

KWL



New information often builds upon previous facts or concepts. Therefore, activating previous knowledge sets the stage for new learning to take place. Also, the amount of prior knowledge a student has about a topic determines how quickly he or she can read a passage or chapter. If the student sees familiar names or vocabulary, he or she is more likely to skim, covering the material more quickly. A good strategy to activate prior knowledge and establish a purpose for reading is **KWL**.

The **K** in the strategy represents *knowledge*. Students — as individuals, in small groups, or as part of the whole class — may be asked to generate a list representing what they already know about a topic. (Some teachers begin by asking students to activate prior knowledge individually. Then each student may share her or his list with one other student or a small group of students. Finally, each pair or group shares its list with the class. Then, a class list of what all students know is posted.)

The **W** in the strategy represents what students *want* to know. Students define what they would like to know about the topic before they read. Defining what they want to know sets a purpose for their reading. These ideas may be written in the form of a question. (Again, after asking individual students to make a list, teachers may want to combine the questions and make a class list.)

The **L** in the strategy represents what students *learned*. The L column may be completed during reading or after reading. During reading, students may take notes to record new information or they may record answers to their questions. After reading, teachers may use a variety of activities to allow students to demonstrate what they have learned. Activities include traditional tests, writing assignments, oral or written reports, or special projects.

To Teach the KWL strategy, you will need a copy of Selection 2 and Graphic Organizer 2. Follow the steps in the left column and allow the students to complete the first two columns (K and W) about the life of George Washington. Then have the students read Selection 2. As they read or when they have completed reading the selection, have them complete Column 3 (L) on the organizer.

1. Tell students about the topic of the selection, in this case, the life of George Washington.
2. Ask students to brainstorm a list of information they already know about George Washington.
3. Have each student record her or his information in the first column (K) on the form.
4. Ask students to think about what information they would like to know about George Washington.
5. Have students list what they would like to know in Column 2 (W). Have them phrase what they want to know as questions.
6. Ask students to read Selection 2. As they read, have them take notes and record information they did not know before they read the passage. They should record this information in Column 3 (L).
7. Have students identify which of their “before reading” questions were answered.
8. Have students identify which of their “before reading” questions are still unanswered.

K	W	L
Born in Virginia Chopped down a cherry tree First president of the United States Indian fighter	1.What did George Washington do before he became president? 2.In what battle did he fight? 3.Why was he chosen president?	

To apply the skill, assign a reading in the textbook. Before reading, have students use Graphic Organizer 2 and complete Columns K and W. Have them complete Column 3 (L) after they have read the material.

To extend the activity, have students brainstorm where they might find the answers to their unanswered questions. Then have them conduct additional research to find those answers

Selection 2 - The Life of George Washington

George Washington, the first president of the United States, was born February 22, 1732, in Virginia. Raised by a family of planters, Washington was taught the morals, manners, and body of knowledge becoming of an eighteenth-century Virginia gentleman.

As a young man, Washington was interested in military affairs as well as the western expansion of the United States. At age 16, he helped survey the western Virginia lands that were owned by Thomas Lord Fairfax. At age 22, he was commissioned a lieutenant colonel in the Virginia militia. In that capacity, he engaged in the early skirmishes of the French and Indian War.

After the British victory in the French and Indian War, Washington spent nearly twenty years living the life of a large landowner. He managed the lands around his home at Mount Vernon. During this time he also married Martha Dandridge Custis and served in the Virginia state legislature.

As a landowner and politician, Washington sided with his fellow planters who believed they were being exploited by the British government. The restrictions and taxes placed on the southern gentlemen fueled growing resentment. This resentment continued to grow until the hostilities finally erupted into a war for independence.

With the clouds of war growing, Washington was selected as one of Virginia's representatives to the Second Continental Congress, which met

in Philadelphia in 1775. He was also elected commander-in-chief of the Continental Army. In that capacity, he led the colonial troops against King George III and the British government.

During the American Revolution, Washington's troops were out-trained and outmanned, but the colonial commander developed a strategy to avoid face-to-face confrontation when possible. Washington chose to harass the British troops and strike unexpectedly in order to keep them off guard. The American Revolution lasted six years. The last major battle took place at Yorktown where the colonial troops, aided by their French allies, defeated British General Cornwallis.

After the American Revolution, Washington hoped to retire to his beloved Mount Vernon. He soon realized, however, that the new constitution of the United States - the Articles of Confederation - was weak and ineffective. Because of his love for his country, Washington was instrumental in calling for a convention to be held in Philadelphia in 1787 to amend the Articles. This meeting became the Constitutional Convention, where the form of government we have today was created. The newly formed Electoral College unanimously chose George Washington as the nation's first president. He served two terms before retiring to Mount Vernon, where he died on December 14, 1799.

Graphic Organizer 2

K	W	L