

## Objectives

- Discuss the issues that led to the Revolutionary War.
- Compare and contrast artworks to understand how artists employ symbols in art
- Create a portrait of a fellow classmate including details and symbols

## Introduction

Begin by showing the class a portrait of George Washington by Gilbert Stuart, and ask them to identify the subject. Ask the class what they think George Washington was like as a person. Was he kind? Stern? Loud? Talkative?

Once the students have discussed Washington's personality and characteristics, explain that artists wanted to tell stories about their subjects, and describe their personalities through their art. Since people could not always go and see the president in person or watch him on TV like we can today, artists tried to show details of the subject's life in the portraits they painted. To prove this point to them, Now show them *George II* and ask them how their perception towards George Washington changes when placed in a sudsy bathtub.

Now ask them, what kinds of symbols do you think you would see in the portrait of a king? Royal portraitists would often depict kings and other nobility with symbols of their wealth and power. Crowns, gold, jewels, military badges and emblems, exotic souvenirs (perhaps from far reaching parts of an empire) would often be depicted in these portraits to ennoble and aggrandize the subjects, and that's the kind of portrait you might see of King George III.

How is this related to the circumstances that led to the Revolutionary war? You may now use this time to discuss the issues surrounding the burden of taxes that were placed on the citizens of the colonies to feed the wealth of the monarchy in England. Because of these burdens, the colonies wanted to govern themselves, electing citizens that were more relatable and less ambitious for wealth and power.

## Learning Activity Part One

Now that the class has talked about the different ways that George Washington is portrayed and the different ways a king like George III might be portrayed, break the students up into groups to discuss the following questions:

- What are the big differences between the portrait of a leader like George Washington and the portrait of a king?



Lee Deffebach, *George II*, 1967, oil on canvas

## Materials

- Images of Portraits (See Images from the Museum)
- Paper
- Pencils
- A color medium of student's choice (crayons, markers, paint, etc.)

## Images from the Museum

- Lee Deffebach, *George II*
- Gilbert Stuart, *George Washington Portrait*
- Cyrus Edwin Dallin, *Portrait of John Hancock*
- Cyrus Edwin Dallin, *Paul Revere*

## Utah Core Standards

Social Studies

Standard II Objective 2:

Evaluate the Revolutionary war's impact on Self Rule.

Visual Arts:

Standard 3 Objective 2:

Discuss, evaluate, and choose symbols, ideas, subject matter, meanings and purposes for student's own artworks.

Social Studies:

Standard IV. Objective 2: Investigate pressing issues facing the world.

- What's different about the clothes that they are wearing? Do we see the same items in both portraits?
- Why would we rather portray George Washington this way rather than the way we might see a portrait of King George?

Once they've finished, lead a class discussion about these questions. Now, for more of an introduction to the art project, show the class more examples of portraits of revolutionary leaders, like *Paul Revere* or *Portrait of John Hancock*, both by Cyrus Edwin Dallin. What clues do these portraits give that show what these people were like and what they did? For example, the quill in John Hancock's hand, referencing Hancock's role as signer of the Declaration of Independence.

## Learning Activity Part Two

Finally, for the art project, taking what the children have learned about including symbolic details in a portrait, have the students pair up and pretend that they have been hired by one another to paint each other's portraits. Their assignment will be to interview one another about their families, their interests, extra-curricular activities, etc. and then create a portrait of that student including symbolic details (For example, a student interested in sports might be portrayed with a basketball). The students are to include at least three symbolic details in the portrait.



Cyrus E. Dallin, *Paul Revere* 1899, Bronze

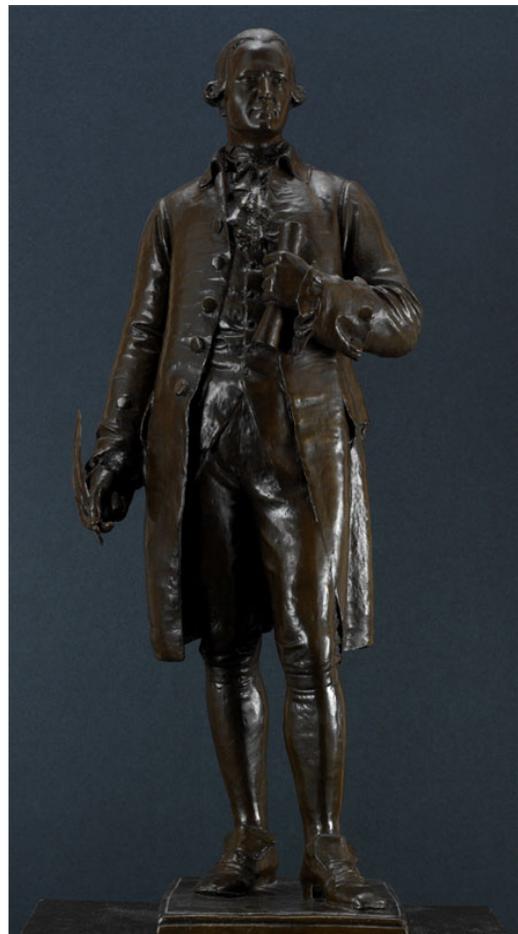
## Assessment:

Have the students write a brief paragraph describing what details they were portraying and how they were portraying them. They will then be assessed on the content of their paragraphs and the completeness of their final portraits. Points will also be deducted if the students fail to include three meaningful details.

