

Summary: President Washington

The First President

The Constitution set up the system for electing the President. Each state chose representatives for the Electoral College. They voted for the President. George Washington's inauguration as the first President was in 1789. He promised to "preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States." Every President makes the same promise.

Congress created departments to help the President run the executive branch. The leader of a department was called its Secretary. The Secretary of State decided how the United States would act toward other countries. The Secretary of the Treasury made decisions about the nation's money. The Secretary of War was in charge of protecting the country. The Attorney General made sure federal laws were obeyed. These men formed the President's Cabinet. They advised the President.

Arguments in the Cabinet

Jefferson and Hamilton often disagreed. Both had supporters who started political parties. Hamilton's supporters started the Federalist Party. It wanted a strong national government that would support manufacturing and trade. Jefferson's supporters started the Democratic-Republican Party. It wanted to limit the national government, and to support farming instead of trade.

Hamilton wanted to start a national bank. Jefferson said the government did not have the power to start a bank. Washington approved the national bank. People put money in bank accounts. The bank borrows money from people's savings to make loans. The borrower pays interest for the loan.

Hamilton and Jefferson agreed to locate the new nation's capital between Virginia and Maryland.

After eight years, Washington retired as President. He warned Americans to avoid forming political parties. He also did not want the nation to take sides in foreign wars.



Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

inauguration *noun*, the official ceremony to make someone President

Cabinet *noun*, a group chosen by the President to help run the executive branch and give advice

political party *noun*, a group of people who share similar ideas about government

interest *noun*, what people pay to borrow money

capital *noun*, the city where the government meets



After You Read

REVIEW What is the purpose of the Cabinet?

Circle the words that tell what the Cabinet does.

REVIEW Why did Hamilton and Jefferson disagree about creating a national bank? Circle the words that say why Jefferson opposed the bank.