Essential Questions

1. George Washington contended that the geographic situation of the United States allowed it to maintain its distance from the political problems and wars of Europe.

List the four main warnings Washington made in his address.

* Did the early citizens follow his guideline?
* Does this hold true today? Why or why not?
* Does the U. S. have a moral obligation today to be involved with the rest of the world or to not be involved?

1. Should Washington’s suggestion to avoid permanent alliances be followed in today’s international relations? Why or why not?
2. To what extent does morality need religious faith to support it?

* What effect might it have on religion for people to understand it in the terms that Washington outlines?

1. Washington argues that the “spirit of party” is a part of “our nature.”
2. Could a part of our nature be bad?

* What does it mean to say that this spirit is “the worst enemy” of popular government? Does this apply to today?

1. Why did Washington support a strong federal form of government?
2. High School only: What is the relationship between the aspirational (ideal) political principles of the Declaration of Independence and Washington’s worries about foreign entanglements?

* How can the United States simultaneously declare universal truths about just political principles and adhere to a plan of non-interference?