



GEORGE WASHINGTON'S TEETH

Learning Objectives: The students will...

1. Identify the contributions of George Washington, who helped shape our nation.
2. Place events in chronological order.
3. Create visual representations of information using pictures and symbols.

TEKS: K.2B, K.3A, K.15B, 1.2A, 1.3C, 1.18B, 2.4A, 2.19B

Materials Needed: *George Washington's Teeth* by Deborah Chandra and Madeleine Comora; small "Mystery Box" containing a handkerchief, a note from George Washington (see Items for the Mystery Box handout), several cotton balls, a picture of a hippopotamus (see Items for the Mystery Box handout), a picture of a tooth (see Items for the Mystery Box handout); Important Events From George Washington's Life Timeline Events (cut into strips); copies of the Tooth Page for each student; glue; pencils; crayons (optional).

Vocabulary: commander in chief, dentist, extracted, false teeth, molars, port, president, Revolutionary War, tripe

Teaching Strategy:

1. Begin the lesson by telling students that you have a "Mystery Box." Explain that you are going to display the items from the box and students are to predict to whom they think the "Mystery Box" belongs based on the clues. Remove each of the items from the box and then ask students to share their conclusions and record responses on the board or chart paper.
2. Reveal the cover of the book *George Washington's Teeth* by Deborah Chandra and Madeleine Comora. (If any student guessed George Washington, have him/her share how they predicted the correct identity.)
3. Read the book to the class. Review the items that were in the "Mystery Box" and ask students the significance of each item based on the story.
4. Discuss the following questions:
 - a. How do you think an important person such as George Washington must have felt about his tooth problems?
 - b. What characteristics did Washington exhibit as he dealt with painful teeth? What things did he accomplish even though he had these physical problems?
 - c. Explain how you think Washington's tooth problems would have been handled if he lived today.
 - d. Why do you think Americans celebrate the birthday of George Washington on Presidents' Day each year?
5. Give each student a strip of paper with a timeline event from the Important Events From George Washington's Life and a copy of the Tooth Page handout. Have students print the date of their event on the top line above the graphic of the tooth and glue the timeline description under the tooth. Students should then draw a picture, illustration, and/or symbol to represent the event described on their strip of paper. They may color the picture after it is drawn.
6. After the Tooth Pages are completed, have students arrange themselves and/or their pictures in chronological order. All students should share their timeline event and their drawing. The Tooth Timeline should be mounted in chronological order on the wall or bulletin board.

7. Conclude the lesson by talking about why many people consider George Washington to be our greatest president.

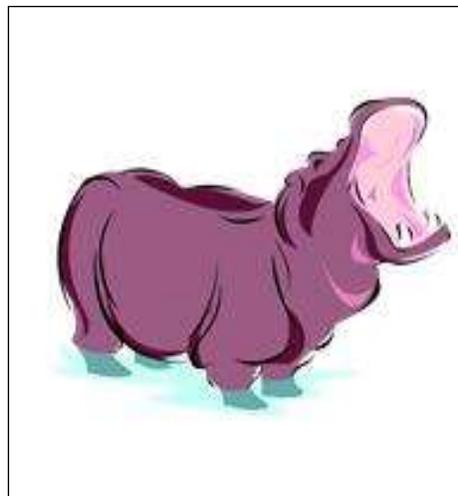
Extension for Gifted/Talented:

Have students research the life of a historical figure and then create a “Mystery Box” or “Mystery Sack” for the person. Students should gather items or pictures of items that offer clues to the identity of their “mystery person.” They should be able to defend the choice of each item placed in the box or sack. Students in the class may exchange boxes/sacks and try to figure out which historical figure the contents of the box/sack represents.

ITEMS FOR THE MYSTERY BOX

Note

Please come. I'll
need your help
when I get home on
leave.



IMPORTANT EVENTS IN GEORGE WASHINGTON'S LIFE

- 1732 George Washington was born on a farm in Virginia.
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- 1754 At the age of 22, George Washington lost 2 of his teeth.
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- 1755 During the French and Indian War, George Washington sent for dental supplies and even had a dentist come to his army headquarters.
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- 1756 George Washington had his first tooth pulled (extracted). He lost a tooth almost every year after that.
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- 1772 When he is 40-years-old, Washington traveled to Williamsburg to have another tooth pulled.
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- 1773 George had to eat soft food, so his teeth wouldn't hurt.
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- 1774 Washington ordered almonds and other sweets even though they were hard on his teeth.
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- 1775 George Washington was elected General and Commander in Chief of the Continental Army.
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- 1776 When General Washington and his men were crossing the Delaware River during the Revolutionary War, Washington's gums caused him great pain.
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- 1781 George Washington wore false teeth, which were wired to his remaining teeth.
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- 1782 George asked his cousin to send him 2 small teeth that Washington remembered were in his desk.
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- 1783 George Washington made a model with his own teeth, and his dentist used the model to make a set of false teeth for Washington.
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- 1785 George Washington's new dentist, Dr. Le Meyeur, visited Mt. Vernon very often to treat him.
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- 1786 Washington had many tooth infections and wrote to his dentist about them. Washington's letters were hand-delivered, so his dental problems would remain a secret.
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- 1788 George Washington was often in bed with tooth infections.
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- 1789 When George Washington was elected President, he only had 2 teeth left in his mouth. Dr. John Greenwood removed one of the teeth and made Washington's first full set of false teeth. The teeth were made out of hippopotamus ivory and 8 human teeth that were held in place with gold screws.
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- 1790 Washington still had a toothache and swollen gums.
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- 1791 Dr. Greenwood made President Washington another set of false teeth, which had to be repaired.
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- 1794 When Washington was 62, he couldn't chew with his false teeth and was very uncomfortable.
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- 1796 Two years later, George eventually had to have his last tooth pulled.
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- 1797 Washington was embarrassed to speak in front of crowds because his false teeth changed the shape of his face and changed how his voice sounded.
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- 1799 George Washington died at Mt. Vernon at the age of 67.
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Year: _____

