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George Washington's Contributions to the American Revolutionary War

Open-Ended Response Answer Key

1. George Washington's early military experiences, such as serving as a colonel in the Virginia militia during the French and Indian War, provided him with valuable leadership skills and a foundation for his role as commander-in-chief during the American Revolutionary War. His experiences taught him the importance of strategy, discipline, and adaptability in warfare. He also gained an understanding of the challenges faced by colonial forces and the need for strong leadership. Washington's reputation and connections from his earlier service made him a natural choice for leading the Continental Army, as he was already respected and known for his dedication to the colonial cause.
2. The Siege of Yorktown was a decisive battle of the American Revolutionary War. In this siege, George Washington, along with French forces led by General Rochambeau, laid siege to the British forces commanded by General Cornwallis. Washington's strategic leadership played a critical role in the success of the siege. He coordinated the American and French forces effectively, preventing Cornwallis from receiving reinforcements or escape. The surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown in 1781 effectively ended major fighting in the war and set the stage for negotiations leading to the Treaty of Paris in 1783, which recognized American independence.
3. The winter at Valley Forge was a challenging period for the Continental Army. The troops faced extreme cold, food shortages, and disease. George Washington's leadership during this time was essential in maintaining the army's cohesion and morale. He implemented training programs to improve the skills and discipline of his troops. Washington's personal presence and commitment to the cause provided inspiration and a sense



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of unity among the soldiers. Despite the hardships, the army emerged from Valley Forge stronger and better prepared for future campaigns.

4. The Battle of Trenton was a pivotal moment during the American Revolutionary War. George Washington's decision to execute a surprise attack on Hessian forces on December 26, 1776, was a bold and strategic move. Crossing the icy Delaware River in adverse conditions, Washington and his troops achieved victory, boosting American morale. This victory was significant because it demonstrated that the Continental Army could achieve military successes against the British, despite the challenging circumstances they faced. It also encouraged more recruits to join the American cause, strengthening the army's ranks.
5. George Washington is often referred to as the "Father of His Country" due to his pivotal role in the founding of the United States. His leadership during the American Revolutionary War, where he served as the commander-in-chief of the Continental Army, was instrumental in securing American independence. Washington's leadership extended beyond the battlefield; he presided over the Constitutional Convention, which resulted in the U.S. Constitution. As the first president of the United States, he set important precedents for the office and the nation, including the peaceful transfer of power. His integrity, dedication to democratic principles, and commitment to the nation's well-being are key reasons for his enduring legacy.

