

Student Handouts for the Newburgh Conspiracy Lesson

Building Background I

- For homework, read the following passage about the events that took place from the fall of 1781 through March 10, 1783. Pay particular attention to the growing anger of the Army, its causes, and the actions that resulted from it.

After the American victory over the British at Yorktown in the fall of 1781, the Continental Army grew very restless. The officers and soldiers recalled the food and clothing shortages they had endured and were especially upset that they were not receiving any of their pay; many of them had incurred debts during the war and had families to support. So, as the months passed and rumors of peace started to reach their ears, they worried about their future, fearing that if peace did arrive and the Army was disbanded without receiving any of its pay, they would return home to a life of poverty.

By early October 1782 the men were so visibly angry, General George Washington feared they might mutiny. He was seeing “discontents . . . throughout the Army,” and he speculated that when his men moved into their winter quarters the situation might worsen; the men would not be engaged in any battles with the British and, consequently, would have more free time to recall past hardships and grow even angrier.

At the time Washington was reporting his fear, most of his men were stationed in the Hudson Highlands. He would set up his headquarters in Newburgh, Newburgh, and his men would establish their last cantonment in nearby New Windsor. There the soldiers would erect their huts and the Temple of Virtue, a headquarters building that would also serve as a place for worship, celebrations, and special occasions.

While the soldiers built their huts, some Massachusetts officers started taking steps to get Congress to pay the Army. In early November 1782 they met and agreed that the time had come to get a sense of how “the army at large” felt about its situation. They then set up a seven-man committee to meet with other officers and decided that a petition stating their grievances should be drafted and addressed to Congress. Soon thereafter, lists of grievances started arriving and, on November 24, 1782, at West Point, at an assembly of officers representing all the Army’s state lines, a committee consisting of five officers was established to draft the petition. Heading the committee was General Henry Knox.

On December 1, 1782, Knox’s committee met with officers representing all the state lines and read the petition he had written. Called “the memorial,” it made clear to the delegates that the Army had reached its breaking point. The officers were upset that those who had been involuntarily retired as a result of reductions in forces were not receiving postwar pensions promised by Congress and they feared that they themselves would not receive pensions when the war ended. They also were angry that Congress had failed to provide the Army the forage, rations, and clothing it was due. And, more than anything else, they

were distressed that the Army was not being paid. The men had used up their private resources in order to prevent their families from starving and they could no longer request help from friends, because they were “wearied and disgusted” from constantly hearing their appeals. So now Congress had to act! It had to get some money for the Army quickly. The Army’s complaints had been ignored too long. “The uneasiness of the soldiers, for want of pay, is great and dangerous,” General Knox warned. “Any further experiments on their patience may have fatal effects.”

In the days immediately following the reading of the petition, officers from the various state lines reviewed it and voted on who would deliver it to Congress. Chosen for that mission were General Alexander McDougall and Colonels John Brooks and Matthias Ogden.

General McDougall and Colonels Brooks and Ogden reached Philadelphia on December 29, 1782. About one week later they formally presented the officers’ petition to Congress. Understanding how important the petition was, the delegates established a committee consisting of one representative from each state except Georgia—the Grand Committee—to study it, meet with the three officers, and prepare a report. Soon thereafter, the Grand Committee met with Superintendent of Finance Robert Morris and learned that the government’s precarious financial situation precluded an immediate advance of pay to the Army and a guarantee that one would be possible in the future. Only after Congress got real taxation authority from the states, which would enable it to get a steady stream of revenue, would it be able to pay the Army.

One week from the day the general and the two colonels presented the petition to Congress, the Grand Committee met with them and heard that if the soldiers did not receive pay, “a mutiny or something even worse was a real possibility.” And the officers in the Army were now so angry over not receiving pay that this time, unlike in the past, when they put down all mutiny attempts, they might do nothing to prevent the revolt; they might feel that their soldiers had good cause to mutiny.

Upon hearing such alarming news, the Grand Committee created a three-man committee made up of Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Rutledge to meet with Morris and prepare a report on the Army’s grievances. The three delegates did as tasked and in late January presented their report to the larger committee, which then prepared its own report based on their recommendations for Congress. When Congress subsequently took up the larger committee’s report and debated how to resolve the Army’s pay problems, it faced two major obstacles: it was broke, and it did not have the taxation authority needed to raise funds that could be used to pay the soldiers and officers; taxation authority rested with the state legislatures and they were not anxious to give up that type of power to Congress. If they did so, they felt, Congress would become big and oppressive, just as the British Parliament had become.

Overcoming those obstacles might have been possible if not for one important thing—Congress was very badly divided at this time: on the one side were the nationalists, delegates who believed that power should rest with the national government in

Philadelphia—Congress—and wanted it to have broad taxation authority; on the other side were state sovereignty types, delegates who believed that power should rest with the state governments, not with the national government in Philadelphia. For nationalists, men like Hamilton, Madison, and Morris, the solution to the delegates' problem appeared to be quite simple; the states had to give Congress broad taxation authority, so it could raise the funds needed to pay the Army and finance its other operations. For state sovereignty types, delegates who believed that the states should not give Congress that kind of power, ones who thought the state legislatures should retain the power of the purse, Hamilton's idea was awful.

