

### **Mr. President, Who Will You Choose?**

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The president's cabinet helps in the decision making and directs the day-to-day operations of the executive branch of the government. While the first president had only five members in the cabinet, more recent presidents have had far larger cabinets.

Following is a list of some of the various cabinet offices held over the years. Which five of these do you think Washington would have had on his first cabinet?

State	Commerce	Housing and Urban Development
Labor	Defense	Transportation
Energy	Justice	Attorney General
Education	War	Health and Humane Services
Postmaster General	Treasury	Health, Education, and Welfare
Interior	Navy	

President George Washington had the same problem as every other president when it came to selecting the people to help him take on the job of chief executive. Who should he ask to serve on his cabinet and in what jobs should he place them? Because his cabinet had only five members, the choices, even among the people that Washington had known and worked with, were many. Following is the list of Washington's cabinet offices and brief descriptions of some people who might have been considered.

## Mr. President, Choose Who Will Serve?

Pretend that you are George Washington and make your choices and placements for your cabinet. Before you begin, you will need to answer one question. In choosing a cabinet, Mr. President, which factors do you think are important? To help you answer this question, nine of the factors Washington might have considered are identified on the following list. Rank order the factors (plus one factor of your own) to get your mind-set to making your final selections among the ten finalists for your Cabinet.

- q \_\_\_\_\_ Represent all regions of the country on the cabinet
- q \_\_\_\_\_ Choose the people who are best qualified for the jobs
- q \_\_\_\_\_ Represent the small states as well as the large states.
- q \_\_\_\_\_ Select friends who are loyal and true to you.
- q \_\_\_\_\_ Favor people who have great political influence.
- q \_\_\_\_\_ Have people with the most experience in government.
- q \_\_\_\_\_ Reward those who gave outstanding military service.
- q \_\_\_\_\_ Have people who have opinions and views similar to your own.
- q \_\_\_\_\_ Include people who have outstanding accomplishments.
- q \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

### Cabinet offices

State

Treasury

Attorney General

War

Postmaster General

## **Potential Cabinet Members**

1. Boston bookseller; forced to flee Boston in disguise in 1774; Revolutionary War general; served as an artillery officer with Washington's army; developed a reputation for being able to move equipment and supplies quickly; known as sound, solid, and dependable.
2. Revolutionary War general; served with distinction and bravery; considered a strong, brilliant leader in battle who men would die for; fought guerilla-type warfare from the swamps of his native state for a considerable period of time while British were in control of the area.
3. Strong-minded, clear speaking champion of individual rights; opposed to a central government that is too strong; extensive experience in dealing with other nations; took a leadership role in Congress during the Revolution.
4. Supporter of a strong national government and a strong executive branch (may even want a king rather than a president); revolutionary war officer of Washington's personal staff and strong supporter of Washington; good organizer and thorough planner; wants to establish a national bank and be sure that the new nation has a strong economic base.
5. Supporter of strong central government; southerner from a powerful state; lawyer by occupation; took a leadership role in the approval of the U. S. Constitution; keen observer and careful record keeper.
6. Elder statesman with ambassadorial experience; had a strong role in both the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution; extremely well liked; inventive and scientifically curious; write extremely well and has many publications.
7. Outspoken critic of the U. S. Constitution and defender of states' rights; spirited public speaker whose words caused many to support the Revolution; experienced as a state governor and long-time member of the state legislature; has real vision for the future.
8. Lawyer from a powerful northern state; took a key role in the effort to gain separation from England and helped in the writing of the Declaration of Independence; considered uncompromising and unyielding but a man of principle; advocate of a strong central government.
9. Boston merchant; Harvard graduate; served in the Revolution, first as a captain and later as a colonel; strong supporter of the U.S. Constitution, first Commissioner of the U. S. Treasury, 1785-1789.

10. Virginia lawyer, aide de camp to Washington; governor of Virginia; member of Congress; attended Constitutional Convention but refused to sign; urged the ratification of the Constitution on the grounds that the union was necessary.

The Students may want to compare their choices to Washington's and know the names of the people who were candidates. This is one case where it is really not so important that their choices line up with the first president's.

**Actual Selections (First Term)**

- |                      |                        |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| q State              | Thomas Jefferson (3)   |
| q Treasury           | Alexander Hamilton (4) |
| q War                | Henry Knox (1)         |
| q Attorney General   | Edmond Randolph (10)   |
| q Postmaster General | Samuel Osgood (9)      |

**Not Chosen by Washington**

- Francis Marion (2)
- James Madison (5)
- Benjamin Franklin (6)
- Patrick Henry (7)
- John Adams (8)