



As a small child, Washington yearned to be a British officer. While other children were playing games, doing what children do, Washington gravitated to rigorous study of famous battles as recreation. He lived the victories and defeats; with extraordinary precision, a young George envisioned and documented battle strategies, actions he would have taken to turn around and win losing engagements. Washington possessed an indomitable fire fed by love for the home country. In his view, Britain was an honorable, unstoppable world force. Washington's plan, early on in childhood, was to be an English patriot, ready, perhaps even anxious, to fight and die for king and country. So, what series of events occurred that turned a searing heat of unstoppable love, dedication and passion for a home country into the ice of disappointment? How did a boy and young man eager to die for king and country turn and become the father of a new nation? How does a passionate believer in and contributor to a country to take over the world morph into a searing combatant against his first and greatest love? What does that do to a person inside? How did that twist him? How did he mourn? How did Washington reinvent himself? Turn love into hate, ostensibly dispassion, to calculate and fight against a home country he now perceived as an

oppressor of people he loved? Virginians first. Then a scraggy mess of countrymen, Americans, he took on to fight a beast 100x the size? Awaiting the French, attempting to keep the cause alive until they arrived. Listen, I couldn't build out a fictional drama character or develop a protagonist for a full-length feature film as perfect as the circumstances which turned Mr. Washington. A change of heart so dramatic, men with less resolve would have folded or disappeared into private life never to be heard from again. Washington did indeed do just that for a period. At 27, he retired from military service to Mount Vernon only to become an innovator at agricultural techniques founded by farming expert Jethro Tull. Why did Washington retire? Ah, you'll find out soon enough. A man lives and breathes false truth, encounters a series of adverse circumstances, (some emotionally devastating), which continually confront and mar that truth. Concurrently, an alternate truth begins to emerge. A truth this man doesn't want to admit and fights against until one, last devastating personal setback, turns him completely, causes him to retrench, only to emerge different, beholden by a new truth. Listen, this is the formula for every great fictional protagonist we embrace (and sometimes hate). Rick Grimes & Father Gabriel (tertiary protagonist) from *The Walking Dead*, John Wick, Maximus from *Gladiator*, Lucas McCain in a revamped *The Rifleman*, Benjamin Martin in *The Patriot*. And there's Washington. Is one man's fiction another man's reality? I believe it to be so. Every fictional character is in some part, another's reality. I'm sure we all know people who have overcome obstacles that would have broken others. *The stock market is fiction. Prices of stocks are based on stories those who get sucked in to the stories. Supply and demand of stories, possibilities, hopes. All regulated. Mostly, fiction.* So, how and why did Washington change so radically? What can we learn? **WASHINGTON UNDERSTOOD THE VALUE OF RETREAT, RECOVERY & RESILIENCY.** Washington embraced strategic retreat, avoiding major engagements until he felt the opportunity was right. On occasion, it was never right, and he needed to re-group and find an alternative plan to victory. Self-preservation and those of his men was paramount. Live to fight another day. Small victories, flanking attacks forged morale for a ragtag army that at times didn't even possess shoes. Britain scorned Washington numerous times, turning him down for major battles. A tremendous disappointment. In 1754, British leaders galvanized against Washington when at the Forks of Ohio not far from Fort Duquesne (occupied by the French), Washington, an officer in the British Army along with men he marched through mountainous and dangerous terrain of Maryland and Pennsylvania, met up with a band of Iroquois to confront a French party of 35 men, fifty-five miles from the Forks. What Washington perceived as his contribution to a first battle between two of Europe's greatest empires, turned out to be an eventual well-publicized massacre of diplomatic messengers. One of the messengers named Jumonville was carrying a letter which was to be delivered to English authorities declaring Ohio Country as French territory. He was the first to be slaughtered by the Iroquois. The attack was particularly gruesome and later didn't write well in periodicals back in the home country, especially due to the brutality of the Indians who split open French scalps with tomahawks and rinsed their hands in victims' brains. As Russell Shorto wrote in his impressive tome *Revolution Song*, "The event, the series of fateful missteps by an inexperienced provincial officer, whose signatures carried the official weight of the British Empire, meant that, for the first time an event in North America would trigger a war in Europe." Back to the battle: It was only a matter of time before more than 1,000 French soldiers back at the Fork would know of the combat and seek to attack. Washington retreated with 400 men to a wide meadow and built a makeshift fort in the middle of it to await the next encounter. French military head up ironically by the brother of Jumonville, passed through the gruesome massacre, now even more motivated to confront Washington and his men. With swift and diligent attack, the French took positions behind trees and rocks and precisely began to pick off Washington's group. They picked off men on horses, they killed more than 100, forcing Washington's hand to surrender. The Indians had run off before the French arrived. Military protocol at the time required George Washington surrender in writing. The French drafted a document. Washington signed it. What the father of our country didn't understand was that he was placing his name to a document that referenced the "assassination" of Jumonville. Washington believed the document referenced the death of the French leader, not an assassination.