With the two factions in Congress far apart, the debates often resulted in fierce arguments and the Army's prospects of receiving any pay did not appear to be good. So when General McDougall wrote to General Knox in February 1783, he had to inform him that a feeling had been growing that the Army was not going to and should not allow itself to be disbanded until it received justice. And when Hamilton wrote to George Washington the same month, he, too, asserted that the Army would refuse to give up its arms when the war ended unless its grievances were redressed. That—the threat by the Army to refuse to disarm—could scare weaker delegates in Congress and the state legislatures into giving the national government the taxation authority it needed to raise funds, but it also was dangerous; it would be very difficult, Hamilton observed, “to keep a complaining and suffering army within the bounds of moderation. What the movement needed, therefore, was a leader who could use his influence “to ensure that the army did not go too far,” a leader who could “guide the torrent, and bring order, perhaps even good, out of confusion.” And that leader, Hamilton made clear, was George Washington.

The chances that Washington would allow himself and the Army to be used by nationalists in a scheme to win taxation authority for Congress were not great, because he was too virtuous and patriotic to “yield to any dishonorable or disloyal plans into which he might be called.” So, at around the time Hamilton was writing Washington, Robert Morris's assistant in the finance office, Gouverneur Morris, sent out a feeler to General Nathanael Greene to see if he might be willing to use the Army's anger, along with that of unpaid creditors of the government, to terrify the state legislatures into acting. Morris would not get an answer from General Greene until April and by that time any response from him, favorable or unfavorable, would not have mattered; by the second week in March the nationalists would already have one of the top generals in Army on their side.

The general who joined sides with the plotting nationalists was Horatio Gates. However, before he could lead the nationalists in their scheme to terrify the state legislatures and their supporters in Philadelphia into giving Congress broad taxation authority by hanging the angry Army over their heads, one last attempt had to be made to find out if George Washington would be willing to take charge of the officers' movement to have their grievances redressed. So sometime on the weekend of March 8-9, 1783, Colonel Walter Stewart, a strong nationalist who had recently returned to the Hudson Highlands from Philadelphia, where he had been meeting with the Army's “friends in Congress” on behalf of the angry officers, visited Washington at his headquarters in Newburgh and

asked him some indirect questions to determine how receptive he might be to the nationalists' scheme.

The answers Washington gave made clear to Colonel Stewart that the general would strongly oppose the nationalists' plan, if he was asked to join them. So the colonel then went to the headquarters of General Gates. There he met with nine or ten other Army officers and reported that peace was almost a certainty. And with its arrival, Congress, which had shown no inclination to answer the officers' calls for back pay and a pension, would disband the Army. Consequently, the officers had to act now to prevent Congress from reneging on its promises to the Army; they had to set their plan in motion. Superintendent of Finance Robert Morris was backing them, Colonel Stewart reported, and so were the angry public creditors.

After Colonel Stewart finished giving his report, he and his fellow plotters at Gates's headquarters agreed to call all the Army officers in the Hudson Highlands together for a meeting to plan further action. But before that meeting was to take place, one of plotters would have to write an anonymous address to arouse the officers. That task was assigned to a brilliant but arrogant young major named John Armstrong, a close friend and aide-de-camp of General Gates.

On the morning of Monday, March 10, Major William Barber, an assistant to Colonel Stewart in the northern department's inspector general's office, arrived at the adjutant general's office with the announcement of the officers' meeting and copies of the address written by Major Armstrong. There officers of the different state lines assembled for general orders and saw both documents. Later that day copies of the address to the officers were distributed at the New Windsor Cantonment, ensuring a wide circulation among all the state lines.

Source: Richards, *Swords in Their Hands: George Washington and the Newburgh Conspiracy*, pp. 7-213

Key Vocabulary

- Listen to your teacher pronounce each of the words you see below. Then write it phonetically in the parenthesis, using dots to divide it into syllables and placing an accent mark over the part of the word that is stressed.

remonstrance () – a protest

Example sentence: After the King jailed the popular priest for failing to recognize his authority, many people sent him a remonstrance demanding that he be freed.

expedient () – a means to an end

Example sentence: By the simple expedient of using the city buses, you can avoid the huge expense of having a car and save much money.

redress () – to right a wrong; to remedy or relieve

Example sentence: Although the waitress did not give me the meal I ordered, I will not write a bad review of the restaurant on Yahoo, because the owner offered to redress her mistake by giving me a gift certificate worth twenty dollars.

disdain () – to look upon or treat someone as if he is unworthy of attention or respect; to despise

Example sentence: Criminals have much disdain for the law.

entreat () – to make an earnest request; to ask earnestly for something; to beg

Example sentence: I entreat you to be a donor at the next Red Cross blood drive.

dissipate () – to disappear; to vanish; to disintegrate; to become scattered or dispersed

Example sentence: “Don’t worry,” Jane said, “this fog should dissipate before noon, and we should have sunny weather the rest of the day.”

contempt () – a strong feeling of disapproval that results from one’s belief that something or someone is disgusting, unworthy of acceptance or attention; disdain

Example sentence: The young woman had contempt for the old man, because she believed that he was a racist.

auspices () – support, sponsorship

Example sentence: The professor travelled to Russia under the auspices of President Obama.

comply () – to obey; to do as one requests, requires, or demands

Example sentence: If all Americans decided not to comply with the law, chaos would result.

