

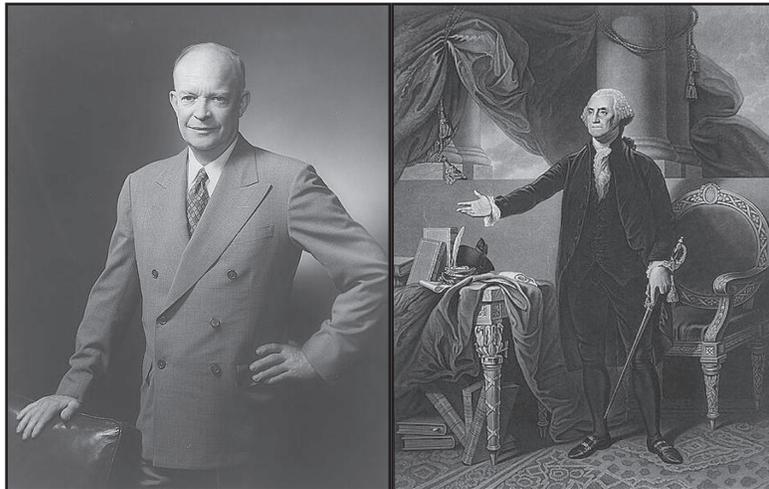


Dwight D.
Eisenhower
Memorial

NATIONAL EISENHOWER MEMORIAL EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

LESSON

Two Farewells: Comparing the Farewell Addresses of Washington and Eisenhower



Duration

One 45-minute period

Grades

7–12

Cross-curriculum Application

U.S. History, English



Historical Background

There are many similarities in the careers of George Washington and Dwight D. Eisenhower. Both had a military background and both were selected as leaders of coalition forces during war: Washington as Commander of the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War and Eisenhower as Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces during World War II. They were chosen for their political skills as well as their military expertise, and both were strong leaders with the ability to choose effective subordinates. Additionally, both Washington and Eisenhower served as two-term presidents. Each accepted their role with some reluctance, but believed they had a duty to serve their country.

President Dwight Eisenhower delivered his final speech as president in 1961. In it, Eisenhower warned of the growth and influence of the “military-industrial complex”—the combination of government and defense industries that Eisenhower felt should not be allowed to shape U.S. policy. Eisenhower’s speech was one of the most notable presidential farewell addresses since George Washington’s in 1796. Like Eisenhower, Washington warned citizens about “overgrown military establishments” and the need for a carefully considered foreign policy. However, the world had changed greatly between their two presidencies. Washington warned against long-term foreign alliances, but Eisenhower recognized and believed that such alliances were vital to lasting world peace.

Objective

Working in groups, students will first examine the farewell speech excerpts, then rephrase and summarize the excerpts in their own words. Using the text they have written, students will compare and contrast the two speeches and write a brief opinion piece explaining what each president would think of the country today.

Essential Questions

1. What were Eisenhower’s foreign policy goals and his global perspective?
2. How did Eisenhower balance his concerns of liberty and security given the undue influence of defense industries on the American electorate as he left office?



Sources

- » “Farewell Address.” Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1961. Avalon Project. Lillian Goldman Law Library. Yale Law School.

http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/eisenhower001.asp

Teacher Notes: Dwight D. Eisenhower gave this speech as his farewell address as president in 1961. There is an audio file of the speech available in Primary Sources below.

Interesting details:

- *Eisenhower states that “America’s prestige” depends on how it uses “power in the interests of world peace and human betterment.”*
- *Eisenhower believes that the military establishment is a vital element in keeping the peace throughout the world.*
- *Eisenhower warns that, “we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence...by the military industrial complex.”*
- *Eisenhower wants people to consider society’s future and to not just live for the moment.*
- *Eisenhower’s speech aired on television. He was the first president to hold televised press conferences and make use of the new technology.*

- » “Farewell Address.” George Washington, 1796. Avalon Project. Lillian Goldman Law Library. Yale Law School.

http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/washing.asp

Teacher Notes: George Washington gave this speech as his farewell address as president in 1796.

