



## DOCUMENT OF THE MONTH

# Radio Remarks to Young Americans on George Washington's Birthday, Mount Vernon, Virginia

February 22, 1982

George Washington, America's first president, is perhaps best known for his role in the American Revolution. In 1781, Washington led his troops to victory by forcing the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown. A few years later, at the Constitutional Convention at Philadelphia of 1787, Washington was elected president. After completing his two terms, Washington retired to his home in Mount Vernon, until his death on December 14, 1799. In the words of Ronald Reagan, because of Washington, "we're free and we're Americans."

On February 22, 1982, President Reagan delivered a radio address to young Americans from Mount Vernon, George Washington's home, in commemoration of the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Birth of George Washington.



E<sup>3</sup> NGAGE

E<sup>3</sup> XCITE

E<sup>3</sup> DUCATE

# Document excerpt:

"...George Washington and his generation of Americans met their challenge. We can, we must, and we will meet ours.

To the students across America listening in, if Washington seems much larger than life & makes you feel a little smaller, I'll let you in on a secret – he makes us all feel that way. But you do matter – a lot. I'm sure he would tell you the important thing is to find your goal – and go for it. Then, if you fail –and he himself failed many times –pick yourselves up & try again.

Remember, our problems are also opportunities. You can take us to new frontiers in space – find medical cures for deadly disease – discover technological breakthroughs, -- develop better ways to grow food, - provide shelter, & produce energy. The world's hope is still America's future. America's future is in your dreams. Make them come true – the only limits are your imagination, and your determination...."

-Document courtesy of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library Archives

## Questions:

1. What is the first word you think of when you hear the name George Washington? Why?
2. Read the first sentence in the excerpt. List three challenges George Washington and his generation faced.
3. List three challenges you and your generation face.
4. How can problems be seen as opportunities? Do you have any examples to share?
5. What problem did George Washington face that became an opportunity?
6. What is America's current frontier? Describe and explain. Provide an example.
7. Based on the excerpt above, do you think President Reagan was an optimist or a pessimist? Underline the phrase or sentence which best supports your answer.
8. Do you think President Reagan thought President Washington was a role model? Circle the phrase or sentence which best supports your answer.

## Vocabulary: Define-

Determination

Frontier

Opportunity

Role Model

## Connections to California Standards:

5.5 Students explain the causes of the American Revolution.

5.7 Students describe the people and events associated with the development of the U.S. Constitution and analyze the Constitution's significance as the foundation of the American republic.

8.2 Students analyze the political principles underlying the U.S. Constitution and compare the enumerated and implied powers of the federal government.

11.1 Students analyze the significant events in the founding of the nation and its attempts to realize the philosophy of government described in the Declaration of Independence.

12.1 Students explain the fundamental principles and moral values of American democracy as expressed in the U.S. Constitution and other essential documents of American democracy.



PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY  
SIMI VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

Education materials available at [www.reaganlibrary.gov](http://www.reaganlibrary.gov)

[ReaganEducation@nara.gov](mailto:ReaganEducation@nara.gov) | (800) 410-8354