

Document Based Question (DBQ) Embodying the Nation: George Washington, Abd el-Kader, and Gandhi

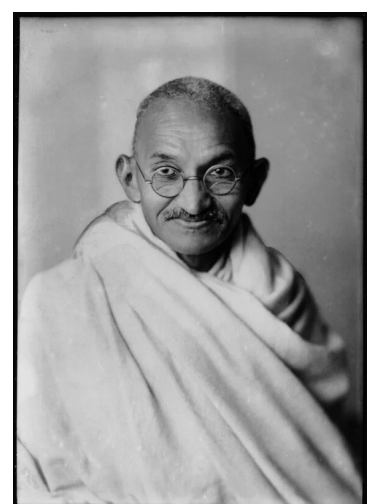
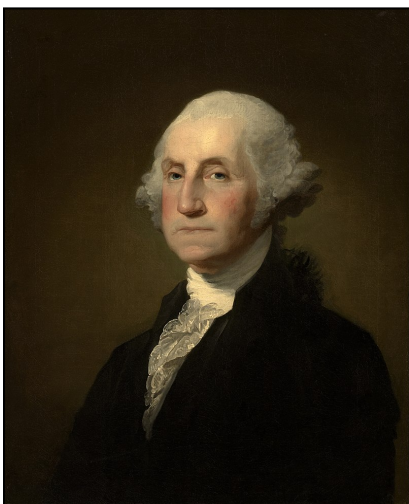
Introduction:

America's George Washington, Algeria's Abd el-Kader, and India's Mohandas Gandhi are all considered to be the "father of the nation" by their respective countries. Abd el-Kader is even called "Algeria's George Washington."

Each leader fought against a stronger military colonial power to achieve their country's independence. Each one had a different set of characteristics and accomplishments that legitimized their claim to lead the anti-colonial movement; and each won acclaim from their enemies as well as their supporters for the strong moral tenor of their leadership.

Washington and Gandhi were successful in their struggle for independence, while Abd el-Kader negotiated an armistice and voluntarily laid down arms to avoid useless suffering. All three still serve as powerful symbols of nationalism and unity. Are the qualities that made them successful leaders in their own times still important characteristics for leaders today?

In this activity, we will think like historians as we compare his methods of leadership to that of the more famous figures of George Washington and Mohandas Gandhi.



Comparing George Washington, Abd el-Kader, and Mahatma Gandhi

George Washington, Emir Abd el-Kader, and Mahatma Gandhi are all very influential figures who fought for the independence of their nations. Analyze the documents to help you to compare the leadership of these three historical figures.

Directions:

Carefully read the following documents.

Answer each question as you go, as these questions will serve as guides to help you answer the final essay prompt:

Compare the methods and policies of Washington, Abd el-Kader, and Gandhi as leaders of their respective nations.

Document 1

Source: Excerpt from a letter to George Mason (fellow “Founding Father” of the United States and neighbor to George Washington), written April 5, 1769. This is seven years before the Declaration of Independence was signed. (From the Mount Vernon Library Online).

"At a time, when our lordly masters in Great Britain will be satisfied with nothing less than the deprivation of American freedom, it seems highly necessary that something should be done to avert the stroke, and maintain the liberty, which we have derived from our ancestors. But the manner of doing it, to answer the purpose effectually, is the point in question. That no man should scruple, or hesitate a moment, to use arms in defence of so valuable a blessing, on which all the good and evil of life depends, is clearly my opinion. Yet arms, I would beg leave to add, should be the last resource, the dernier* resort. Addresses to the throne, and remonstrances** to Parliament, we have already, it is said, proved the inefficacy*** of. How far, then, their attention to our rights and privileges is to be awakened or alarmed, by starving their trade and manufacturers, remains to be tried."

*dernier = French for last

**remonstrances = forceful protests

***inefficacy = failure to do what it meant to do

Questions to help you analyze the excerpt:

1. What is George Washington's opinion on fighting the British?
2. Why do you think that he wants to keep trying to work it out with the British?

Document 2

Source: Excerpt from George Washington's Farewell Address in 1796. He announced his intention of declining a third year in office and gives advice to the American people.

"Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and to cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connections with private and public felicity. Let it simply be asked: Where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths which are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.

Observe good faith and justice towards all nations; cultivate peace and harmony with all.

Religion and morality enjoin this conduct; and can it be, that good policy does not equally enjoin it -- It will be worthy of a free, enlightened, and at no distant period, a great nation, to give to mankind the magnanimous and too novel example of a people always guided by an exalted justice and benevolence. Who can doubt that, in the course of time and things, the fruits of such a plan would richly repay any temporary advantages which might be lost by a steady adherence to it? Can it be that Providence has not connected the permanent felicity of a nation with its virtue? The experiment, at least, is recommended by every sentiment which ennobles human nature. Alas! is it rendered impossible by its vices?"

Questions to help you analyze the excerpt:

1. Are there any vocabulary words you need to define to understand the document? If so, do it below:

2. For George Washington, what qualities does the virtuous nation have?

3. How does George Washington's beliefs about religion impact his leadership?

Document 3

Source: From his headquarters in Mascara, Abd el-Kader dictated an official proclamation of his authority to lead the jihad* against the French colonizers in 1832. (From *Commander of the Faithful*, a biography by John Kaiser.)

"Praise be to God alone and blessings from on high to the Prophet Mohammed after whom there is no other prophet.

To the tribes and to their sheiks,** notables, and ulemas,*** may God enlighten you, guide and direct your counsels and give success to your deeds and actions.

