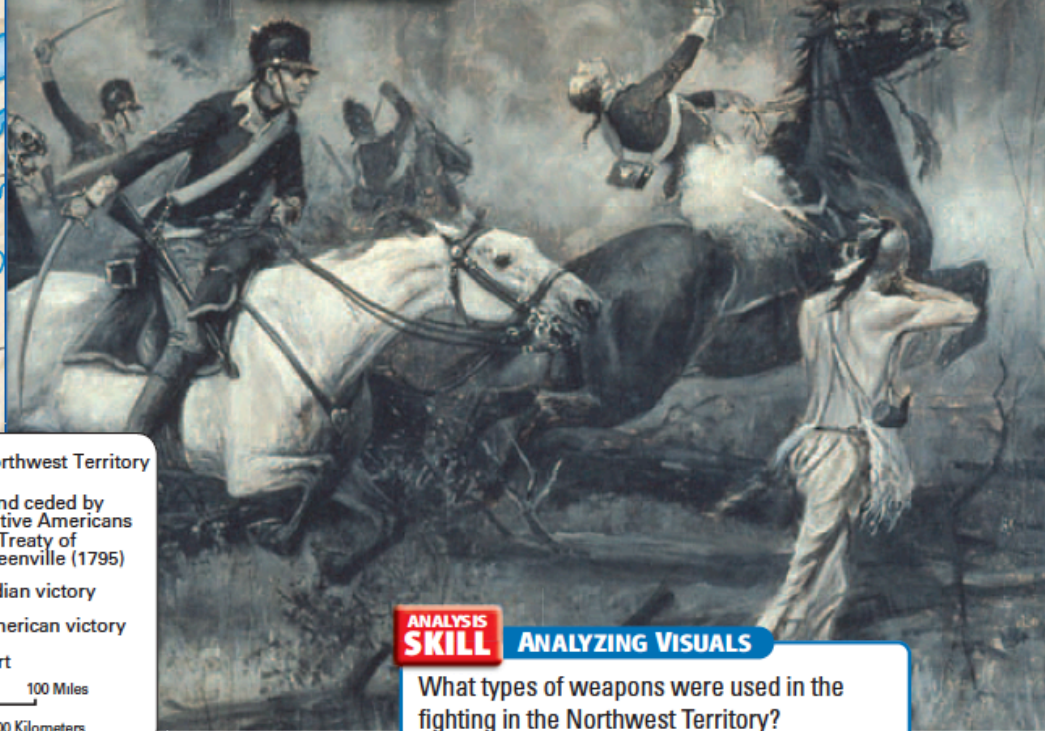
August 1795 The Treaty of Greenville ends fighting in the Northwest Territory.

1795

October 1795 Pinckney's Treaty reopens the port of New Orleans.



Fighting in the Northwest Territory



ANALYSIS SKILL

ANALYZING VISUALS

What types of weapons were used in the fighting in the Northwest Territory?

New Orleans to American ships and gave them the right of deposit. Because it opened the frontier to more expansion, Washington and most other Americans believed that Pinckney's Treaty was a successful compromise.

READING CHECK Summarizing Why did President Washington want the United States to remain neutral?

Conflict in the Northwest Territory

As the United States dealt with international conflicts, trouble was also brewing at home. Americans continued to settle the Northwest Territory despite Native Americans' protests. Supplied by British traders with guns, Native Americans went to war. In 1790 a Native American alliance under the command of Miami chief **Little Turtle** defeated U.S. forces under General Josiah Harmar. Then in 1791, Native Americans defeated General Arthur St. Clair's troops.

General Wayne Takes Command

In 1792 President Washington gave command of the army in the West to General Anthony Wayne. Wayne's task was to bring troops to the frontier to fight against the Indians. In 1793 General Wayne arrived in Ohio. Many of his men were ill from smallpox and influenza, so they were unable to fight well.

Wayne's troops moved north and built Fort Greenville, where they remained during the winter. They built additional forts for protection and to have supplies at hand.

As the summer of 1794 neared, several Native American groups led by Little Turtle attacked a supply train near the fort. Wayne and his men responded. They attacked Native American towns and burned crops.

The British no longer aided the Native Americans after this defeat, and Little Turtle realized that he was outmatched. He urged his people to seek peace.

“The trail has been long and bloody; it has no end. The [whites] . . . are many. They are like the leaves of the trees. When the frost comes they fall and are blown away. But when the sunshine comes again they come back more plentiful than ever before.”

—Little Turtle, quoted in *The Ohio Frontier*
by Douglas Hurt

The End of Conflict

On August 20, 1794, Native Americans fought Wayne’s troops in the **Battle of Fallen Timbers** and were defeated. The battle was named for an area where many trees had been destroyed by a tornado. Wayne’s forces burned Indians’ villages and fields. The strength of Indian forces in the region was broken.

