

# LESSON 1

## George Washington's Mount Vernon

### South Carolina Standards Addressed in This Program

**Note to Teacher:** *The following standards are directly addressed in the content of this video. However, this program is appropriate for grades K–12 and can be used in many ways in the classroom. Additional standard correlations are listed in parentheses following each Discovery Activity.*

#### **Social Studies Standards**

Grade K: I.K.1; III.K.8.1

Grade 1: I.1.1 and 3; III.1.6.1

Grade 2: I.2.1; III.2.10.1

Grade 3: I.3.1; III.3.12.1

Grade 4: I.4.1.5

Grade 5: I.5.1

Grade 10: III.10.5.8

#### **Science Standards**

Grade 3: III.A.1.j; II.C.2.f

### Discovery Description

Mount Vernon, on the Potomac River in Virginia, was the home of George Washington for 45 years. He inherited the land when he was 22 years old and lived there until he died at the age of 67. Washington is remembered as the country's first president and the leader of the Revolutionary army, but he considered himself a farmer. At Mount Vernon he was a farmer who loved the land and experimented with many new methods of farming. Today, visitors to Mount Vernon can learn about the man, his home, and life in the 18th century.

The pioneer farm site is being restored to look as it did during Washington's time. Summer interns are raising Hog Island sheep, cutting lumber with a pit saw, and rebuilding Washington's 16-sided barn. George Washington wanted a round structure to use as a barn where the animals could walk and grind grain, but it was easier to build a 16-sided structure than a perfectly round one. The animals entered on the second floor, which was built over a first-floor grinder. As the animals walked around, they tread on the grain, which fell down into the grinder.

Washington was one of the country's first farmers to try crop rotation so that growing tobacco year after year would not ruin the soil. He rotated the tobacco with wheat, which would replenish the soil's minerals.

The dung repository was another farming innovation tried by George Washington. Archaeologists are looking at the structure built to supply the farm with a type of fertilizer. The structure had brick sides and a cobblestone floor. Horse manure was put in the structure and allowed to rot, then added to the soil to enrich it for planting.

Archaeologists have reconstructed the slave quarters to help visitors learn about the lives of the slaves who worked on the plantation. From the trash pile outside the kitchen, archaeologists have found pieces of pottery and other artifacts, which they have preserved and pieced together to learn more about the life of Washington, his family, and his slaves.

Children visiting Mount Vernon can learn about life in the 18th century at the hands-on history area. Here, they can make a bucket from wood as the cooper did, they can make clothing as the seamstress did, or they can prepare thread for clothing by carding wool from the sheep or by breaking the flax to make linen. They can even learn about archaeology by piecing together pottery.

## Discovery Words

*Mount Vernon:* The plantation home of George Washington.

*plantation:* A large estate where crops are raised, often by resident workers.

*excavate:* To expose or uncover by digging.

*piazza:* A roofed and arcaded passageway; colonnade.

*craftsmanship:* Work done by a skilled worker to create a craft.

*pioneer:* A person who ventures into an unknown territory to settle.

*cash crop:* A crop grown especially for sale to provide a source of income.

*dung repository:* A warehouse for the collection of animal wastes.

*cobblestone:* A naturally rounded stone used for paving streets and building walls.

*archaeology:* The systematic recovery and study of material remaining from past human life and culture.

*cooper:* A person who makes and repairs wooden tubs and barrels.

*flax:* A textile fiber obtained from any plant of the genus *Linum*.

## Discovery People

Martha Washington  
George Washington

## Discovery Places

Virginia  
Potomac River

### Introducing the Discovery

**Note to Teacher:** *Appropriate standard correlations are listed in parentheses following each activity. Please note that these standards are not necessarily addressed in the video itself.*

