Washington's First Advisors

How the first cabinet positions took shape

5.C.7.1.A "creation of cabinet positions"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two actions Congress took, circle two actions Washington took, and number the four cabinet members named in the passage.

A Team for a New President

1 In 1789, the new United States government had many jobs, from paying debts to dealing with other countries. President George Washington could not manage every job alone. Congress created executive departments to handle major areas of work. Washington chose people to lead them, and the Senate approved his choices. These leaders helped carry out laws and gave Washington advice when he faced hard decisions.

2 Thomas Jefferson became secretary of state and worked on relations with other countries. Alexander Hamilton became secretary of the treasury and worked on the nation's money and debts. Henry Knox became secretary of war and dealt with the army. Congress also created the job of attorney general. Edmund Randolph filled it and gave the president legal advice. Each official brought knowledge of a different problem to Washington's meetings.

3 Washington asked these officials for advice, sometimes meeting with them as a group. Their group became known as the cabinet. The Constitution did not require a cabinet. Congress had created the jobs, but Washington made a practice of seeking advice from their leaders. Later presidents kept this practice. The cabinet helped the president connect big decisions to the work of the new government.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What did Congress create to give the new government leaders for different kinds of work?

2. How did Washington and the Senate each help choose the leaders?

3. If Washington needed advice about debts and relations with other countries, which two leaders could help him? Explain each choice.

4. How did Washington's actions turn these officials into a cabinet even though the Constitution did not require one?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine the president needs advice about protecting national forests. In three or four sentences, invent a new cabinet position, explain its work, and describe how Congress, the president, and the Senate would help add the department and its leader.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 5 · 5.C.7.1.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two actions Congress took, circle two actions Washington took, and number the four cabinet members named in the passage. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What did Congress create to give the new government leaders for different kinds of work?	**Congress created executive departments and the job of attorney general.**
2	How did Washington and the Senate each help choose the leaders?	**Washington chose the leaders, and the Senate approved his choices.**
3	If Washington needed advice about debts and relations with other countries, which two leaders could help him? Explain each choice.	**Alexander Hamilton worked on money and debts. Thomas Jefferson worked on relations with other countries.**
4	How did Washington's actions turn these officials into a cabinet even though the Constitution did not require one?	**He asked the officials for advice, sometimes as a group, and made this a practice that later presidents kept.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Congress could create a Department of Forests to protect national forests. The president could choose a secretary of forests, and the Senate would vote on whether to approve that choice. The secretary would help manage forest protection work. This leader could advise the president on how to respond to fires.

Accept answers that distinguish Congress's creation of positions from the president's selection of leaders and the Senate's approval. For Your Turn, accept any invented position with a clear forest-related duty and an advisory role.