The frontier war soon ended. In August 1795, Native American leaders signed the **Treaty of Greenville**, which gave the United States claim to most Indian lands in the Northwest Territory. The treaty also guaranteed the safety of citizens there. In exchange, Native Americans received \$20,000 worth of goods and an acknowledgment of their claim to the lands they still held.

READING CHECK Finding Main Ideas What conflicts did the United States face in the late 1700s?

The Whiskey Rebellion

Other conflicts occurred on the frontier. Congress passed a tax on American-made whiskey in March 1791. The tax was part of Hamilton’s plan to raise money to help pay the federal debt. He was also testing the power of the federal government to control the states’ actions.

Reaction in the West

People in areas such as western Pennsylvania were bitter about the tax. They were already angry with the federal government, which they believed did not protect settlers from Native American attacks and did not allow settlers enough opportunities for trade. The farmers’ corn crops were often made into whiskey, which was easier to transport than

the corn. Because cash was rare, whiskey became like money in their region. The farmers believed that the tax was aimed specifically at them.

Farmers who produced small amounts of whiskey for trade argued that they could not afford the tax. They believed they should be able to keep the money they had made from a product they created themselves. Protests in 1792 led President Washington to issue a proclamation saying that people had to obey the law.

Westerners also disliked the fact that cases about the law were to be tried in a district court. These courts were usually far away from the people they affected and were a great inconvenience to them.

Whiskey Rebellion Is Crushed

The complaints of western Pennsylvanians were at first expressed peacefully. But by 1794 fighting had broken out. In what became known as the **Whiskey Rebellion**, farmers lashed out against the tax on whiskey. Protesters refused to pay the tax. They even tarred and feathered tax collectors. Some called themselves the new Sons of Liberty.

Incidents of violence spread to other states. President Washington feared that the rebels threatened the federal government’s authority. He believed he needed to make people understand that the Constitution gave Congress the right to pass and enforce the tax.

Washington declared that he could “no longer remain a passive [inactive] spectator” in the event. He personally led the army in military action against the rebellion—the first and only time an American president has done so. The army of about 13,000 men approached western Pennsylvania in November 1794. By this time most of the rebels had fled. The Whiskey Rebellion ended without a battle.

READING CHECK Supporting a Point of View Defend the viewpoint of the Pennsylvania farmers who did not want to pay the whiskey tax.

Washington Says Farewell

In 1796 Washington decided not to run for a third presidential term. He wrote that he was “tired of public life” and “devoutly [strongly] wished for retirement.” He also wanted to remind Americans that the people were the country’s true leaders.

With the help of Alexander Hamilton and James Madison, Washington wrote his Farewell Address. In it he spoke about what he believed were the greatest dangers to the American republic. Among these were the dangers of foreign ties and political conflicts at home. Washington warned against forming permanent ties with other countries because choosing sides could draw the United States into war.

He also worried about growing political conflicts within the nation. Washington believed that disagreements between political groups weakened government. Political unity, he said, was a key to national success.

Washington left office warning the nation to work out its differences and protect its independence. Washington also warned against too much public debt. He thought the government should try not to borrow money. He wanted future generations to be protected from debt.

He concluded his speech by looking forward to his retirement and praising his country. “I anticipate . . . the sweet enjoyment . . . of good laws under a free government, the ever favorite object of my heart.”

READING CHECK Finding Main Ideas

What issues did Washington believe were most dangerous to the future of the new nation?

SUMMARY AND PREVIEW Americans responded to foreign and domestic conflict during Washington’s presidency. In the next section you will read about the formation of political parties in the United States and the presidency of John Adams.

Section 3 Assessment

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Online Quiz

KEYWORD: SC7 HP7

Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and People

- Describe** What did Washington’s **Neutrality Proclamation** state?
 - Compare and Contrast** In what ways were **Jay’s Treaty** and **Pinckney’s Treaty** similar and different?
- Identify** Who were the leaders of American Indian and U.S. forces in the conflict in the Northwest Territory?
 - Predict** What are some possible consequences of the **Treaty of Greenville** for American Indians in the Northwest Territory?
- Recall** Why did Congress tax American-made whiskey?
 - Explain** How did the tax lead to the **Whiskey Rebellion**?
 - Elaborate** Why do you think that President Washington personally led the army against westerners in the Whiskey Rebellion?
- Describe** What warnings did Washington give the nation in his Farewell Address?
 - Draw Conclusions** Why did Washington not run for a third term as president?

Critical Thinking

- Categorizing** Review your notes on the challenges the young United States faced. Then categorize those challenges as either foreign or domestic in a graphic organizer like this one.

Challenges	
Foreign	
Domestic	

FOCUS ON WRITING

- Thinking about Washington, Hamilton, and Jefferson** In this section you read about the activities of these three men during a difficult time for our country. What did you learn that you could add to a Nobel Prize nomination for any of these leaders?