**George Washington’s Farewell Address (1796) – Group One**

In 1792, George Washington nearly decided to retire from public life. He sat down with his friend, James Madison, to write a farewell letter to the nation. However, shortly there after he changed his mind and decided to run for re-election. When he was re-elected by a unaninmous Electoral College vote, all the written notes were set aside.

However, four years later Washington set down a tradition that was followed until 1940. This tradition was to serve as President only for two terms and then step aside for someone new. In 1940, Franklin Roosevelt became the first president to break this tradition by running for a third term. Roosevelt won this election in a landslide, and was even elected a fourth time in 1944.

So in 1796 when Washington decided to retire he again took out the notes he and James Madison had written four years earlier. This time, Washington worked with his original notes and the thoughts of Alexander Hamilton and John Jay to write his farewell.

Although the resulting work is known as one of Washington’s greatest ‘speeches’, he never spoke the words out loud to the public. Rather, this farewell address appeared first in a Philadelphia newspaper, and then seven days later, it appeared in the *Independent Chronicle*, a Boston newspaper.

The following is an excerpt from this address. You and your group need to read it, discuss it, and determine the main idea. What is Washington telling the nation? Why is he telling them that?

**“Citizens, by birth or choice, of a common country, that country has a right to concentrate your affections (*love)*. The name of American, which belongs to you in your national capacity, must always exalt the just pride of Patriotism, more than any appellation(*geographical name*) derived (*comes from)* from local discriminations (*differences)*.**

**With slight shades of difference, you have the same religion, manners, habits, and political principles. You have in a common cause fought and triumphed together; the Independence and Liberty (*freedom)* you possess are the work of joint counsels (*groups)*, and joint efforts, of common dangers, sufferings, and successes.**

**While, then, every part of our country thus feels an immediate and particular interest in Union (*being as one)*, all the parts combined cannot fail to find in the united mass of means and efforts greater strength, greater resource, proportionably greater security from external danger, a less frequent interruption of their peace by foreign nations;**

**And, what is of inestimable (*can’t be counted)*  value, they must derive from Union an exemption (*free from)*from those broils and wars between themselves, which so frequently afflict neighbouring countries not tied together by the same governments, which their own rivalships alone would be sufficient to produce, but which opposite foreign alliances, attachments, and intrigues would stimulate and embitter.”George Washington’s Farewell Address (1796)- Group 2**

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**I have already intimated to you the danger of parties in the state, with particular reference to the founding of them on geographical discriminations (*differences)*. Let me now take a more (*bigger/wider)*  view, and warn you in the most solemn(*serious)* manner against the baneful effects of the spirit of party.**

**The alternate domination (*ruling)* of one faction(*group)* over another, sharpened by the spirit of revenge, natural to party dissension (*disagreement)*, which in different ages and countries has perpetrated the most horrid enormities, is itself a frightful despotism (*ruling of someone)*. But this leads at length to a more formal and permanent despotism. The disorders and miseries, which result, gradually incline the minds of men to seek security and repose in the absolute (*complete)* power of an individual; and sooner or later the chief (*head)* of some prevailing faction, more able or more fortunate than his competitors, turns this disposition to the purposes of his own elevation, on the ruins of Public Liberty (*freedom)*.**

**Without looking forward to an extremity of this kind, the common and continual mischiefs of the spirit of party are sufficient to make it the interest and duty of a wise people to discourage and restrain it.**

**It serves always to distract the Public Councils, and enfeeble the Public Administration. It agitates the Community with ill-founded jealousies and false alarms; kindles the animosity (*anger)* of one part against another, foments occasionally riot and insurrection. It opens the door to foreign influence and corruption, which find a facilitated access to the government itself through the channels of party passions. Thus the policy and the will of one country are subjected to the policy and will of another.**

**George Washington’s Farewell Address (1796)- Group 3**

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**Of all the dispositions (moods) and habits, which lead to political prosperity (wealth), Religion and Morality are indispensable (necessary) supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of Patriotism, who should labor to subvert (overthrow) these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of Men and Citizens. The mere Politician, equally with the pious (religious/moral) man, ought to respect and to cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connexions with private and public felicity (happiness).**

**Let it simply be asked, Where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation (duty) desert the oaths, which are the instruments of investigation in Courts of Justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition (thought), that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded (accepted as to true) to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect, that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.**

**It is substantially true, that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government. The rule, indeed, extends with more or less force to every species of free government. Who, that is a sincere friend to it, can look with indifference upon attempts to shake the foundation of the fabric ?**

**George Washington’s Farewell Address (1796)- Group Four**

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The following is an excerpt from this address. You and your group need to read it, discuss it, and determine the main idea. What is Washington telling the nation? Why is he telling them that?

**It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent (*forever)* alliances (*partnerships)* with any portion of the foreign world; so far, I mean, as we are now at liberty to do it; for let me not be understood as capable of patronizing (*encouraging*) infidelity (*abandonment*) to existing engagements (*treaties)*. I hold the maxim no less applicable to public than to private affairs, that honesty is always the best policy. I repeat it, therefore, let those engagements be observed in their genuine sense. But, in my opinion, it is unnecessary and would be unwise to extend them.**

**Taking care always to keep ourselves, by suitable establishments, on a respectable defensive posture, we may safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies.**

**Harmony, liberal intercourse (*trade)* with all nations, are recommended by policy, humanity, and interest. But even our commercial (*trade)* policy should hold an equal and impartial hand; neither seeking nor granting exclusive favors or preferences. Establishing conventional rules of intercourse (*trading)* in order to give trade a stable course, to define the rights of our merchants, and to enable the government to support them, the best that present circumstances and mutual opinion will permit, but temporary, and liable to be from time to time abandoned or varied, as experience and circumstances shall dictate.**

**Constantly keeping in view, that it is folly (*foolish)* in one nation to look for disinterested favors from another; that it must pay with a portion of its independence for whatever it may accept under that character; that, by such acceptance, it may place itself in the condition of having given equivalents for nominal favors, and yet of being reproached with ingratitude for not giving more. There can be no greater error than to expect or calculate upon real favors from nation to nation. It is an illusion, which experience must cure, which a just pride ought to discard.**