

## George Washington's Farewell Address

WallBuilders/David Barton outline and a select dictionary <https://wallbuilders.com/george-washingtons-farewell-address/>

### OUTLINE

- Retirement from office.
  - He realizes people must be thinking about his replacement, therefore he declines re-election.
  - He has thought it through, and feels like it is in everyone's best interest.
  - He wanted to retire earlier, but foreign affairs and advice from those he respected caused him to "abandon the idea."
  - Now that everything is calm, he is persuaded that the people will not disapprove of this "determination to retire."
  - He is convinced his age forces retirement, and he welcomes the opportunity.
  - He offers gratitude for the people's support.
  - He offers a blessing "that Heaven may continue to you the choicest tokens of its beneficence. . ."
- Scope of the Address.
  - His sentiments are for the people's "frequent review," he wanted us to read and re-read the Address.
  - His only motive was as a friend.
  - He felt no need to recommend a love of liberty – it was already there.
- Unity of Government.
  - Unity is a "main pillar" of "real independence":
    - for the support of "tranquility at home"
    - for "your peace abroad"
    - for "your safety"
    - for "your prosperity"
    - for "that very liberty which you so highly prize."
  - Common attributes of unity:

- same religion
- manners
- habits
- political principles.
- The most commanding motive is to preserve the “union of the whole.”
- The North, South, East, and West all depend on each other.
- Unity leads to greater strength, resources, and security.
- Unity will help “avoid the necessity of . . . overgrown military establishments” and will be the main “prop of your liberty.”
- He questions the patriotism of anyone who tries to “weaken its bands.”
- It was unity that brought two valuable treaties:
  - with Great Britain
  - with Spain.
- Government for the whole – via the Constitution – is indispensable; not just alliances between sections.
  - the adoption of the Constitution was an improvement on the former “essay.”
  - respect for its authority, compliance with its laws, and acquiescence in its measures are fundamental maxims of true liberty.
  - the people’s right to alter constitutions is the basis of our political system.
- Spirit of Party.
  - Parties are “potent engines” that men will use to take over the “reins of government.”
  - Washington warns against parties’ “baneful effects”:
    - leads to the absolute power of an individual
    - “discourage and restrain” the spirit of party
    - leads to “jealousies and false alarms”
    - “animosity of one part against another”
    - can lead to “riot and insurrection”

- opens “door to foreign influence and corruption”
  - “it is a spirit not to be encouraged.”
- Spirit of Encroachment.
  - Leads to “a real despotism.”
  - There is a necessity of “reciprocal checks in the exercise of political power.”
  - If a problem arises, correct it by an amendment, not by “usurpation.”
- Religion and Morality.
  - Are “indispensable supports” for “political prosperity.”
  - Are the “firmest props of the duties of Men and Country.”
  - The oaths in our courts would be useless without “the sense of religious obligation.”
  - “And let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion.”
  - “Reason and experience both forbid us to expect, that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.”
  - “Promote, then, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge.”
- Debt.
  - “Avoid occasions of expense by cultivating peace . . . .”
  - “Timely disbursements to prepare for danger” are better than “greater disbursements to repel it.”
  - Avoid debt: in time of peace, pay off debts..
  - Public opinion should “cooperate” with their representatives to pay off debt.
  - Some taxes are necessary even though “inconvenient and unpleasant.”
- Foreign Policy.
  - We should exercise “good faith and justice towards all nations.”
    - “religion and morality enjoin this conduct”
    - we should be guided by “an exalted justice and benevolence.”

- Replace “inveterate antipathies” (hatred) and passionate attachments with “just and amicable feelings.”
- - “passionate attachments” produce a variety of evils
  - these attachments will lead you into “quarrels and wars”
  - they will also lead to favoritism, conceding “privileges denied to others.”
- Foreign “attachments” are “alarming” because they open the door to foreigners who might:
  - “tamper with domestic factions”
  - “practise the arts of seduction”
  - “mislead public opinion”
  - influence “Public Councils.”
- “Foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of Republican Government.”
- “The great rule of conduct for us”: “as little political connection as possible.”
  - we should fulfill obligations, then stop
  - we should not get involved in Europe’s affairs.
- Our “detached and distant situation . . . enables . . . a different course.”
- “Steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world.”
- However, we may have “temporary alliances, for extraordinary emergencies.”
- Maintain “a liberal intercourse with all nations.”
- Conclusion.
  - Washington hopes his counsel will:
    - “help moderate the fury of party spirit”
    - “warn against the mischiefs of foreign intrigue”
    - “guard against the impostures of pretended patriotism.”
  - He believes himself to be guided by the “principles which have been delineated” above.
  - A “neutral position” is the best course to take regarding the “subsisting war in

Europe.”

- that neutrality is the right course has been “admitted by all.”
- our “motive has been to endeavor to gain time for our country to settle and mature” until America has “command of its own fortunes.”
- Washington asks “the Almighty” to correct any unintentional errors or defects from his administration.
- He looks forward to retiring and enjoying “good laws under a free government.”
- Closing words.

