

Washington Leads a New Nation

The Big Idea

President Washington and members of Congress established a new national government.

Main Ideas

- In 1789 George Washington became the first president of the United States.
- Congress and the president organized the executive and judicial branches of government.
- Americans had high expectations for their new nation.

Main Idea 1:

In 1789 George Washington became the first president of the United States.

- Americans saw **George Washington** as an honest man and a hero of the Revolution.
 - Many Americans wanted him to be president.
- Electors from the 11 states that had passed the Constitution met in January 1789 to vote.
 - They formed a group called the **electoral college**: a body of electors who represent each state's vote in choosing the president.
 - They selected Washington unanimously and picked John Adams to be vice president.
- First Lady **Martha Washington** entertained at social events.

Women in the New Nation

-Some believed that women should play a greater role in the new nation than Martha Washington did.

-Others believed that women played an important role just by teaching their children to be good- citizens.

-Some hoped that more women would receive an education, because few families provided much education for their daughters.

-Most women in the early republic managed their households and worked hard inside or outside the home to support their families.

Main Idea 2: Congress and the president organized the executive and judicial branches of government.

Executive Branch

- The new government would set **precedents**, or examples, for future action.
- The First Congress created executive departments.
- The president's cabinet served as his advisers.
- Alexander Hamilton was chosen secretary of the treasury, and Thomas Jefferson, secretary of state.

Judicial Branch

- Congress passed the **Judiciary Act of 1789** to set up the federal court system.
- The act created three levels of federal courts and defined powers.
- It set up federal district courts and circuit courts of appeals.
- The president nominated federal judges.

Main Idea 3: Americans had high expectations of their new government.

- The United States had 4 million people in 1790.
- Most were farmers, who wanted fair tax laws and the right to settle western lands.
- Merchants, laborers, and craftspeople wanted help with their businesses.
- The first capital was New York City– a trade center and economic hub of the nation, that had 33,000 people and was growing rapidly.