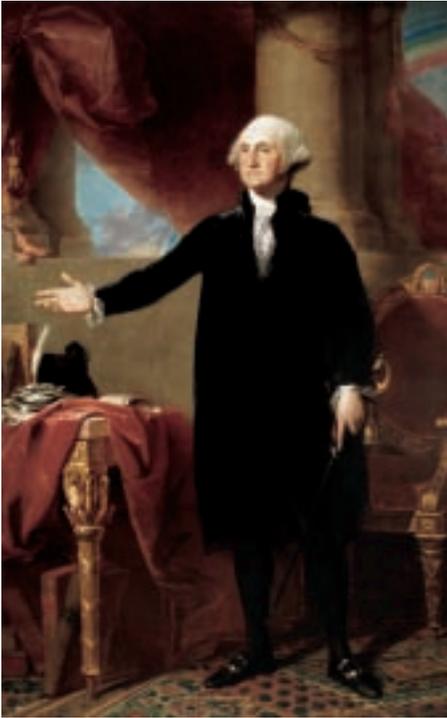


3-B George Washington (the Lansdowne Portrait), 1796

Gilbert Stuart (1755–1828)



3-B Gilbert Stuart (1755–1828), *George Washington*, 1796. Oil on canvas, 97 ½ x 62 ½ in. (247.6 x 158.7 cm.). National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; acquired as a gift to the nation through the generosity of the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation. © 2008 Smithsonian Institution. Courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery.

The Art

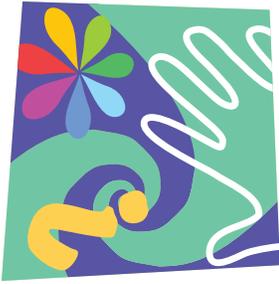
This life-sized portrait shows George Washington as a great leader and the father of his country, the United States of America. Washington is wearing a black velvet suit and powdered hair, or a wig, pulled back in a ponytail, which was the popular style of that time. His arm is stretched out as if giving a speech. The room he is standing in is grand, with a large column, a chair with a medallion of the stars and stripes on the back, and a beautiful table and carpet.

The Artist

Gilbert Stuart was born in Newport, Rhode Island. His father was from Scotland. Like many painters of his time, Stuart sailed to England to study the traditional European style of painting. He lived in England for a total of 18 years. In that time, he became known for working best from living models. He also became known for layering his colors of paint one over the other to make the images more real and the skin of his models more natural. Stuart was able to make the people he was painting feel very comfortable, which helped him paint them as they really were. In Stuart's time, there were no copying machines or assembly lines, and the printing press was just starting to print local newspapers. Artists had to make their own copies by hand or through engravings.

The Historical Perspective

When Stuart settled in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the largest city and temporary capital of the new nation, he tried to get hired to paint President George Washington. By doing so, he could become famous and get more work. Stuart knew many people would want a picture of Washington. He painted three portraits of the first president. An engraved version of one of Stuart's portraits of Washington appears on America's one-dollar bill. The painting captures the American ideals of freedom and democracy with the Great Seal of the United States on the chair and the Federalist Papers resting on the table beside him. To the left, shrouded by a red curtain, are clouds, and to the right are the vibrant colors of a rainbow—a symbol of promise and hope.



Conversations and Teaching Activities

Head Start Children ages 3 to 5

Encourage children to look closely at the artwork. Introduce new vocabulary and find books that relate to the painting.

Describing



- ✓ Look at this painting. What do you see?
- ✓ Who does this man look like to you? What kind of man do you think he is?
- ✓ What does a president do?
- ✓ How old do you think Washington looks in this portrait? He was in his sixties. Why?
- ✓ What do you see around Washington's neck? His wrists?
- ✓ Do you think our president today dresses like Washington?
- ✓ What is a portrait?

Connecting and Extending

Introducing Vocabulary

curved	patent leather
dollar bill	portrait
drapes	posed
ink stand	president
leader	ruffle
medallion	shadow
orator	quill

Analyzing and Interpreting

Ask the following questions to stimulate thinking and discussion:

- The title of this painting is *George Washington*. Why do you think it is named that?
- What in the picture tells you this is a very important man?
- What do you think he is thinking?
- Do you think this painting was done quickly or that it took a long time?
- How would you feel if someone painted a portrait of you? What would you want them to put in the portrait with you?
- How is this portrait of Washington like the one on a dollar bill?
- Are there other things you would like to say about this painting?



Books

Arthur Meets the President by Marc Brown (Street Books, 1991)
Arthur wins an essay contest and gets to meet the president.

George Washington's Breakfast by Jean Fritz (Putnam and Grosset Group, 1998)
A young boy tries to learn what George Washington ate for breakfast. As he searches for clues, the boy learns personal facts about Washington.

George Washington's Teeth by Deborah Chandra and Madeleine Comora (Farrar Straus Giroux, 2003)
This book uses a rhyme to describe Washington's struggle with bad teeth. There also is a timeline based on diary entries and other sources.

Books continued on page 23



Connecting and Extending continued...

Related Family Literacy Experiences

Parents and children can:

- ✓ take turns drawing each other's portraits while posing in different ways.
- ✓ find the different presidents located on coins and paper money.
- ✓ take turns playing the game "Follow the Leader."

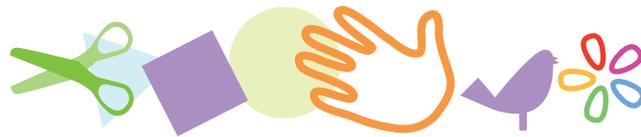


Books continued...

If You Grew Up with George Washington by Ruth Belov Gross (Scholastic, 1993)
This book describes colonial life in Virginia during the time George Washington grew up.

Pass the Buck: A Fun Song about the Famous Faces and Places on American Money by Michael Dahl (Coughlan Publishing, 2003)

This book explains why certain historical people and places have been honored by appearing on American coins and paper money. The book is interspersed with verses of original song lyrics to be sung to the tune of "This Old Man."



Related Educational Experiences

- ✓ Look for /at portraits in magazines, picture books, storybooks.
- ✓ Draw or paint a self-portrait or portrait of a friend.
- ✓ Give children cameras and let them take portrait photographs of their friends.
- ✓ Pass around samples of fabrics (including velvet). Let children describe how the fabrics feel. Compare and contrast the materials.
- ✓ Discuss presidents. Do children know the name of the president of the United States? Do they know the names of any other presidents? Have they seen the picture of Abraham Lincoln in the *Picturing America* set of artworks?
- ✓ Talk about the American flag and other symbols, such as the Statue of Liberty and the Seal of the United States. Have the children seen any other paintings with flags, e.g., *Allies Day*? Where have children seen flags? Walk around the community and look for American flags in front of post offices, schools, courts, state capital buildings, City Hall, etc.

The ideas listed are just a few of the many activities that could be used to introduce or extend children's learning. Your knowledge of your children and families supports your ability to ensure positive learning experiences and outcomes for students. As an educator, you probably have ideas for books, songs, finger plays, and activities that you have thought of when introducing or extending children's learning related to the "A Head Start on Picturing America" artworks. We encourage you to confer with your colleagues, visit the local library or bookstore, and share your ideas with others.