Interesting details:

- *Washington states that “overgrown military establishments” are a threat to liberty.*
 - *Washington encourages the nation to “cultivate peace and harmony with all.”*
 - *Washington believes that commercial relations with foreign countries should be extended, but political connections should be discouraged.*
 - *Washington believes that the geographic location of the United States will make it easier to remain neutral and uninvolved with European conflicts.*
 - *Washington’s speech first appeared in a Philadelphia newspaper. Newspapers were the fastest way to disseminate news during the eighteenth century.*
-



- » “Memorandum Regarding George Washington’s Farewell Address.” April 5, 1960. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.
<https://www.eisenhowerlibrary.gov/sites/default/files/research/online-documents/farewell-address/1960-04-05.pdf>

Teacher Notes: This memorandum, written by a staff assistant to Eisenhower’s speech writer, suggests that George Washington’s Farewell Address might provide inspiration for the writing of Eisenhower’s own final address to the nation.

Interesting details:

- *The author of the memorandum notes that many of Washington’s concerns in 1796 are still relevant in 1960 and might provide inspiration for Eisenhower’s final address.*
- » “George Washington and Dwight Eisenhower.” George Washington’s Mount Vernon.
<http://www.mountvernon.org/george-washington/the-revolutionary-war/rick-atkinson-comparing-george-washington-and-dwight-eisenhower/>
- Teacher Notes: Video (3:21 minutes) of historian Rick Atkinson discussing similarities and differences in the careers of Washington and Eisenhower.*
- Interesting details:*
- *Atkinson states that both Washington and Eisenhower were chosen as military leaders for their political skills in addition to their military experience.*
 - *Both men had the ability to select effective subordinates for leadership roles.*

Materials

- » Excerpts from the Two Farewells Handout
- » The Two Farewells Worksheet

Preparation

- For each student, print one copy of:
 - The Two Farewells Handout
 - The Two Farewells Worksheet
- Cue the video, “George Washington and Dwight D. Eisenhower.”



Procedure

1. Briefly introduce the students to the careers of George Washington and Dwight Eisenhower by showing the video of historian Rick Atkinson's discussion of George Washington and Dwight Eisenhower as both military leaders and presidents.
<http://www.mountvernon.org/george-washington/the-revolutionary-war/rick-atkinson-comparing-george-washington-and-dwight-eisenhower/>
2. Explain to the students that presidents sometimes use their final address to the nation to express their hopes and/or concerns for the future of the country.
3. Pass out the Two Farewells Handout and have students read the excerpts from the speeches.
4. Pass out the Two Farewells Worksheet.
5. Have students paraphrase the main ideas from the excerpted paragraphs from the two speeches into 21st-century plain language.
6. Students should compare and contrast the two speeches noting any differences and/or similarities in the ideas expressed by Washington and Eisenhower.
7. Students should write a brief opinion piece explaining what each president would think of the country today. For example, George Washington might be very disapproving of the extent of United States' involvement in international affairs. Or, Dwight Eisenhower might regret the fact that the threat of nuclear war remains a factor in global affairs.

Differentiation

Students could work in pairs - with one student reading Washington's speech and the other reading Eisenhower's and each rewriting the highlighted paragraphs in their own words. They could then collaborate on writing a brief opinion piece on what they think each president would think of the country today.

Teachers may also make use of the Teacher Notes that accompany the above sources. Providing these notes to your students may help them to notice important details within the source.



Assessment

Students will be assessed on their ability to understand the sources and identify its key points. The students should be able to use the sources to support their ideas in an opinion piece. The opinion piece itself can be assessed for factual understanding, sourcing, and ability to make an evidence-based claim per the attached rubric.

Related Resources

Lesson Plans

- » *George Washington's Farewell Address: Did the U.S. Take his Advice?* Harry S. Truman Library and Museum.
<https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/education/lesson-plans/george-washingtons-farewell-address-did-us-take-his-advice> The primary goal of this lesson is to introduce students to the ideas that Washington presented in his Farewell Address, but also touches on the Monroe Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, the Cold War, and Iraq.