Reading the Newburgh Address

The Newburgh Address, shown on page eight, includes four distinct sections:

- Look at the first paragraph.
The first paragraph has Major Armstrong requesting that his fellow officers let him address them, observing that he and they are bound by the suffering they both have endured.
- Look at the second, third, and fourth paragraphs.
This section tells us that Major Armstrong views himself as a sincere person who needs to be heard. He wants his fellow officers to know that he, like them, took up arms to fight for liberty from the British and that he and they faced the same hardships, expecting that once peace arrived, a grateful country would reward them. But now he is tired of waiting for justice, and he wants his fellow officers to no longer weakly accept injustice from their government.
- Look at the fifth paragraph.
The fifth paragraph shows us Major Armstrong's call to his fellow officers to act while they still have their arms—their swords—to force Congress to give them justice.
- Look at the sixth paragraph.
The sixth paragraph features Major Armstrong urging his officers to send to Congress just one more petition—a very strongly worded one, one with a very strong threat.

Strategic Reading:

Read the Newburgh Address alone or in pairs. After reading each paragraph, identify important ideas in it. Also, decide which words and phrases in it are important and try to define them in your own words. If you don't know what they mean, research them.

The Newburgh Address

To the Officers of the Army.

GENTLEMEN—A fellow soldier, whose interest and affections bind him strongly to you, whose past sufferings have been as great, and whose fortune may be as desperate as yours—would beg leave to address you.

Age has its claims, and rank is not without its pretensions to advise: but, though unsupported by both, he flatters himself, that the plain language of sincerity and experience will neither be unheard nor unregarded.

Like many of you, he loved private life, and left it with regret. He left it, determined to retire from the field, with the necessity that called him to it, and not till then—not till the enemies of his country, the slaves of power, and the hirelings of injustice, were compelled to abandon their schemes, and acknowledge America as terrible in arms as she had been humble in remonstrance. With this object in view, he has long shared in your toils and mingled in your dangers. He has felt the cold hand of poverty without a murmur, and has seen the insolence of wealth without a sigh. But, too much under the direction of his wishes, and sometimes weak enough to mistake desire for opinion, he has till lately—very lately—believed in the justice of his country. He hoped that, as the clouds of adversity scattered, and as the sunshine of peace and better fortune broke in upon us, the coldness and severity of government would relax, and that, more than justice, that gratitude would blaze forth upon those hands, which had upheld her, in the darkest stages of her passage, from impending servitude to acknowledged independence. But faith has its limits as well as temper, and there are points beyond which neither can be stretched, without sinking into cowardice or plunging into credulity.—This, my friends, I conceive to be your situation—Hurried to the very verge of both, another step would ruin you forever.—To be tame and unprovoked when injuries press hard upon you, is more than weakness; but to look for kinder usage, without one manly effort of your own, would fix your character, and show the world how richly you deserve those chains you broke. To guard against this evil, let us take a review of the ground upon which we now stand, and from thence carry our thoughts forward for a moment, into the unexplored field of expedient.

After a pursuit of seven long years, the object for which we set out is at length brought within our reach. Yes, my friends, that suffering courage of yours was active once—it has conducted the United States of America through a doubtful and a bloody war. It has placed her in the chair of independency, and peace again returns to bless—whom? A country willing to redress your wrongs, cherish your worth and reward your services, a country courting your return to private life, with tears of gratitude and smiles of admiration, longing to divide with you that independency which your gallantry has given, and those riches which your wounds have preserved? Is this the case? Or is it rather a country that tramples upon your rights, disdains your cries and insults your distresses? Have you not, more than once, suggested your wishes, and made known your wants to Congress? Wants and wishes which gratitude and policy should have anticipated, rather than evaded. And have you not lately, in the meek language of entreating memorials, begged from their justice, what you would no longer expect from

their favour? How have you been answered? Let the letter which you are called to consider tomorrow make reply.

If this, then, be your treatment, while the swords you wear are necessary for the defence of America, what have you to expect from peace, when your voice shall sink, and your strength dissipate by division? When those very swords, the instruments and companions of your glory, shall be taken from your sides, and no remaining mark of military distinction left but your wants, infirmities and scars? Can you then consent to be the only sufferers by this revolution, and retiring from the field, grow old in poverty, wretchedness and contempt? Can you consent to wade through the vile mire of dependency, and owe the miserable remnant of that life to charity, which has hitherto been spent in honor? If you can—GO—and carry with you the jest of Tories and scorn of Whigs—the ridicule, and what is worse, the pity of the world. Go, starve, and be forgotten! But, if your spirit should revolt at this; if you have sense enough to discover, and spirit enough to oppose tyranny under whatever garb it may assume; whether it be the plain coat of republicanism, or the splendid robe of royalty; if you have yet learned to discriminate between a people and a cause, between men and principles—awake; attend to your situation and redress yourselves. If the present moment be lost, every future effort is in vain; and your threats then, will be as empty as your entreaties now.

