



Day 3 French and Indian War  
70 Minutes

Future Founding Fathers

# Lesson Plan: Future Founding Fathers During the French and Indian War

## ***Washington & Franklin Before They Were Famous***

**Grade Level:** 6–8 (works for 9 with extension)

**Time:** One class period (50–55 minutes)

**Unit Context:** French and Indian War / Road to the American Revolution

### **Anchor Resources:**

- PowerPoint: *Washington & Franklin in the French and Indian War*
- Scripted slide narration (provided)
- **George Washington at 22** online/printable reading comprehension (differentiated)
- “Rookie Mistakes” relate-to writing prompt

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## Lesson Objectives

Students will be able to:

1. Explain the roles of George Washington and Benjamin Franklin during the French and Indian War
2. Describe how early experiences and mistakes shaped Washington’s leadership
3. Compare military leadership and political/organizational leadership
4. Connect historical experiences to their own lives through reflective writing

# Essential Question

How did early experiences during the French and Indian War help shape future American leaders?

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## Key Vocabulary

- French and Indian War
- Ohio River Valley
- Fort Necessity
- Unity
- Leadership
- Surrender

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## Materials

- Projector or smartboard
- PowerPoint slideshow
- Printed or digital reading comprehension packets
- Writing paper or notebooks
- Optional: highlighters or annotation tools

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## Lesson Procedure

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### 1. Warm-Up / Do Now (5 minutes)

**Prompt (projected):**

*Can someone become a strong leader without ever making mistakes? Why or why not?*

### Student Task:

- Write 2–3 sentences independently
- Brief pair-share or whole-class share

### Teacher Purpose:

This primes students to think about **failure as part of growth**, which is central to Washington's story.

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## 2. Direct Instruction: PowerPoint Mini-Lesson (18–20 minutes)

<https://learnaboutamerica.com/fiwar/washfrank.pptx>

Use the PowerPoint with the **approved slide-by-slide script**. This portion establishes **historical context** and introduces both leaders. Alternatively, you can read (or have students read) the article here:

<https://learnaboutamerica.com/american-history/french-and-indian-war/events-of-the-french-and-indian-war/future-founding-fathers-washington-and-franklin-in-the-french-and-indian-war>

### Slide 1 – Title Slide

#### Washington & Franklin in the French and Indian War

##### Teacher Script:

Today we're going to learn about two men who would later become famous Founding Fathers—George Washington and Benjamin Franklin—but we're going to look at them **before they were famous**. During the French and Indian War, both men were just beginning their political and leadership careers. Their experiences during this war helped shape the leaders they would later become.

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### Slide 2 – Background: The French and Indian War

##### Key Points on Slide:

- Fought between Britain and France
- Control of land in North America
- Native American nations were involved
- War began in 1754

##### Teacher Script:

The French and Indian War was fought between Britain and France over control of land in North America. Native American nations were involved on both sides, often forming alliances to protect their own lands. The war officially began in 1754, and it played a major role in shaping American history—even though the colonies were still part of the British Empire at the time.

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## Slide 3 – George Washington: A Young Officer

### Key Points on Slide:

- From Virginia
- Sent to the Ohio River Valley
- Ordered to warn French to leave
- Tensions soon turned violent

### Teacher Script:

George Washington was a young man from Virginia—only 21 or 22 years old—when he was sent into the Ohio River Valley. His job was to deliver a message telling the French to leave land claimed by Britain. Instead of calming the situation, tensions quickly increased, and Washington found himself in the middle of a growing conflict.

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## Slide 4 – Washington and Early Fighting

### Key Points on Slide:

- Clashed with French forces in 1754
- Built Fort Necessity
- French attacked the fort
- Washington was forced to surrender

### Teacher Script:

In 1754, Washington and his troops clashed with French forces. He built a small fort called Fort Necessity, but it was poorly placed in a low, muddy area. The French attacked, and Washington was forced to surrender. This was a serious mistake and an embarrassing moment—but it became an important learning experience.

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## Slide 5 – Washington’s Impact

### Key Points on Slide:

- Gained valuable military experience
- Learned frontier warfare
- Prepared for future leadership
- Later led colonial forces in the Revolution

### Teacher Script:

Even though Washington lost at Fort Necessity, the experience helped him grow. He learned about frontier warfare, leadership, and the importance of preparation. These lessons stayed with him and helped prepare him for his future role leading colonial forces during the American Revolution.

