



## Excerpts from Washington's Farewell Address of 1796



“In contemplating the causes which may disturb our Union, it occurs as a matter of serious concern, that any ground should have been furnished for characterizing parties by geographical discriminations, Northern and Southern, Atlantic and Western; whence designing men may endeavor to excite a belief that there is a real difference of local interests and views. One of the expedients of party to acquire influence, within particular districts, is to misrepresent the opinions and aims of other districts. You cannot shield yourselves too much against the jealousies and heart burnings which spring from these misrepresentations; they tend to render alien to each other those who ought to be bound together by fraternal affection....”

1. What is the main idea of this first excerpt?
2. Interpret the phrase, “*they tend to render alien to each other those who ought to be bound together by fraternal affection....*”:

“...I have already intimated to you the **danger of parties in the State**, with particular reference to the founding of them on geographical discriminations. Let me now take a more comprehensive view, and warn you in the most solemn manner against the baneful effects of the spirit of party generally...”

3. What is the main idea of this excerpt?

“**The alternate domination of one faction over another**, sharpened by the spirit of revenge, natural to party dissension, which in different ages and countries has perpetrated the most horrid enormities, is itself a frightful despotism... The disorders and miseries which result gradually incline the minds of men to seek security and repose in the absolute power of an individual ....” (Despotism: Total rule by one person; aka-Tyranny!)

4. Summarize President Washington's predictions on the effects of political parties.

“Promote then, as an object of primary importance, **institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge**. In proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, **it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened. ...**”

5. Summarize the main idea of this excerpt:
6. Why did George Washington feel that the general population needed to be educated?

“As a very important source of strength and security, **cherish public credit**. One method of preserving it is to use it as sparingly as possible, **avoiding occasions of expense by cultivating peace**, but remembering also that timely disbursements to prepare for danger frequently prevent much greater disbursements to repel it, avoiding likewise the accumulation of debt, not only by shunning occasions of expense, but by vigorous exertion **in time of peace to discharge the debts** which unavoidable wars may have occasioned, **not ungenerously throwing upon posterity the burden which we ourselves ought to bear. ...**” (Posterity: Future generations)

7. Identify President Washington’s economic goals for the United States.

“Observe **good faith and justice towards all nations**; cultivate **peace and harmony with all**. ... 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.”

8. Summarize the advice that George Washington gives to Americans regarding foreign nations.

Using the excerpts above, create a list of precedents that President Washington suggested for the United States and future Presidents:

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