Secondary Sources and Digital Resources

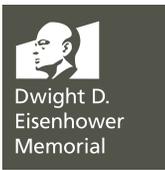
- » *Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953-1961.* White House Historical Association
<https://www.whitehousehistory.org/bios/dwight-eisenhower>
Brief biography of Eisenhower.
- » *George Washington, 1789-1797.* White House Historical Association
<http://www.mountvernon.org/george-washington/the-first-president/imperfect-election/>
Article describing the election of George Washington to the presidency in 1789.
- » *Teaching History the Old-Fashioned Way—Through Biography.* American Historical Association.
<https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/may-1994/teaching-history-the-old-fashioned-way-through-biography>
An article about using comparative biographical sketches to capture student attention, as well as develop or refine students' analysis, synthesis, and evaluation skills.

Primary Sources

- » *Audio of Eisenhower's Farewell Address.* Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.
<https://www.eisenhowerlibrary.gov/sites/default/files/all-about-ike/speeches/wav-files/farewell-address.mp3> Eisenhower's final public speech as president, given on 17 January 1961. In it he refers to the influence of the military-industrial complex.



- » *Reading Copy of Eisenhower's Farewell Address.* Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library. <https://www.eisenhowerlibrary.gov/sites/default/files/research/online-documents/farewell-address/reading-copy.pdf>
One of Eisenhower's drafts of his final address with handwritten notes and other markings.
 - » *Washington's Farewell Address, 1796.* George Washington's Mount Vernon. <https://www.mountvernon.org/education/primary-sources-2/article/washington-s-farewell-address-1796/>
Transcription of Washington's Farewell Address and a facsimile of the newspaper where it originally appeared.
 - » *Archives Subject Guide: Farewell Address of January 17, 1961.* Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library. <https://www.eisenhowerlibrary.gov/research/online-documents/farewell-address>
Subject guide from the Eisenhower Presidential Library for files relating to Eisenhower's Farewell Address.
-



Two Farewells Handout

Excerpts from Washington's and Eisenhower's Farewell Speeches

George Washington, 1796:

- While, then, every part of our country thus feels an immediate and particular interest in union, all the parts combined cannot fail to find in the united mass of means and efforts greater strength, greater resource, proportionably greater security from external danger, a less frequent interruption of their peace by foreign nations; and, what is of inestimable value, they must derive from union an exemption from those broils and wars between themselves, which so frequently afflict neighboring countries not tied together by the same governments, which their own rival ships alone would be sufficient to produce, but which opposite foreign alliances, attachments, and intrigues would stimulate and embitter. Hence, likewise, they will avoid the necessity of those overgrown military establishments which, under any form of government, are inauspicious to liberty, and which are to be regarded as particularly hostile to republican liberty. In this sense it is that your union ought to be considered as a main prop of your liberty, and that the love of the one ought to endear to you the preservation of the other.*
 - Observe good faith and justice towards all nations; cultivate peace and harmony with all. Religion and morality enjoin this conduct; and can it be, that good policy does not equally enjoin it - It will be worthy of a free, enlightened, and at no distant period, a great nation, to give to mankind the magnanimous and too novel example of a people always guided by an exalted justice and benevolence. Who can doubt that, in the course of time and things, the fruits of such a plan would richly repay any temporary advantages which might be lost by a steady adherence to it? Can it be that Providence has not connected the permanent felicity of a nation with its virtue? The experiment, at least, is recommended by every sentiment which ennobles human nature. Alas! is it rendered impossible by its vices?*
 - The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements, let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith. Here let us stop. Europe has a set of primary interests which to us have none; or a very remote relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves by artificial ties in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics, or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities.*
-