I would advise you, therefore, to come to some final opinion upon what you can bear, and what you will suffer. If your determination be in any proportion to your wrongs, carry your appeal from the justice to the fears of government. Change the milk-and-water style of your last memorial; assume a bolder tone—decent, but lively, spirited and determined, and suspect the man who would advise to more moderation and longer forbearance. Let two or three men, who can feel as well as write, be appointed to draw up your last remonstrance; for, I would no longer give it the suing, soft, unsuccessful epithet of memorial. Let it be represented in language that will neither dishonor you by its rudeness, nor betray you by its fears, what has been promised by Congress, and what has been performed, how long and how patiently you have suffered, how little you have asked, and how much of that little has been denied. Tell them that, though you were the first, and would wish to be the last to encounter danger: though despair itself can never drive you into dishonor, it may drive you from the field: that the wound often irritated, and never healed, may at length become incurable; and that the slightest mark of indignity from Congress now, must operate like the grave, and part you forever: that in any political event, the army has its alternative. If peace, that nothing shall separate them from your arms but death: if war, that courting the auspices, and inviting the direction of your illustrious leader, you will retire to some unsettled country, smile in your turn, and “mock when their fear cometh on.” But let it represent also, that should they comply with the request of your late memorial, it would make you more happy and them more respectable. That while war should continue, you would follow their standard into the field, and when it came to an end, you would withdraw into the shade of private life, and give the world another subject of wonder and applause; an army victorious over its enemies—victorious over itself.

Source: “John Armstrong: The Newburgh Address,” Rhodehamel, ed, *The American Revolution: Writings from the War of Independence*, pp. 774-77.

Check Your Understanding I

➤ Circle the letter of the correct answer and use what you've read to answer the questions.

1. The Newburgh Conspiracy resulted mainly from the

- A food and clothing shortages endured by the Continental Army
- B unwillingness of Congress to give state legislatures funds
- C nationalists' fear that Congress would get broad taxation authority
- D inability of Congress to pay the Continental Army

2. In your own words, describe the events that led up to the writing of the Newburgh Address.

3. Which word BEST describes what Major John Armstrong and the Army really wanted?

- A peace
- B justice
- C strength
- D fortune

4. How, according to Major Armstrong, would the soldiers and officers be treated when the war ended and the Army was disbanded, if they did nothing?

5. What does Major Armstrong suggest that two or three of his fellow officers do to end the Army's suffering?

- A go to Philadelphia to complain in person to the delegates
- B write one more petition to Congress, a strongly-worded one
- C betray their country
- D take action against George Washington, "the man who would advise to more moderation and longer forbearance."

6. The Newburgh Address contains a threat that the Army could

- A refuse to give up its arms after the war
- B replace its great leader, George Washington, with someone else
- C join the British and attack Congress
- D establish a monarchy in America

7. In your opinion, what is the most important point Major Armstrong is trying to make in his address? Give at least two reasons for your opinion.

Writing Workshop: Expository Essay I

Writing Prompt

Read the following quotation:

“In all Causes of Passion admit Reason to Govern.”

- Part of one of the Rules of Civility & Decent Behavior in Company and Conversation

The teenage George Washington copied those words into the back of a notebook from Francis Hawkins’s *Youth Behavior*, a book based primarily on a sixteenth-century manual that French Jesuits had prepared for the training of young noblemen. Think carefully about how Major John Armstrong did NOT let reason govern when he wrote the Newburgh Address and, consequently, created a very dangerous situation for the young American republic.

WRITE an essay explaining the importance of allowing reason, not passion, to govern your actions.

Be sure to

- clearly state your thesis
- organize and develop your ideas effectively
- choose your words carefully
- use correct grammar, mechanics, and spelling

Prewriting

- Using a separate sheet of paper, brainstorm key ideas and supporting details for your essay. Then organize them into an outline.

Drafting

- Write a first draft of your expository essay.

Revising and Editing

- Work with a partner to evaluate your expository essay. Use the following questions and prompts to guide the evaluation.

Revising the draft:

Does the essay have a clear introduction, body, and conclusion?

Does the introduction state a clear thesis?

Are the main ideas strongly related to the thesis?

Is the progression of ideas logical and well controlled?

Is the essay thoughtful and engaging?

Does the writer use details and examples to support the ideas?

Are there effective transitions (linking words and phrases)?

Are the sentences purposeful, varied, and well controlled?

What does the writer do best?

What suggestions or revisions do you have?

Editing the draft:

- Circle or highlight any specific spelling, grammar or usage errors.

Final Draft

- Write a final draft of your expository essay.

Writing Prompt

Write an essay explaining the importance of allowing reason, not passion, to govern your actions. Be sure to state your thesis clearly in the beginning of your essay, use specific examples and relevant details to support each idea you present, and choose words that are precise and can be clearly understood by the reader.

Grading Your Essay

Read the questions you see below. Then reread your essay and circle the letters that best describe your essay. After that, look at the grading instructions beneath the last question and write the grades you earned next to each question. Finally, meet with your teacher to discuss the grade your essay was given.

1. Which description BEST describes the organizational structure of your essay?

- A It is clear and relates to the thesis.
- B It is mostly clear, but there are parts that seem unrelated to the thesis.
- C It is not clear and many parts seem unrelated to the thesis.

2. Which description BEST describes the progression of ideas in your essay?

- A It is logical and well controlled.
- B It is generally clear, but not always unified.
- C It lacks clarity and control.

3. Which description BEST describes how well you developed your essay?

- A I provided specific facts, details, and relevant examples that supported my thesis.
- B I provided facts, details, and examples, most of which support my thesis.
- C I provided few facts, details and examples that support my thesis.

4. Which description BEST describes the style of your essay?

- A My essay maintains a formal tone, precise words, and effective transitions.
- B My essay may use a formal tone, but my word choice may be general or imprecise. Some of my transitions are effective.
- C My essay does not establish a formal tone, its vocabulary is limited, and some of its sentences are awkward.

