

Presidents' Day

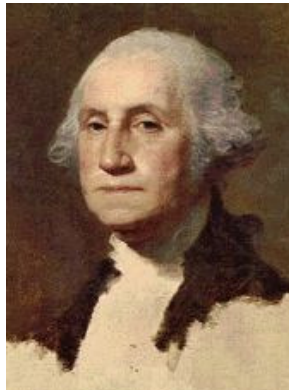
Pre-reading

Questions:

- What do you know about this holiday?
- When is it?

Definitions:

- Plantation – a large farm where crops like cotton, tobacco or sugar are grown; farm work is done by workers who live there
- Revolution – the overthrow of a government in order to set up a new government
- General – an officer of high military rank in the armed forces
- Postmaster – the person in charge of a post office
- Congressman – a male member of the U.S. House of Representatives
- Civil – having to do with citizens or the general population



Reading

17 Presidents' Day is the third Monday in February. This national holiday honors all the Presidents of the
34 United States. However, it first began as a holiday to honor two specific Presidents, George Washington and
36 Abraham Lincoln.

36 George Washington was born in Virginia on February 22, 1732. His family owned rich farm land.
52 George grew to be a wealthy farmer and businessman. He re-built a small family farm into a large plantation.
71 Mount Vernon became a 20 room mansion surrounded by 8,000 acres of land.

84 George Washington also was in the military. He was a general in the Revolutionary War. He helped
101 the 13 colonies become free from England. After the war was won, the United States of America was born.
120 George Washington helped write the U.S. Constitution. This served as the law for the new country.

136 In 1789 George Washington became the first President of the United States. He was President for eight
153 years. In 1797 he retired to Mount Vernon. George Washington died there in 1799.

167 Abraham Lincoln was born in Kentucky on February 12, 1809. His family was poor. They lived in a
185 log cabin built by Abe's father. This small house measured 16 by 18 feet. Abe often went barefoot because
204 his family could not afford shoes.

210 Abraham Lincoln did not go to school very often. In fact, the total number of days he went to school
230 did not add up to a year. But, he did learn to read and write. Abe loved books! He read every book he could
254 find and taught himself many subjects.

260 When he was 22, his family moved to Illinois. Here Abe worked and lived in a store. He also was a
281 postmaster. He later became a lawyer and a congressman. In 1861, Abraham Lincoln became the sixteenth
297 President of the United States.

302 Lincoln was President for four very difficult years. The northern states fought the southern states in the
319 Civil War. The South wanted slavery. The North did not believe in owning people. During these **tense**
336 times, Lincoln received more than 10,000 death threats.

344 Lincoln freed many slaves in 1864. The Civil War ended on April 9, 1865. Five days later, a man
363 from the South **assassinated** President Lincoln. He shot and killed the President in Washington D.C.

378 Americans honor these two Presidents in many ways. Some U.S. money has pictures of Washington
393 and Lincoln on it. Many cities, schools, and streets have the names Washington or Lincoln. Many people
410 visit the Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C.
420

Understanding

1. Why did the Civil War take place? _____

2. Presidents' Day is in what month? Why? _____

3. What does **assassinate** mean? _____

4. Which President was part of the Revolutionary War? _____

5. What did he do in this war? _____

6. Which U.S. money has pictures of Washington? Which has Lincoln? _____

7. What does the word **tense** mean in this reading? _____

8. Abraham Lincoln and George Washington are in what numerical order of the past 43 U.S. Presidents? _____

Writing

Option A: Why were George Washington and Abraham Lincoln chosen as the President's to honor on President's Day?

Option B Which other U.S. President(s) deserves a similar honor? Why?
