

## *James Gallagher as George Washington, 1992*

dye-coupler print on paper  
H. 19 x W. 18.5 inches  
Group I

## **David Graham b. 1952**



### **Looking Questions**

What do you see?

Is this a painting or a photograph?

Who is the man?

Where is he standing?

When do you think this image was made? Why do you think so?

Is this picture serious or funny? How so?

What do you think the artist is saying?

### **Vocabulary**

Area  
Battle of Trenton  
Contrast  
Irony  
Landscape  
Mean  
Median  
Mode  
Photography  
Range  
Scale  
Surrealism  
Washington's Crossing

## **Art Activities**

- As a class, discuss this photograph using the “Looking Questions.” Working in pairs, imagine what James Gallagher, the person pretending to be George Washington, was thinking when he was posing. Write several sentences or sentence fragments in thought balloons and attach them to photocopies of the photograph.
- View and discuss *George Washington Crossing the Delaware* by Emanuel Leutze ([www.metmuseum.org/explore/gw/el\\_gw.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/explore/gw/el_gw.htm)). Compare this painting to *James Gallagher as George Washington*.
- Take turns dressing up as George Washington (or other famous people from the colonial era) and being photographed. Decide what the background and setting will be—the colonial era or today? How does the setting affect your photograph?
- Look at other artworks that are humorous; e.g., the large, soft sculptures of Claes Oldenburg ([www.artnetweb.com/oldenburg/soft.html](http://www.artnetweb.com/oldenburg/soft.html)), *Vermeer with Model* by Guy Johnson ([www.nicholasroukes.com/sub/ar301.htm](http://www.nicholasroukes.com/sub/ar301.htm)), and *Fruit Descending a Staircase* by David Gilhooly ([www.nicholasroukes.com/sub/ar208.htm](http://www.nicholasroukes.com/sub/ar208.htm)). Create a humorous picture of your own, starting with a reproduction of a famous artwork and changing a key part of it; e.g., the background, what a figure is wearing, or the size of an ordinary object in it.

National Standards: NA-VA.K-4.1, 4.3, 4.5, 4.6.

## **Language Arts Activities**

- Read *Joke's on George* by Michael O. Tunnell (ages 6 through 8), a picture book about an amusing incident that supposedly occurred when Washington visited artist Charles Wilson Peale and politely greeted two of his sons only to discover that he was looking at a realistic painting of them! Discuss different ways that pictures can fool our eyes.
- Read *George Washington's Socks* by Elvira Woodruff (ages 9 through 12), a story about time travel to the Revolutionary era. Create a time line for the adventure that Matthew, Katie, and their friends have when they travel back in time and meet General Washington.
- Read the following two poems about George Washington: “Like Washington” by Helena M. Richardson and “Washington's Birthday” by Margaret E. Sangster (see [www.apples4theteacher.com/holidays/presidents-day/poems-rhymes/index.html](http://www.apples4theteacher.com/holidays/presidents-day/poems-rhymes/index.html)). Write your own poem (rhyming or free verse) or song about George Washington.
- Imagine what it would be like to wake up in another time period. How do you think George Washington would feel if he suddenly found himself in today's world? If he came to visit your school, who and what do you think would surprise him the most? Brainstorm as a class, then create some skits in small groups and present them to the class.
- Make a list of important men and women during the Revolutionary era; e.g., Paul Revere, Abigail Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and Crispus Attucks. Choose one and write a short description explaining what role he or she played in the events of the time.

National Standards: NL-ENG.K-12.1, 12.4, 12.5, 12.12.

## Math Activities

- George Washington had a difficult time providing supplies for his army at Valley Forge. Imagine that you are in charge of buying supplies for your troops. Calculate the numbers of each item needed for a week and the total cost. Use the following figures: corn (6 ears)—\$0.19; sugar (5 lbs.)—\$0.56; fish/meat (10 lbs.)—\$1.50; bread (1 loaf)—\$0.07; tea (1 tin)—\$0.12; vegetables (10 lbs.)—\$0.78. Create a table or graph to organize your data.
- Find the mean, median, mode, and range of the ages of the soldiers in a battalion during the American Revolution using the following information: 11 men were 16 years old; 18 men—17 years; 27 men—18 years; 22 men—19 years; 13 men—32 years; 9 men—36 years.
- Draw a grid 20 squares wide and 25 squares long on graph paper. Using the directions provided at [www.education-world.com/a\\_lesson/dailylp/dailylp/dailylp056.shtml](http://www.education-world.com/a_lesson/dailylp/dailylp/dailylp056.shtml), connect the dots (Students will discover that they have created a profile drawing of George Washington!).

National Standards: NM-NUM.PK-2.1, 2.3; NM-NUM.3-5.2; NM-DATA.3-5.1, 5.2.

## Social Studies Activities

- Why did Washington cross the Delaware in 1776? What happened at the Battle of Trenton? When did Washington spend the winter at Valley Forge? Make a time line of events involving Washington during the Revolutionary War.
- Take a class trip to the Washington Crossing Historic Park. Compare what you learned about George Washington with *James Gallagher as George Washington* by David Graham. What is the most important similarity? The most important difference? Why?
- Is the story about Washington as a boy cutting down a cherry tree true? How is this story like the photograph *James Gallagher as George Washington*? Check out photographs of several other Washington impersonators at [www.classiqueproductions.com/pages/PAGE5A.HTM](http://www.classiqueproductions.com/pages/PAGE5A.HTM). Compare the people and the backgrounds in these photographs with the photograph by David Graham.

National Standards: NSS-USH.K-4.3

## Technology/Graphic Arts Activities

- Reproduce *James Gallagher as George Washington* and replace Washington's face with a digital photo of your face. Draw a new background of a different location.
- Create a PowerPoint presentation of paintings and sculptures of George Washington. Form a group with half of the class and debate the other half about which image is more idealized and which is more realistic.
- Go to [www.georgewashington.si.edu/kids/flash.html](http://www.georgewashington.si.edu/kids/flash.html) to play a game with a portrait of Washington that encourages looking and discovering, in a group or individually.

National Standards: NT.K-12.1, 12.2, 12.4.

## Compare and Contrast

Compare *James Gallagher as George Washington* with *George Washington (Patriae Pater)*, 1824, by Rembrandt Peale ([www.senate.gov/artandhistory/art/artifact/Painting\\_31\\_00001.htm](http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/art/artifact/Painting_31_00001.htm)).

## Cultural Connections

Read aloud *Sundiata* by David Wisniewski (grades 2 through 4), a beautifully illustrated biography of the man who is credited with founding the Mali Empire. Compare the lives and achievements of Sundiata and George Washington.

## Contemporary Connections

What contemporary American leader do you admire? Why? What kind of portrait would you like to see of this person; e.g., a painting, sculpture, photograph? Why?

## At the Michener

Compare the work by Graham with the *Portrait of Edward Hicks*, 1850–1852, by Thomas Hicks. Discuss each subject's historical significance and the context for each of the works.