5. Which description BEST describes how well you edited your essay for grammar, mechanics, and usage?

- A There are few, if any, grammar, mechanics, and usage errors in my essay.
- B There are some grammar, mechanics, and usage errors in my essay.
- C There are many grammar, mechanics, and usage errors in my essay.

Next to each 'A' you circled, write a '5' (exceptional). Next to each 'B' you circled, write a '3' (proficient). Next to each 'C' you circled, write a '1' (inadequate).

Building Background II

- For homework, read the following passage about the events that took place shortly after Major John Armstrong wrote his address to the officers and on the day of Washington's speech at the Temple of Virtue. Pay particular attention to the mood of the officers.

Neither the plotters' call for a meeting of all the officers nor the address by Major Armstrong had been authorized by George Washington. And the plotters certainly did not want him to see either of those documents. But Washington ended up getting his hands on copies of both documents and he was not pleased. Especially troubling was Armstrong's address to his fellow officers, which was as a real powder keg. However, Washington pretended not to be upset. Instead of cancelling the unauthorized meeting of the officers, he simply issued orders rescheduling it from March 11, 1783, to March 15, 1783, and in them implied that he would be unable to attend.

On the day of the meeting, hundreds of officers stationed in the Hudson Highlands marched up a hill located not far from the soldiers' huts to the newly constructed Temple of Virtue. Once there, they headed for the central hall, where the officers' meeting would be held. Those who arrived early managed to find seats on benches there, those who arrived closer to the start of the meeting had to settle for spots elsewhere—in the aisles, by the room's plastered walls, or in doorways.

As the officers waited for the meeting to begin, they thought about the past and considered the future. Their minds were filled with a mixture of hostility and hope.

At one end of the room, under an arched vault on a small dais by a lectern, stood General Horatio Gates. He would preside at the meeting, he and the assembled officers believed, since George Washington had implied in his orders that he would be unable to attend. So at noon, the time when the meeting was supposed to begin, General Gates called the officers to order, and those who were standing in front of benches stopped talking and took their seats. The officers understood that "the matters they were called to deliberate upon were of the most serious nature."

Then a low and narrow door behind the dais, which had been closed, opened and in walked George Washington. Surprised by his entry, the officers who had just taken their seats rose, and for a few moments the room filled with the noises of boots hitting and scuffing the floor and scabbards being repositioned. Then a veil of silence settled over the hall. Washington, Captain Samuel Shaw of Massachusetts felt, had "heightened the solemnity of the scene" by making such an unannounced appearance.

Washington took a seat for a short time and then quietly asked a surprised Gates to let him speak to the officers gathered in the room. When Gates quickly complied, the

Commander-in-chief of the Continental Army walked directly towards the lectern and mounted the low dais. Shortly thereafter, he removed some statements that he had prepared and began speaking to his officers. In all, he probably spoke for ten to fifteen minutes.

After finishing his speech, Washington sensed that his words had failed to soothe the angry officers. So he reached into his inside coat pocket and slowly removed a letter that had been sent to him by Joseph Jones, a delegate from Virginia, and began reading. What Jones, who was considered to be a friend of the Army, had written would prove to the officers that Congress was going to treat them and their soldiers justly, that it would eventually pay them and fund their postwar pensions.

Something was not right when Washington read from the letter, though. The general was pausing and moving it to and fro as if he were struggling to make out what Jones had written. Finally, after only a few sentences or but a paragraph, Washington stopped reading, reached into his waistcoat pocket and removed a spectacles case, slowly took out some new reading glasses that had been made for him, wiped them off, and began to clumsily don them. "Gentlemen, you will permit me to put on my spectacles, for I have not only grown gray, but almost blind in the service of my country," he sadly announced.

Washington's words moved his officers. They now felt sympathy for their commander, and their anger towards Congress over not being paid was completely forgotten. They turned and hugged each other. Some, if not all, started to cry or at least became choked up. And Washington himself faltered when he tried to resume reading.

Realizing that he had succeeded in swaying his officers, that his sad announcement had essentially brought an end to the Newburgh Conspiracy, Washington moments later departed from the hall. He then exited the building, mounted his horse, and slowly rode off, as some of the officers gazed fixedly at him through the hall's windows.

Source: Richards, *Swords in Their Hands: George Washington and the Newburgh Conspiracy*, pp. 212-41.

Key Vocabulary

- Listen to your teacher pronounce each of the words you see below. Then write it phonetically in the parenthesis, using dots to divide it into syllables and placing an accent mark over the part of the word that is stressed.

insidious () – secretly dangerous, treacherous, or deceitful

Example sentence: The changes he proposes are really insidious, because they will eventually cause much violence.

unavailing () – useless; ineffectual

Example sentence: The boy's attempts to persuade his father to quit smoking were unavailing, and soon the old man ended up with lung cancer.

sheath () – to put a sword, a knife ... into its case or covering

Example sentence: "Drop or sheath your swords immediately," the captain of the ship commanded, "or I'll shoot every one of you mutineers."

emissary () – a representative sent on a mission

Example sentence: "I am acting as an emissary for the President of the United States with orders to deliver this handwritten message to you, President Putin," the Army general announced.

deliberations () – formal discussions or consultations

Example sentence: The members of the jury did not need much time for deliberations, because they all had decided early in the trial that the man was guilty of murder.

dissolution () – the breaking up of an organization

Example sentence: The dissolution of John and Mary's marriage did not surprise their neighbors, because they had often heard the two arguing.

specious () – appearing to be true or correct at first, but turning out to be wrong when closely examined; misleading in appearance

Example sentence: John always makes specious claims when the teacher asks him why he is late for class.

pretense () – a false claim, allegation, or justification; an attempt to make something that is not true appear to be true

Example sentence: Under the pretense of trying to save money on salaries, the owner of the Rockets traded the player whose poor play had caused his team to lose many games.

discord () – lack of agreement or harmony between persons or groups; bitter conflict between persons or groups; quarreling

Example sentence: There was much discord between the two top players on their team, so the coach and the owner decided that they had to trade one of them to another team.

posterity () – future generations

Example sentence: The President of the United States must often think about posterity when making decisions on important issues.