Two Farewells Handout

Excerpts from Washington's and Eisenhower's Farewell Speeches

- 4. Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course. If we remain one people under an efficient government, the period is not far off when we may defy material injury from external annoyance; when we may take such an attitude as will cause the neutrality we may at any time resolve upon to be scrupulously respected; when belligerent nations, under the impossibility of making acquisitions upon us, will not lightly hazard the giving us provocation; when we may choose peace or war, as our interest, guided by justice, shall counsel.*
- 5. It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world; so far, I mean, as we are now at liberty to do it; for let me not be understood as capable of patronizing infidelity to existing engagements. I hold the maxim no less applicable to public than to private affairs, that honesty is always the best policy. I repeat it, therefore, let those engagements be observed in their genuine sense. But, in my opinion, it is unnecessary and would be unwise to extend them.*

Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1961:

- 1. We now stand ten years past the midpoint of a century that has witnessed four major wars among great nations. Three of these involved our own country. Despite these holocausts America is today the strongest, the most influential and most productive nation in the world. Understandably proud of this pre-eminence, we yet realize that America's leadership and prestige depend, not merely upon our unmatched material progress, riches and military strength, but on how we use our power in the interests of world peace and human betterment.*
 - 2. A vital element in keeping the peace is our military establishment. Our arms must be mighty, ready for instant action, so that no potential aggressor may be tempted to risk his own destruction.*
 - 3. Until the latest of our world conflicts, the United States had no armaments industry. American makers of plowshares could, with time and as required, make swords as well. But now we can no longer risk emergency improvisation of national defense; we have been compelled to create a permanent armaments industry of vast proportions. Added to this, three and a half million men and women are directly engaged in the defense establishment. We annually spend on military security more than the net income of all United States corporations.*
-



Two Farewells Handout

Excerpts from Washington's and Eisenhower's Farewell Speeches

4. *This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience. The total influence -- economic, political, even spiritual -- is felt in every city, every State house, every office of the Federal government. We recognize the imperative need for this development. Yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. Our toil, resources and livelihood are all involved; so is the very structure of our society.*
 5. *In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.*
 6. *We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted. Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together.*
-



Two Farewells Worksheet

Rewrite the major idea in each excerpted paragraph of *George Washington's Farewell Speech* in your own words.

Paragraph 1.

Paragraph 2.

Paragraph 3.

Paragraph 4.

Paragraph 5.



Two Farewells Worksheet

Rewrite the major idea in each excerpted paragraph of *Dwight Eisenhower's Farewell Speech* in your own words.

Paragraph 1.

Paragraph 2.

Paragraph 3.

Paragraph 4.

Paragraph 5.

Paragraph 6.



Two Farewells Worksheet

Compare the two speeches. Are there any similarities in the concerns of each of the presidents as they speak to the nation for the last time?

Contrast the two speeches. What are the differences in worldview expressed by Washington and Eisenhower?



Two Farewells Worksheet

Although there are similarities in the careers of Washington and Eisenhower, they lived in very different times. Write a brief opinion piece explaining what each president would think of the country today.

Two Farewells Rubric

	Fully Meets Expectations	Minimally Meets Expectations	Not Yet Within Expectations
	<i>3 points</i>	<i>2 points</i>	<i>1 point</i>
Factual Understanding	The opinion piece demonstrates understanding of the main idea of each source (or piece of evidence) and identifies its key details.	The opinion piece demonstrates understanding of the main idea of each source (or piece of evidence), but does not identify key details.	The opinion piece does not demonstrate understanding of the main idea of each source (or piece of evidence).
Sourcing	The opinion piece demonstrates understanding of each source's origin, especially when it was created and the creator's goal.	The opinion piece demonstrates partial understanding of each source's origin, when it was created and the creator's goal.	The opinion piece demonstrates insufficient understanding of each source's origin, when it was created and the creator's goal.
Evidence-Based Claim	The opinion piece makes a reasonable claim about President Washington's and President Eisenhower's final addresses and uses appropriate evidence to support the opinion.	The opinion piece makes a reasonable claim about President Washington's and President Eisenhower's final addresses, but the sources and evidence only partially support the opinion.	The opinion piece makes a claim about President Washington's and President Eisenhower's final addresses that is not supported by appropriate sources and evidence.