From One to All
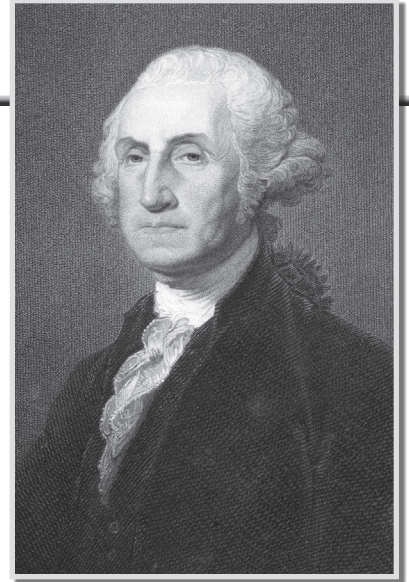
The History of Presidents' Day

1732 George Washington was born on February 22. He lived until December 14, 1799.

1800 George Washington's birthday became a national day of remembrance for the first president.

1879 Washington's Birthday became a federal holiday in Washington, DC only. This holiday was on February 22.

1885 Washington's Birthday became a federal holiday for all of the United States.

1968 The Uniform Monday Holiday Act was passed. This bill stated that many federal holidays would take place on Mondays rather than the actual date of the holiday. Washington's Birthday was one of these holidays.

1971 The Uniform Monday Holiday Act took effect. Washington's Birthday would now be observed on the third Monday in February. Abraham Lincoln, who was also born in February (February 12, 1809) would also be honored on this day.

mid-1980s Many Americans started calling the Washington's Birthday holiday Presidents' Day. Presidents' Day is intended to honor all US presidents. However, the name of the federal holiday did not change. It is still called Washington's Birthday.

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Read the timeline.
Answer the questions on another sheet of paper.

1. When was George Washington born?
2. When did his birthday become a national day of remembrance?
3. What happened in 1879?
4. What did the Uniform Monday Holiday Act do? How did this affect the Washington's Birthday holiday?
5. When is Washington's Birthday now celebrated?
6. Is Washington's Birthday still a federal holiday? How do you know?
7. How are Presidents' Day and Washington's Birthday the same? How are they different?