Reading George Washington's Speech to the Officers

George Washington's speech to his officers, shown on page twenty-four, includes nine distinct sections:

- Look at the first paragraph.
The first paragraph makes clear how dissatisfied Washington is that the officers have called an unauthorized meeting.
- Look at the second paragraph.
The second paragraph attacks the motives of the author of the Newburgh Address.
- Look at the third paragraph.
The third paragraph criticizes the author of the Newburgh Address for appealing to the officers' passion, not to their ability to reason.
- Look at the fourth paragraph.
The fourth paragraph shows that Washington views himself as a supporter of the Army and someone who has shared his men's hardships, and that he feels the author of the Newburgh Address is guilty of proposing two awful options in an attempt to force Congress to pay the Army.
- Look at the fifth paragraph.
The fifth paragraph presents Washington as a general who is confident that his officers will reject Armstrong's plan, because they will understand that it is impossible to implement it.
- Look at the sixth paragraph.
The sixth paragraph illustrates that Washington dislikes how Armstrong urges the officers to suspect him of not supporting the Army because he is asking it to continue to bear hardships.
- Look at the seventh paragraph.
The seventh paragraph proves that Washington still has faith in Congress and that he thinks that the Army will get justice if it remains patient.
- Look at the eighth paragraph.
The eighth paragraph tells us that Washington is willing to do whatever the Army asks of him in order to achieve justice for it, as long as it does not ask him to betray his country.

- Look at the ninth paragraph.

The ninth paragraph finds Washington urging his officers to be reasonable, to be patient and trust Congress, to not do anything that could cause the young American government to fall and a civil war to result.

Strategic Reading:

Read Washington's speech to his officers alone or in pairs. After reading each section, identify important ideas in the speech. Also, decide which words and phrases in the speech are important and try to define them in your own words. If you don't know what they mean, research them.

George Washington's Speech to the Officers

Gentlemen: By an anonymous summons, an attempt has been made to convene you together; how inconsistent with the rules of propriety! how unmilitary! and how subversive of all order and discipline, let the good sense of the Army decide.

In the moment of this Summons, another anonymous production was sent into circulation, addressed more to the feelings and passions, than to the reason and judgment of the Army. The author of the piece, is entitled to much credit for the goodness of his Pen and I could wish he had as much credit for the rectitude of his Heart, for, as Men see thro' different Optics, and are induced by the reflecting faculties of the Mind, to use different means, to attain the same end, the Author of the Address, should have had more charity, than to mark for Suspicion, the Man who should recommend moderation and longer forbearance, or, in other words, who should not think as he thinks, and act as he advises. But he had another plan in view, in which candor and liberality of Sentiment, regard to justice, and love of Country, have no part; and he was right, to insinuate the darkest suspicion, to effect the blackest designs.

That the Address is drawn with great Art, and is designed to answer the most insidious purposes. That it is calculated to impress the Mind, with an idea of premeditated injustice in the Sovereign power of the United States, and rouse all those resentments which must unavoidably flow from such a belief. That the secret mover of this Scheme (whoever he may be) intended to take advantage of the passions, while they were warmed by the recollection of past distresses, without giving time for cool, deliberative thinking, and that composure of Mind which is so necessary to give dignity and stability to measures is rendered too obvious, by the mode of conducting the business, to need other proof than a reference to the proceeding.

Thus much, Gentlemen, I have thought it incumbent on me to observe to you, to shew upon what principles I opposed the irregular and hasty meeting which was proposed to have been held on Tuesday last: and not because I wanted a disposition to give you every opportunity consistent with your own honor, and the dignity of the Army, to make known your grievances. If my conduct heretofore, has not evinced to you, that I have been a faithful friend to the Army, my declaration of it at this time wd. be equally unavailing and improper. But as I was among the first who embarked in the cause of our common Country. As I have never left your side one moment, but when called from you on public duty. As I have been the constant companion and witness of your Distresses, and not among the last to feel, and acknowledge your Merits. As I have ever considered my own Military reputation as inseparably connected with that of the Army. As my Heart has ever expanded with joy, when I have heard its praises, and my indignation has arisen, when the mouth of detraction has been opened against it, it can *scarcely be supposed*, at this late stage of the War, that I am indifferent to its interests. But, how are they to be promoted? The way is plain, says the anonymous Addresser. If War continues, remove into the unsettled Country; there establish yourselves, and leave an ungrateful Country to defend itself. But who are they to defend? Our Wives, our Children, our Farms, and other property which we leave behind us. or, in this state of hostile seperation, are we to take the two first (the latter cannot be removed), to perish in a Wilderness, with hunger, cold

and nakedness? If Peace takes place, never sheath your Swords Says he untill you have obtained full and ample justice; this dreadful alternative, of either deserting our Country in the extremest hour of her distress, or turning our Arms against it, (which is the apparent object, unless Congress can be compelled into instant compliance) has something so shocking in it, that humanity revolts at the idea. My God! what can this writer have in view, by recommending such measures? Can he be a friend to the Army? Can he be a friend to this Country? Rather, is he not an insidious Foe? Some Emissary, perhaps, from New York, plotting the ruin of both, by sowing the seeds of discord and separation between the Civil and Military powers of the Continent? And what a Compliment does he pay to our Understandings, when he recommends measures in either alternative, impracticable in their Nature?

