

Winter Encampment at Valley Forge – 1777-1778

During Reading: Highlight specific details that indicate conditions the soldiers' endured.

For George Washington and the Continental Army the first two years of the American Revolution had not gone well. The troops had withdrawn from Boston and retreated from New York City in 1775. In October of 1777, Washington had been unable to stop General Howe who marched his army into the national capital of Philadelphia. There had been a victory for the Patriots at Trenton and Princeton, but overall the army had suffered many hardships.

Under these circumstances, Washington was having a hard time keeping men enlisted in the Continental Army. Some of the men signed on for one or two years, but most men had enlisted for a period of nine months. These men frequently stayed their term of nine months, returned home and did not re-enlist. Sadly, some men chose to desert the Continental Army.

To add to uncertain times, members of Congress did not trust Washington. Some felt as if he were choosing to retreat rather than fight. This made his position as the leader of the Continental Army uncertain during the years at Valley Forge.

With Howe encamped at Philadelphia, Washington decided to set up camp at Valley Forge for the winter months. This was 18 miles northwest of Philadelphia. Valley Forge was not big enough to be considered even the smallest of villages. It was a few fieldstone houses and a mill for forging iron. The Quaker farms in the area offered the possibility of food for the men and they were close enough to Philadelphia to watch the British.

In 1777, the week before Christmas, the men were to build huts. There were 16x14 with a door at one end and a fireplace at the other. There were no windows in the log huts. Each hut slept approx. 12 men. Of course, there were no beds; just straw for beds on mud floors. Naturally, cold and smoke were problems. These huts were the soldiers' homes for the next six months through the winter months at Valley Forge.

Miraculously, most of the soldiers survived the winter. Although many became ill, when food and supplies became scarce. In December of 1777, victory seemed a long way off to many and unlikely to others. In 1778 the Continental Army learned they would be receiving help from the French. This was a real turning point in the war.

Many men, including General George Washington searched their hearts for “the right thing to do” that winter at Valley Forge. As you will see in the photographs, the conditions were poor, but something gave the men the will to continue their quest for victory. Search the photographs for any trace of evidence that would have given them this strength.

Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

Art and Photography Analysis Guide

Step 1. Observation

For each painting or photograph, study the image for 2 minutes. Form an overall impression of the image and then examine individual items. Next, divide the photo into quadrants and study each section to see what new details become visible. Use the chart below to list people, objects, and activities in the photograph.

	Activities	People	Objects
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

Select one painting or photograph and complete the steps below.

Step 2. Inference

Based on what you have observed above, list three things you might infer from the image.

1.

2.

3.

Step 3. Questions

What questions does this image raise in your mind?

Where could you find answers to them?



General George Washington and the Marquis de Lafayette surveying the troops camped at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, in the winter of 1777–78, as depicted in a 19th-century lithograph. *Credit: The Granger Collection, New York*

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/media/72192/General-George-Washington-and-the-marquis-de-Lafayette-surveying-the>



"Washington at Valley Forge" by Edward P. Moran
<http://waquote.wordpress.com/page/2/>



George Washington at Valley Forge

Thompkins Matteson - 1854

<http://www.the-athenaeum.org/art/detail.php?ID=16298>





Washington and Lafayette at Valley Forge, by John Ward Dunsmore, c. 1907.

<http://kids.britannica.com/comptons/art-169340/Washington-and-Lafayette-at-Valley-Forge-by-John-Ward-Dunsmore?&articleTypeId=31>





The headquarters of George Washington at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:George_Washington_HQ_Valley_Forge.jpg



Soldier's Hut – Valley Forge

<http://slagshouseofstats.com/JimSatori/JimSatori.html>



Soldier's Hut Interior – Valley Forge
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/mrjmartin/4245961585/>