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## Slide 6 – Benjamin Franklin: A Different Kind of Leader

### Key Points on Slide:

- Writer, printer, and political leader
- Did not fight in battles
- Helped support the war effort
- Focused on organization and cooperation

### Teacher Script:

Benjamin Franklin was not a soldier. Instead, he was a writer, printer, and political leader. He supported the war effort in different ways—by organizing supplies, communicating ideas, and encouraging cooperation among the colonies. Franklin believed that unity was just as important as fighting.

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## Slide 7 – The Albany Plan of Union

### Key Points on Slide:

- Proposed in 1754
- Plan to unite the colonies
- Shared defense against France
- Plan was not approved

**Teacher Script:**

In 1754, Franklin proposed the Albany Plan of Union. It was an early idea to unite the colonies under one government for defense against France. Although the plan was not approved by the colonies or Britain, it showed that Franklin was already thinking about unity—years before the American Revolution.

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## **Slide 8 – “Join, or Die”**

**Key Points on Slide:**

- Famous cartoon by Benjamin Franklin
- Showed a snake cut into pieces
- Each piece represented a colony
- Warned colonies must unite

**Teacher Script:**

Franklin also created one of the most famous political images in American history—*Join, or Die*. The cartoon shows a snake cut into pieces, with each piece representing a colony. At the time, people believed a snake could come back to life if reassembled. Franklin was warning the colonies that they must unite or fail.

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## **Slide 9 – Franklin’s Impact**

**Key Points on Slide:**

- Encouraged colonial cooperation
- Helped gather supplies for soldiers

- Promoted unity between colonies
- Ideas influenced later independence

**Teacher Script:**

Franklin's ideas helped bring the colonies closer together. He encouraged cooperation, helped gather supplies for soldiers, and promoted unity. Although he wasn't fighting battles, his ideas had a long-lasting influence and helped lay the groundwork for American independence.

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## Slide 10 – Comparing Their Roles

**Key Points on Slide:**

- Washington: military leadership
- Franklin: political and organizational leadership
- Both roles were important
- Together shaped America's future

**Teacher Script:**

Washington and Franklin took very different paths. Washington learned leadership through military experience and mistakes. Franklin used ideas, writing, and organization to bring people together. Both roles were important, and together, their experiences during the French and Indian War helped shape the future of the United States.

## 3. Guided Discussion (5 minutes)

**Discussion Questions:**

- Why do you think Britain trusted Washington with responsibility even though he was young?
- Why might Franklin's ideas have been just as important as soldiers and weapons?
- Which kind of leadership do you think is harder—and why?

**Purpose:**

This solidifies understanding before independent work.

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## 4. Culminating Activity 1: George Washington at 22 Reading Comprehension (15–18 minutes)

Students complete the **George Washington at 22** reading comprehension activity. This activity has an adjustable lexile level from 750 to 1000. It contains a reading passage and seven multiple choice questions. It can be printed or completed online.

<https://learnaboutamerica.com/american-history/french-and-indian-war/comprehension-and-writing-activities/george-washington-at-22-online-or-printable-reading-comprehension>

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## 5. Culminating Activity 2: “Rookie Mistakes” Writing Prompt (15-20 minutes)

<https://learnaboutamerica.com/american-history/french-and-indian-war/comprehension-and-writing-activities/rookie-mistakes>

### Writing Prompt Focus:

Students connect Washington’s early failure at Fort Necessity to a time when they were **new at something and made mistakes**.

When George Washington was young and just beginning his military career, he faced real challenges that showed he was still learning how to lead. In 1754, during the early days of the French and Indian War, Washington built a makeshift fort at a place called Fort Necessity. Because he chose a poor location, did not fully understand the terrain, and was outnumbered by the French forces, his army was forced to surrender—a rare defeat that taught him important lessons about planning, strategy, and leadership.

Now think about a time in your own life when you were new at something—like starting a sport, joining a club, learning a musical instrument, trying a difficult subject, or taking on a job for the first time. In a paragraph, write about your own “rookie mistakes.” Be sure to include: 1. What you were trying (the new activity or responsibility) 2. A mistake you made or something that didn’t go well at first 3. What you learned from that mistake or experience 4. How that learning helped you improve the next time

### Support Options:

- Sentence starters for struggling writers
- Option to write about a fictional or real character
- Oral brainstorming before writing

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## 6. Closure / Exit Ticket (3–5 minutes)

Students respond to **one** prompt:

- *How did the French and Indian War help prepare Washington or Franklin for the future?*
- *Why are mistakes important for learning and leadership?*

Collect writing or assign completion as homework.