But here, Gentlemen, I will drop the curtain, because it wd. be as imprudent in me to assign my reasons for this opinion, as it would be insulting to your conception, to suppose you stood in need of them. A moment's reflection will convince every dispassionate Mind of the physical impossibility of carrying either proposal into execution.

There might, Gentlemen, be an impropriety in my taking notice, in this Address to you, of an anonymous production, but the manner in which that performance has been introduced to the Army, the effect it was intended to have, together with some other circumstances, will amply justify my observations on the tendency of that Writing. With respect to the advice given by the Author, to suspect the Man, who shall recommend moderate measures and longer forbearance, I spurn it, as every Man, who regards that liberty, and reveres that justice for which we contend, undoubtedly must; for if Men are to be precluded from offering their Sentiments on a matter, which may involve the most serious and alarming consequences, that can invite the consideration of Mankind, reason is of no use to us; the freedom of Speech may be taken away, and, dumb and silent we may be led, like sheep, to the Slaughter.

I cannot, in justice to my own belief, and what I have great reason to conceive is the intention of Congress, conclude this Address, without giving it as my decided opinion, that that Honble Body, entertain exalted sentiments of the Services of the Army; and, from a full conviction of its merits and sufferings, will do it compleat justice. That their endeavors, to discover and establish funds for this purpose, have been unwearied, and will not cease, till they have succeeded, I have not a doubt. But, like all other large Bodies, where there is a variety of different Interests to reconcile, their deliberations are slow. Why then should we distrust them? and, in consequence of that distrust, adopt measures, which may cast a shade over that glory which, has been so justly acquired; and tarnish the reputation of an Army which is celebrated thro' all Europe, for its fortitude and Patriotism? and for what is this done? to bring the object we seek nearer? No! most certainly, in my opinion, it will cast it at a greater distance.

For myself (and I take no merit in giving the assurance, being induced to it from principles of gratitude, veracity and justice), a grateful sence of the confidence you have ever placed in me, a recollection of the chearful assistance, and prompt obedience I have experienced from you, under every vicissitude of Fortune, and the sincere affection I feel for an Army, I have so long had the honor to Command, will oblige me to declare, in this public and solemn manner, that, in the attainment of compleat justice for all your toils and dangers, and in the gratification of every wish, so far as may be done consistently

Comment [D1]: Y o

with the great duty I owe my Country, and those powers we are bound to respect, you may freely command my Services to the utmost of my abilities.

While I give you these assurances, and pledge myself in the most unequivocal manner, to exert whatever ability I am possessed of, in your favor, let me entreat you, Gentlemen, on your part, not to take any measures, which, viewed in the calm light of reason, will lessen the dignity, and sully the glory you have hitherto maintained; let me request you to rely on the plighted faith of your Country, and place a full confidence in the purity of the intentions of Congress; that, previous to your dissolution as an Army they will cause all your Accts. to be fairly liquidated, as directed in their resolutions, which were published to you two days ago, and that they will adopt the most effectual measures in their power, to render ample justice to you, for your faithful and meritorious Services. And let me conjure you, in the name of our common Country, as you value your own sacred honor, as you respect the rights of humanity, and as you regard the Military and National character of America, to express your utmost horror and detestation of the Man who wishes, under any specious pretences, to overturn the liberties of our Country, and who wickedly attempts to open the flood Gates of Civil discord, and deluge our rising Empire in Blood. By thus determining, and thus acting, you will pursue the plain and direct road to the attainment of your wishes. You will defeat the insidious designs of our Enemies, who are compelled to resort from open force to secret Artifice. You will give one more distinguished proof of unexampled patriotism and patient virtue, rising superior to the pressure of the most complicated sufferings; And you will, by the dignity of your Conduct, afford occasion for Posterity to say, when speaking of the glorious example you have exhibited to Mankind, "had this day been wanting, the World had never seen the last stage of perfection to which human nature is capable of attaining."

Source: "George Washington: Speech to the Officers," Rhodehamel, ed, *The American Revolution: Writings from the War of Independence*, pp. 781-85.

Check Your Understanding II

➤ Circle the letter of the correct answer and use what you've read to answer the questions.

1. What was the mood of the officers when George Washington first arrived at the Temple of Virtue on March 15, 1783?

- A optimistic
- B solemn
- C disturbed
- D furious

2. What caused George Washington to decide that he had to attend his officers' meeting?

3. Which word BEST describes how George Washington felt about the unauthorized call for a meeting of the officers?

- A sensitive
- B unaffected
- C displeased
- D good

4. In your own words, describe how Washington characterized Major John Armstrong and his plan.

5. Washington emphasizes in his speech that the officers should regard him as a

- A friend of the Army
- B distressed General
- C man who is indifferent to their interests
- D common countryman

6. According to Washington, Major Armstrong proposed that if the Army did not receive pay even after peace, it should

- A disband
- B move to another country
- C remain armed and demand justice from Congress
- D send an emissary to the British in New York

7. How did Washington feel about Congress and what important advice did he give his officers?

Writing Workshop: Expository Essay II

Writing Prompt

Read the following quotation:

“Patience is a virtue.”