The citizens... have elected me unanimously and appointed me to govern their country. They pledged themselves to obey me in success and in distress, in prosperity and adversity, and to consecrate themselves and their sons and their properties to the great and holy cause of defending our faith and our soil.

We have, therefore, assumed this heavy responsibility, hoping it may be the means for uniting the Muslim community and of preventing dissensions among them and of affording general security to all the inhabitants of the land, of putting an end to lawlessness, and of driving back the enemy who has invaded our country in order to subjugate us.

As a condition of our acceptance, we have imposed on those who have delegated to us the supreme governing power the duty to conform all their actions to the precepts and teaching of the book of God and of administering justice in their various spheres according to the law of the Prophet, to wit: loyally and impartially to the strong and to the weak, to the nobles and the poor this condition has been accepted by them.

We hereby invite you to partake in this pledge, or compact, between ourselves and these tribes. Hasten, therefore, to show your allegiance and obedience, and may God help you to prosper in this world and the next. My great goal is to reform and to do good to the extent that good lies within me. My trust is in God, and from Him and Him only do I expect reward and success.

By the order of the Defender of our Religion, our sovereign and Commander of the Faithful, Abd el-Kader ibn Muhi al-Din. May God grant him victory. Amen."

*jihad = in this case, a struggle or fight against the enemies of Islam

**sheik = an Arab leader, in particular the chief or head of an Arab tribe, family, or village

***ulemas = Muslim scholars who have knowledge of Islamic law and the Quran

Questions to help you analyze the excerpt:

1. What goals does Abd el-Kader set for himself as the emir of Algeria?
2. Based on this text, how do you think Abd el--Kader would define the ideal nation?
3. How does this compare with Washington's argument?

Document 4

Source: Excerpt of a letter written by Abd el-Kader to the Bishop Pavy (second Bishop of Algiers from 1846 to 1866) describing his reasons for protecting the Christians in Damascus in 1860. (From *Commander of the Faithful*, a biography by John Kaiser.)

“That which we did for the Christians, we did to be faithful to Islamic law and out of respect for human rights. All creatures are part of God's family and those most loved by God are those who do the most good for his family. All the religions of the book rest on two principles--to praise God and to have compassion for his creatures...The law of Mohammed places the greatest importance on compassion and mercy, and on all that which preserves social cohesion and protects us from division. But those who belong to the religion of Mohammed have corrupted it, which is why they are now like lost sheep. Thank you for your prayers and good will toward me...”

Questions to help you analyze the excerpt:

1. What was Abd el-Kader's rationale for protecting the Christians of Damascus?
2. Why did Abd el-Kader believe in jihad against the Christian French when they invaded Algeria and still protect the Christians in Syria?

Document 5

Source: Excerpts from *Young India*. In the 1920s Mahatma Gandhi took over a weekly published Journal called *Young India* in 1918, and continued publishing it until 1931 when he founded another paper.

August 11, 1920

“And so I am not pleading for India to practice nonviolence because it is weak. I want her to practice nonviolence being conscious of her strength and power. No training in arms is required for realization of her strength. We seem to need it because we seem to think that we are but a lump of flesh. I want India to recognize that she has a soul that cannot perish and that can rise triumphant above every physical weakness and defy the physical combination of a whole world.”

June 6, 1924

“We should remain non-violent, unmindful of whether we succeed or fail in our undertaking. This is the only natural way of demonstrating the principle of non-violence. It would be more correct to say that the result of Ahimsa* is always good. Such being our firm faith, we are not concerned whether our efforts are crowned with success today or years later.”

February 23, 1930

“Satyagraha** literally means insistence on truth. This insistence arms the votary with matchless power. This power or force is connoted by the word Satyagraha... There is in it no room for violence. The only force of universal application can, therefore, be that of ahimsa or love. In other words it is soul force. Love does not burn others, it burns itself. Therefore, a satyagrahi, i.e., a civil resister will joyfully suffer even unto death. It follows, therefore, that a civil resister, whilst he will strain every nerve to compass the end of the existing rule, will do no intentional injury in thought, word or deed to the person of a single Englishman.”

Note: Gandhi’s primary doctrines of nonviolence were influenced by his upbringing in the Indian religions of Jainism and Buddhism. Two important words are:

**ahimsa* = “to be without harm or to be utterly harmless”

***satyagraha* = loosely translated from Sanskrit and Hindi means “insistence on truth” (satya “truth”; agraha “insistence”)

Questions to help you analyze the excerpt:

1. How did Gandhi use his religious beliefs in his attempt to gain independence?
2. Why do you think Gandhi believed in non-violence as a way to gain independence?

Document 6

Source: Mahatma Gandhi during the Salt March, also known as the Salt Satyagraha*. This was a non-violent protest that took place in March 1930 against the British Salt Monopoly. (*Wikimedia Commons*)

The British made Indians pay a large tax on salt in order to make money on exporting it. The Salt March was a protest against that tax. They walked 240 miles to the sea, and then illegally produced their own salt from the sea water. When the British repealed the salt tax, it started a huge movement for Independence.

*Satyagraha = loosely translated from Sanskrit and Hindi means “insistence on truth” (satya “truth”; agraha “insistence”). It became a policy of passive political resistance, also known as “non-violence.” In this case they’re using it against British rule in India.



Questions to help you analyze the excerpt:

1. How is this an example of “non-violence” when trying to gain independence from the British?
2. How does this compare to the attempt to gain independence by Washington and the attempt to fight back against France by Abd el-Kader?