A Careful Choice

How Washington weighed the nation's interests

5.C.7.2.B "left a legacy of cautious foreign policy based on national interest."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two choices Washington made about other countries. Circle a U.S. need or risk that helped shape each choice.

Washington and a War Across the Ocean

1. In 1793, France and Britain went to war. Both countries mattered to the young United States. France had helped the Americans win independence, while American merchants traded with Britain. Some Americans wanted to help France. Others favored Britain. President George Washington faced a hard choice: joining either side could pull the new nation into a costly war before it was ready to fight.

2. Washington announced that the United States would stay neutral, meaning it would not take either side in the war. He wanted Americans to keep trading while the nation grew stronger. Staying neutral did not mean ignoring problems with Britain. British troops still held forts on land the United States claimed. Rather than start a war, Washington sent John Jay to negotiate with Britain.

3. The agreement called Jay's Treaty helped avoid war, and Britain agreed to leave those forts. Many Americans disliked the treaty because it did not settle every dispute. Near the end of his presidency, Washington warned against permanent alliances, long-term promises that might draw the country into other nations' fights. His choices left a legacy: weigh the country's needs and risks before taking sides abroad.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did joining either France or Britain pose a risk to the United States?

2. How did staying neutral serve the nation's interests?

3. How did Washington handle the forts held by British troops without rushing into war?

4. How did Washington's warning about permanent alliances fit his earlier choices?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine two countries are arguing over a sea route used by U.S. fishing boats. One asks the United States to send warships to fight. In 3 or 4 sentences, advise a president what to do, name one U.S. interest, and explain how your plan follows Washington's cautious approach.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 5 · 5.C.7.2.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two choices Washington made about other countries. Circle a U.S. need or risk that helped shape each choice. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did joining either France or Britain pose a risk to the United States?	**Joining either side could pull the young United States into a costly war before it was ready to fight.**
2	How did staying neutral serve the nation's interests?	**It helped the United States avoid the war, keep trading, and grow stronger.**
3	How did Washington handle the forts held by British troops without rushing into war?	**He sent John Jay to negotiate with Britain. Jay's Treaty helped avoid war, and Britain agreed to leave the forts.**
4	How did Washington's warning about permanent alliances fit his earlier choices?	**Like neutrality and negotiation, avoiding permanent alliances could keep the United States from being drawn into other nations' wars.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would not send warships into the fight right away. U.S. fishing crews need a safe route, so I would ask both countries to let fishing boats pass and try to reach an agreement. This follows Washington's cautious approach because it protects Americans without rushing into war.

Accept answers that connect a specific choice to a U.S. need or risk stated in the passage. For Your Turn, accept different plans if the student names a U.S. interest and explains a cautious response.