- Prudentius

The quotation given above is from the “Psychomachia” [“Conflict of the Soul”], which was written by Aurelius Prudentius Clemens, a popular Roman author who lived from the middle of the fourth century to the early fifth century and was greatly influenced by the Bible. Think carefully about how George Washington urged his officers to be patient, to give Congress more time to get the funds it needed to provide the Army with pay.

WRITE an essay explaining the importance of patience.

Be sure to

- clearly state your thesis
- organize and develop your ideas effectively
- choose your words carefully
- use correct grammar, mechanics, and spelling

Prewriting

- Using a separate sheet of paper, brainstorm key ideas and supporting details for your essay. Then organize them into an outline.

Drafting

- Write a first draft of your expository essay.

Revising and Editing

- Work with a partner to evaluate your expository essay. Use the following questions and prompts to guide the evaluation.

Revising the draft:

Does the essay have a clear introduction, body, and conclusion?

Does the introduction state a clear thesis?

Are the main ideas strongly related to the thesis?

Is the progression of ideas logical and well controlled?

Is the essay thoughtful and engaging?

Does the writer use details and examples to support the ideas?

Are there effective transitions (linking words and phrases)?

Are the sentences purposeful, varied, and well controlled?

What does the writer do best?

What suggestions or revisions do you have?

Editing the draft:

- Circle or highlight any specific spelling, grammar or usage errors.

Final Draft

- Write a final draft of your expository essay.

Writing Prompt

Write an essay explaining the importance of being patient. Be sure to state your thesis clearly in the beginning of your essay, use specific examples and relevant details to support each idea you present, and choose words that are precise and can be clearly understood by the reader.

Grading Your Essay

Read the questions you see below. Then reread your essay and circle the letters that best describe your essay. After that, look at the grading instructions beneath the last question and write the grades you earned next to each question. Finally, meet with your teacher to discuss the grade your essay was given.

- 1. Which description BEST describes the organizational structure of your essay?**
 - A It is clear and relates to the thesis.
 - B It is mostly clear, but there are parts that seem unrelated to the thesis.
 - C It is not clear and many parts seem unrelated to the thesis.

- 2. Which description BEST describes the progression of ideas in your essay?**
 - A It is logical and well controlled.
 - B It is generally clear, but not always unified.
 - C It lacks clarity and control.

3. Which description BEST describes how well you developed your essay?

- A I provided specific facts, details, and relevant examples that supported my thesis.
- B I provided facts, details, and examples, most of which support my thesis.
- C I provided few facts, details and examples that support my thesis.

4. Which description BEST describes the style of your essay?

- A My essay maintains a formal tone, precise words, and effective transitions.
- B My essay may use a formal tone, but my word choice may be general or imprecise. Some of my transitions are effective.
- C My essay does not establish a formal tone, its vocabulary is limited, and some of its sentences are awkward.

5. Which description BEST describes how well you edited your essay for grammar, mechanics, and usage?

- A There are few, if any, grammar, mechanics, and usage errors in my essay.
- B There are some grammar, mechanics, and usage errors in my essay.
- C There are many grammar, mechanics, and usage errors in my essay.

Next to each 'A' you circled, write a '5' (exceptional). Next to each 'B' you circled, write a '3' (proficient). Next to each 'C' you circled, write a '1' (inadequate).

Additional Resources

- Link to a video of Professor James Kirby Martin's lecture on the Newburgh Conspiracy that was given to the Society of the Cincinnati:
Library.fora.tv/2014/10/24/George_Washington_and_the_Newburgh_Conspiracy

- Link to an article about the Newburgh Conspiracy by a retired U.S. Army colonel that appeared in *American Heritage* magazine:
www.americanheritage.com/users/james-w-wensyel

- Link to the article "The Rise and Fall of the Newburgh Conspiracy: How George Washington and his Spectacles Saved the Republic":
www.varsitytutors.com/earlyamerica/milestone-events/rise-fall-newburgh-conspiracy

- Link to a transcript of a February 27, 1783, letter from Joseph Jones of Virginia to George Washington warning him that a plot is afoot:
rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/default.xqy?keys=FOEA-print-01-02-02-4732

- Link to a transcript of the Newburgh Address:
Teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/the-newburgh-address

- Link to a full transcript of George Washington's speech to his officers on March 15, 1783, that was produced by the National Archives:
Founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/99-01-02-10840

- Link to the original handwritten copy of George Washington's speech to his officers on March 15, 1783, with a brief account of the Newburgh Conspiracy and its end written by the Massachusetts Historical Society:
www.masshist.org/database/1742

- Link to a brief article about the Newburgh Conspiracy:
www.revwar75.com/ob/newburgh.htm

- Link to a PDF file of excerpts from *Swords in Their Hands: George Washington and the Newburgh Conspiracy*, a book about the plot:
www.americanheritage.org/docs/Swords%20in%20Their%20Hands%20-%20Dave%20Richards%20Excerpts%20Teachers%20w%20Intro.pdf