



# **The Rules of Civility and Decent Behaviour in Company and Conversation**

*George Washington*



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George Washington (February 22, 1732]– December 14, 1799) was the first President of the United States (1789–1797), the Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army during the American Revolutionary War, and one of the Founding Fathers of the United States. He presided over the convention that drafted the United States Constitution, which replaced the Articles of Confederation and remains the supreme law of the land. Washington was elected president as the unanimous choice of the electors in the elections of both 1788–1789 and 1792. He oversaw the creation of a strong, well-financed national government that maintained neutrality in the wars raging in Europe, suppressed rebellion, and won acceptance among Americans of all types. His leadership style established many forms and rituals of government that have been used since, such as using a cabinet system and delivering an inaugural address. Further, his retirement after two terms and the peaceful transition from his presidency to that of John Adams established a tradition that continues today. Washington was hailed as "father of his country" even during his lifetime. Washington was born into the provincial gentry of Colonial Virginia; his wealthy planter family owned tobacco plantations and slaves. After both his father and older brother died when he was young, Washington became personally and professionally attached to the powerful William Fairfax, who promoted his career as a surveyor and soldier. Washington quickly became a senior officer in the colonial forces during the first stages of the French and Indian War. Chosen by the Second Continental Congress in 1775 to be commander-in-chief of the Continental Army in the American Revolution, Washington managed to force the British out of Boston in 1776, but was defeated and almost captured later that year when he lost New York City. After crossing the Delaware River in the dead of winter, he defeated the British in two battles, retook New Jersey and restored momentum to the Patriot cause. Because of his strategy, Revolutionary forces captured two major British armies at Saratoga in 1777 and Yorktown in 1781. Historians laud Washington for his selection and supervision of his generals, encouragement of morale and ability to hold together the army, coordination with the state governors and state militia units, relations with Congress and attention to supplies, logistics, and training. In battle, however, Washington was repeatedly outmaneuvered by British generals with larger armies. After victory had been finalized in 1783, Washington resigned as Commander-in-chief rather than seize power, proving his opposition to dictatorship and his commitment to American republicanism. He devised a new Federal government of the United States. Elected unanimously as the first President of the United States in 1789, he attempted to bring rival factions together to unify the nation. He supported Alexander Hamilton's programs to pay off all state and national debt, to implement an effective tax system and to create a national bank (despite opposition from Thomas Jefferson).



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