### **VOCABULARY**

acquiescence – agreement without protest. Consent.

actuate – put into motion. Motivate.

admonish – to counsel against. Caution.

alienate – to cause to become unfriendly. Exclude.

alliance – a formal pact between nations. Partnership.

animosity – bitter hostility. Hatred.

antipathies – strong feelings of hatred or opposition. Aversions.

apostate – abandoning one’s principles. Defective or Traitorous.

appellation – a name or title.

appertaining – relating to.

apprise – to give notice; to inform. Notify.

arduous – demanding great care, effort, or labor. Difficult.

artifices – subtle but base deceptions. Tricks.

assuage – make less burdensome or painful. Relieve.

auspice – protection or support. Authority.

auxiliary – giving assistance or support. Supplementary.

avert – to turn away. Prevent.

baneful – causing death, destruction, or ruin. Harmful.

belligerent – inclined or eager to fight. Hostile.

beneficence – a charitable act or gift. Kindness.

benevolence – an inclination to do kind or charitable acts. Goodness.

benign – tending to promote well-being. Beneficial.

beseech – to call upon earnestly. Request.

bias – to cause to have a prejudice view. Distort.

conceded – acknowledged as true, just, or proper. Given.

conjure – to call upon or entreat solemnly. Call upon.

consigned – turned over to another's charge. Delivered.

consolation – the comforting in time of grief, defeat, or trouble. Comfort.

contemplation – thoughtful observation. Meditation.

countenanced – to give or express approval to. Approved.

covertly – concealed, hidden, or secret.

cultivate – promote the growth of. Develop.

deference – yielding to the wishes of another. Consideration.

deliberate – planned in advance. Intentional.

delineated – depicted in words or gestures. Outlined.

despotisms – political system with one man in absolute power. Oppression.

diffidence – the quality of lacking self-confidence. Humility.

diffusing – causing to spread freely. Spreading.

diffusion – the process of diffusing. Spreading.

diminution – reduction. Decrease.

disbursements – money paid out. Expenditures.

discriminations – acts based on prejudice. Prejudices.

dispositions – an habitual tendency or inclination. Tendencies.

diversifying – giving variety to. Varying.

dubious – causing doubt or uncertainty. Uncertain.

edifice – a building of imposing appearance or size. Structure.

efficacy – power to produce a desired effect. Effectiveness.

encroach – to advance beyond proper limits. Intrude.

enmities – deep-seated mutual hatred. Hostilities.

ennobles – raises in rank. Elevates.

envenomed – poisoned or embittered. Poisoned.

evinced – to show clearly or convincingly. Demonstrated.

exemption – a freedom from obligation or duty. Freedom.

exigencies – situations needing immediate attention. Necessities.

expedients – something adopted to meet an urgent need. Schemes.

facilitating – making something easier. Assisting.

fallible – capable of making an error. Imperfect.

felicity – great happiness or bliss. Happiness.

fervently – having great emotion or warmth. Earnestly.

hypothesis – something considered to be true. Assumption.

impostures – deceptions through false identities. Deceptions.

inauspicious – unfavorable.

incongruous – not consistent with what is logical, customary, or correct.  
Disagreeable.

indispensable – not able to be done away with. Essential.

indissoluble – impossible to break or undo. Indestructible.

inducement – something that leads to action. Influence.

indulgent – granted as a favor or privilege. Agreeable.

inferred – figured out from evidence. Understood.

infidelity – lack of loyalty. disloyalty.

insidiously – spreading harm in a subtle way. Dishonestly.

instigated – stirred up or urged on. Aroused.

intercourse – communication between persons or groups. Business.

intimated – to announce or proclaim. Spoken.

intractable – hard to manage or govern. Stubborn.

intrigue – secret schemes or plots. Affairs.

intrinsic – having to do with the very nature of a thing. Natural.

inveterate – firmly established and deeply rooted. Established.

inviolate – not violated or changed. Unchanged.

invigorated – given strength and vitality. Energized.

inviolable – not able to be violated. Unchanging.



laudable – deserving approval. Praiseworthy.

magnanimous – noble of mind and heart. Idealistic.

maxim – fundamental principle or rule of conduct. Principle.

mitigate – to make less severe or intense. Weaken.

monarchy – a state ruled by an absolute ruler, such as a king or emperor.

obligatory – legally or morally binding. Required.

oblivion – the condition of being completely forgotten. Nonexistence.

obstinate – hard to manage, control, or subdue. Uncontrollable.

odium – a strong dislike for something. Disfavor.

pernicious – causing great harm and destruction. Destructive.

perpetrated – to be guilty of bringing something about. Committed.

perpetual – lasting for eternity. Unending.

plausible – appearing to be valid, likely, or acceptable. Believable.

posterity – future generations.

precarious – lacking in security and stability. Uncertain.

precedent – an act used as an example in future situations.

predominant – having great importance, influence, or authority. Important.

procured – obtained or acquired.

progenitors – a direct ancestor. Ancestors.

propensity – a tendency to do something. Tendency.

propagated – cause to multiply. Spread.

provocation – a reason to take action.

prudence – good judgment and common sense. Wisdom.

recompense – payment for something done. Repayment.

requisite – essential or required.

scrupulously – to do something with ethical considerations. Conscientiously.

seduction – the act of leading away from proper conduct. Misleading.

solicitude – the state of being concerned or eager. Concern.

specious – appearing to be true, but being false. Deceptive.

subservient – under the control of something. Subject.

subvert – to undermine the character, morals, or allegiance of. Overthrow.

suffrages – votes.

supposition – the idea that something is true. Idea.

tenure – the terms under which something is held. Terms.

tranquility – the state of being free from disturbance. Peace.

transient – passing away with time. Temporary.

umbrage – offense. Resentment.

usurpation – the seizing of power by force and without legal right. Overthrow.

vicissitudes – changes or variations. Changes.

vigilance – alert watchfulness. Watchfulness.

virtuous – morally excellent and righteous. Pure.

weal – the welfare of the community. Welfare.