1. Locate the Potomac River and Virginia on a map of the United States. Explain that George Washington's home was located near Washington, D.C., the present capital of the United States. However, during Washington's presidency, the capital of the country was New York City and Philadelphia, so he had to leave his beloved home to serve as president. (**SS Standards: Grade K:** III.K.5.1; **Grade 1:** III.1.5.1; **Grade 2:** III.2.7.1 and 3; **Grade 4:** III.4.6.1 and 3; **Grade 5:** III.5.9.1 and 3; **Grade 6:** III.6.3.1; **Grade 7:** III.7.3.1; **Grade 8:** III.8.8.1)
2. On the board, list the different things the students know about George Washington. Even though the program does not tell about his life, this would be a good opportunity to learn more about the man. (**SS Standards: Grade K:** II.K.3.1; **Grade 1:** II.1.3.2; **Grade 2:** I.2.1.2; **Grade 4:** I.4.1.6, 9, and 17, II.4.3.2 and 3; **Grade 5:** II.5.5.3; **Grade 8:** I.8.4.3; **Grade 12:** II.12.4.10)
3. If any students have visited Mount Vernon, let them tell about their visits. (**ELA Standards: Grade 3:** III.A.7; **Grade 4:** I.B.15)

### Discovery Activities

**Note to Teacher:** Lessons 1, 4, 5, and 10 are on similar topics, and feature areas where history is preserved by showing visitors how our ancestors lived. It may be appropriate to view some, or all, of these programs, then do one big unit follow-up.

1. Have an archaeology dig either on the playground or in a box prepared with sand in your classroom. Add broken pieces of pottery, china, metal, etc. and let the children guess what they are and how they are used. Vary the size and complexity of the artifacts based on the age of your students. Break an inexpensive pottery dish and let the students reconstruct it. (**SS Standards: Grade K:** IV.K.11.1; **Grade 1:** IV.1.12.1; **Grade 3:** IV.3.14.4; **Grade 4:** IV.4.11.1; Science Standards: **Grade 3:** III.A.1.j)
2. Discuss the design of the 16-sided barn. Why would a 16-sided structure resemble a round building? Let students cut 16 equal lengths of paper, wooden sticks, etc. to construct such a figure. Discuss architecture and its relationship to mathematics. (**Math Standards: Grade K:** IV.G; **Grade 1:** IV.G; **Grade 2:** IV.G; **Grade 3:** IV.B and G, V.G; **Grade 4:** IV.A and B, V.G; **Grade 5:** IV.A, B, C, and G, V.G; **Grade 6:** IV.A, B, and C, V.G; **Grade 7:** IV.D and G, V.G; **Grade 8:** IV.C; **Grades 9-12:** IV.A, V.A)
3. Create a hands-on history table. Let students either bring items or make exhibits to demonstrate how people lived in the past. A restored home or a museum in your community may be a good resource for these exhibits. (**SS Standards: Grade K:** IV.K.9.1; **Grade 1:** I.1.1.2 and 3, IV.1.9.2; **Grade 8:** I.8.2.3 and 4)
4. Invite grandparents or senior citizens in your community to talk about the differences between their lives as children and the lives of children today. This would be a fun activity for both the students and the senior citizens. (**ELA Standards: Grade 1:** II.B; **Grade 3:** II.A; **Grade 4:** II.A and B; **Grade 5:** II.A and B, III.E; **Grade 6:** II.B, III.F; **Grade 8:** II.A.1, III.C; **Grade 10:** II.A and C; **Grade 12:** II.A, B, and C)
5. As a writing activity, have students write a diary page telling about the things they did today. Ask them to write another diary page telling about the things they could have done if they had lived at Mount Vernon 250 years ago. Some students may like to write a third diary page telling about the things they might have done if they lived 250 years in the future. Compare the days activities. (**ELA Standards: Grade 1:** IV.D; **Grade 2:** IV.D; **Grade 3:** IV.F and H; **Grade 4:** IV.D; **Grade 5:** IV.C and H; **Grade 6:** IV.E, and H; **Grade 7:** IV.D; **Grade 8:** IV.C; **Grade 9:** IV.H and Q; **Grade 10:** IV.I and P; **Grade 11:** IV.H and O; **Grade 12:** IV.H and O; **SS Standards: Grade K:** IV.K.9.1; **Grade 1:** I.1.1.2 and 3, IV.1.9.2; **Grade 8:** I.8.2.3 and 4)