

STUDENT WORKSHEET

BUILDING NAME	IMPORTANCE	PRESERVATION ISSUES
Lord Stirling's Headquarters		
Potts Residence		
Von Steuben Statue		
National Memorial Arch		

RESOURCES

Web Sites: To find related Web sites, log on to: <http://network.HistoryChannel.com>.

Books:

Gregory, Kristiana. *The Winter of Red Snow: The Revolutionary War Diary of Abigail Jane Stewart*. (Dear America Series) New York: Scholastic, 1996.

Knight, James E. and George Guzzi. *The Winter at Valley Forge: Survival and Victory*. Mahwah, N.J.: Troll Communications, L.L.C., 1999.

Stein, Richard Conrad. *Valley Forge*. Dublin: Children's Press, 1999.

Photos courtesy of Valley Forge National Park, National Park Service



VALLEY FORGE

INTRODUCTION

When the American colonists declared independence from Great Britain in 1776, few believed that they could defeat one of the most powerful fighting forces in the world. The Continental Army was poorly trained and poorly supplied. After crushing defeats at the battles of Germantown and Brandywine, General George Washington led his troops to winter quarters at Valley Forge in 1777. The following bitterly cold months brought great suffering to Washington's under-fed and ill-clothed troops. Yet the force of Washington's leadership revived the troops' commitment to the cause of independence. New shipments of food and clothing the following spring strengthened the soldiers' resolve, as did the arrival of French military commander Baron Von Steuben. Von Steuben drilled the troops relentlessly, turning a struggling group of individual militiamen into a unified fighting force. Because it was at Valley Forge that this transformation occurred, many consider this site to be sacred ground. This *Save Our History* special explores the role of Valley Forge in the nation's early history and examines present-day preservation efforts aimed at restoring this national landmark.





NATIONAL STANDARDS

This teacher's guide fulfills the following National Standards for History, as developed by the National Center for History in the Schools: Historical Thinking Standards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 for United States History (Era 3, Standard 1).

CURRICULUM LINKS

Save Our History: Valley Forge is suitable for 5th to 12th grade students in U.S. history and civics classes.

PREVIEWING ACTIVITIES

Before your students watch this documentary, they should have a basic understanding of the chronology of the American Revolution. They should know the significance of events leading up to the winter at Valley Forge, including Washington's crossing of the Delaware, the battles in New York and Pennsylvania, and the fall of Philadelphia. It may be helpful to construct a timeline of the American Revolution that students can refer to as they watch the documentary and as they learn about events following the troops' departure from their winter encampment.

It may also be helpful to review the Vocabulary with your students prior to viewing the documentary.

VIEWING ACTIVITIES

As your students watch *Save Our History: Valley Forge*, have them fill out the worksheet on the last page of this guide. This worksheet asks them to record the importance of each of the sites mentioned in the documentary and to describe what is being done to preserve them. You may wish to have your students conduct additional research on these sites to learn more about them and to fill out the "importance" column more fully. Students may also want to take additional notes as they watch, so that they can support their answers to the following discussion questions with specific evidence.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What kind of army did George Washington have when he entered Valley Forge in 1777? How did the problems plaguing this army affect the Americans' chances for success against the British?
2. Why did George Washington choose Valley Forge as the site of his winter camp? Do you agree with his choice? Why or why not?
3. What role did Washington's personality play in reviving his downtrodden troops at Valley Forge? How did he help get additional supplies for the troops?
4. Describe the huts that were built by Washington's men at Valley Forge. What new facts have we learned about these huts through archaeological excavations?
5. Describe Martha Washington's role at Valley Forge. Do you find her involvement surprising? Why or why not?
6. Why did Baron Von Steuben come to Valley Forge? What role did he play in the colonists' eventual victory over Great Britain?
7. How did France contribute to a reversal of American fortunes in the spring of 1778? How did Valley Forge figure into the colonists' growing wartime victories?
8. When did Valley Forge become part of the National Park System? Why was it made a National Park?
9. What does the narrator mean when he says that the name Valley Forge is "synonymous with the American Revolution?" Do you agree or disagree? Why?
10. Why is it important to learn about Valley Forge? What can the experiences of George Washington's troops teach us today?
11. Based on the chart you completed while watching the documentary, what do you think is the most pressing preservation issue at Valley Forge?

VOCABULARY

- **brigade (n.):** a unit or division of an army
- **Continental (adj.):** relating to the American colonies around the time of the Revolutionary War
- **destitution (n.):** extreme poverty; a state of having no resources, such as food and shelter
- **disburse (v.):** to pay out
- **encampment (n.):** a campsite
- **excavation (n.):** the process of digging a hole, often for the purpose of an archaeological study
- **gangrene (n.):** the decaying of flesh in a living person, often because of a lack of blood to that area of the body
- **ingenuity (n.):** inventive or creative imagination
- **militia (n.):** an army made up of ordinary citizens who are not professional soldiers, and which usually serves only during emergencies
- **oxidation (n.):** the burning or rusting that occurs when a substance mixes with oxygen
- **quartermaster (n.):** an army officer responsible for providing troops with clothing, equipment, and food
- **solidarity (n.):** a united front against a common cause, such as agreeing to stand or fight together against an enemy
- **synonymous (adj.):** having the same meaning

EXTENDED ACTIVITIES

1. Ask students to imagine that they are soldiers in George Washington's army at Valley Forge during the winter of 1777. Have them write a journal entry, describing their experiences and the conditions at Valley Forge.
2. Using information from the documentary and from additional research, students should create a scale model of a hut built by the soldiers at Valley Forge. Students should rely on any materials they have at hand to build their huts—like the soldiers themselves, students should show ingenuity in their construction. When students have completed their huts, they should present them to the class, explaining their design and construction choices. Display all of the huts together in a classroom Valley Forge exhibit.
3. In the documentary, Park Attendant Tim Long explains that preservation is not about "freezing things" in the past. Instead, it's about "understanding how things have evolved over time" and determining how to save the integrity of some of the elements that show this evolution. Ask students to imagine that they have been asked to appear before a local preservation organization to make a case for saving one of the structures at Valley Forge mentioned in the documentary. Have them write short oral presentations, no more than 2-3 minutes in length, explaining why this site at Valley Forge should be saved and how they would propose to go about preserving it. Students may include drawings, pictures, or other props to help make their case.
4. During the winter of 1777-1778, General George Washington ordered that Thomas Paine's *American Crisis* be read to the troops at Valley Forge. Read the excerpt below from *American Crisis* and discuss with your class what Paine was trying to argue and why Washington read it to the troops. Next, have students imagine that they have been asked to write a similar message to American troops fighting in Afghanistan in the wake of the September 11, 2001 attacks. Students should write a short paragraph that puts Paine's message into their own words, in a way that would be meaningful to troops in the present day. Have students present their messages to the class.

THESE are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives every thing its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as FREEDOM should not be highly rated.

THOMAS PAINE, *AMERICAN CRISIS I*, DECEMBER 23, 1776