## Optional Extension Activity

For more advanced students, the project can be modified so that instead of interviewing classmates, they may choose from a specific list of revolutionary leaders, research their lives, and then paint the portraits, including the symbolic details. Suggested leaders might include:

- Benjamin Franklin
- Thomas Jefferson
- John and Samuel Adams
- Thomas Payne

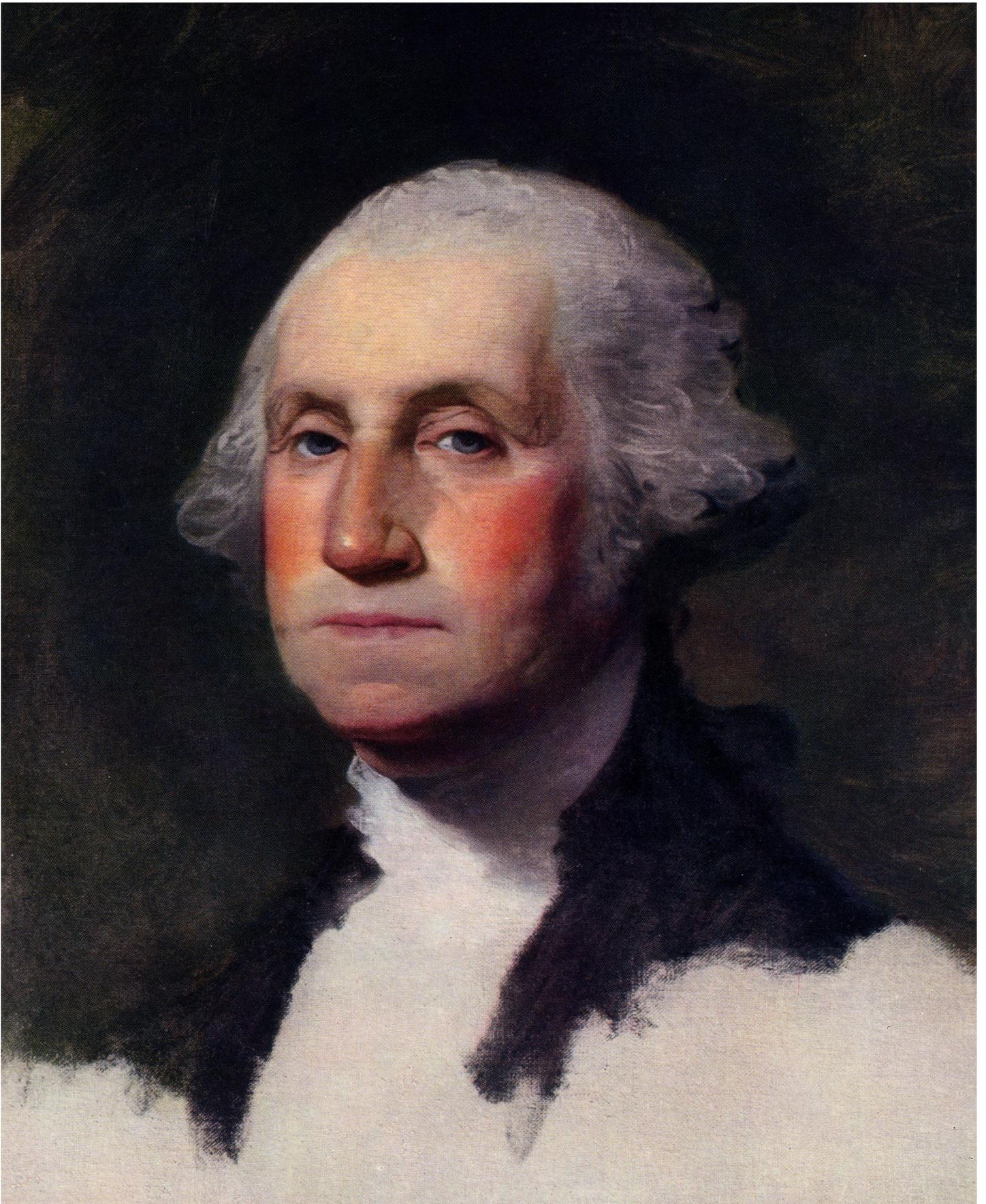


Cyrus E. Dallin, *Portrait of John Hancock*, 1896, Bronze

Images



Lee Deffebach, *George II*, 1967, oil on canvas



Gilbert Stuart, *Portrait of George Washington*, 1796, oil on canvas  
\*not part of SMA's Collection



Cyrus E. Dallin, *Paul Revere*, 1899, Bronze



Cyrus E. Dallin, *Portrait of John Hancock*, 1896, Bronze