Unfortunately, it was probably due to the lack of skills by a novice interpreter. No matter. Washington signed a document of admission to the assassination which made the battle even more repulsive to the British. To make matters worse (can you imagine?), a letter Washington wrote to his brother bragging about the encounter, referencing how the whistle of bullets to be a 'charming sound,' was exposed and published in London Magazine. A prominent writer portrayed Washington as foolish and the consequences dire. 'The volley fired by a young Virginian in the backwoods of America set the world on fire.' I'm not sure about you, but this series of events would have convinced me to leave the military and never be seen or heard from again. And Washington did indeed do so. For a bit. He went straight to the earth. He pondered a new life as gentleman farmer. He learned to grow tobacco on a commercial scale, he became a voracious reader and student of several heady topics including the law. So, how do we take in what Washington experienced, how he reacted, and reinvented? Obviously, he was a Stoic in the making. He was a student of the German philosopher Nietzsche without knowing, either. It was just who he was. Nietzsche described human greatness as:

"Amor Fati or love of fate. Don't bear what is necessary but love it."

Marcus Aurelius said:

"A blazing fire makes flame and brightness out of everything that's thrown at it."

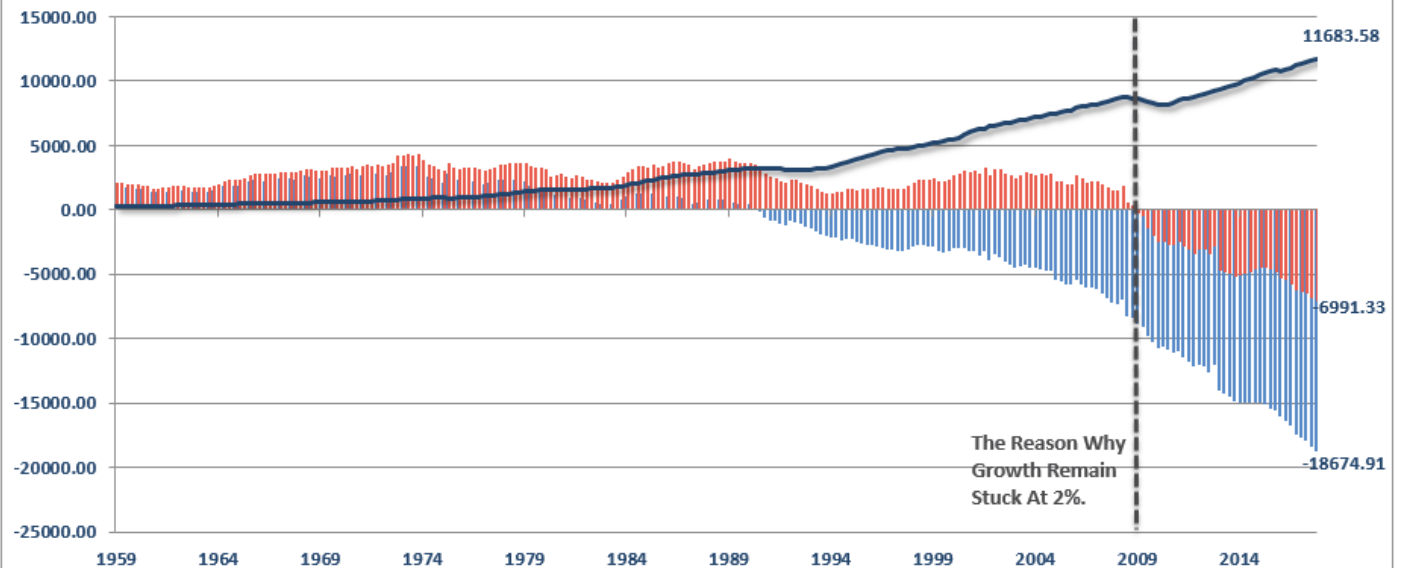
Epictetus lamented:

"Do not seek for things to happen the way you want them to; rather, wish that what happens happen the way it happens. Then you will be happy."

Washington was an empath. He took in the pain of others. The Stamp Act and taxation by Britain forced oppression upon him and his brethren; denied him and his fellow man the freedom to prosper. Thus, the rest is history. The man who loved and wanted so much to be loved by the British, found a new and greater love, a bigger mission, a higher truth. Mostly from great setback. Just like those incredible characters in films and series we are hooked on. **A non-fictional American story that resonates today.** A life we all can learn from. At the time of his death in 1799, Washington's estate was worth roughly \$780,000 and that doesn't include the valuation of his 7,000 acres at Mount Vernon. He was ranked as one of the richest colonialists. However, that wasn't always the case. His finances dramatically ebbed and flowed. There were times in his life Washington was 'land rich, cash poor.' So, what lesson can we take from Washington's life, good and bad? Here are 3 to consider. **Washington yearned for social status and went broke several times in an effort to keep up with the 'Joneses.'** It was all about appearances. The finest clothing, expensive, outlandish accessories brought in from London designers. He borrowed (at 6%), to maintain his lifestyle for many years. Appears many Americans take after our first president when it comes to the use of credit to maintain standards of living.

Gap Between Real Disposable Income & Cost Of Living

REAL INVESTMENT ADVICE

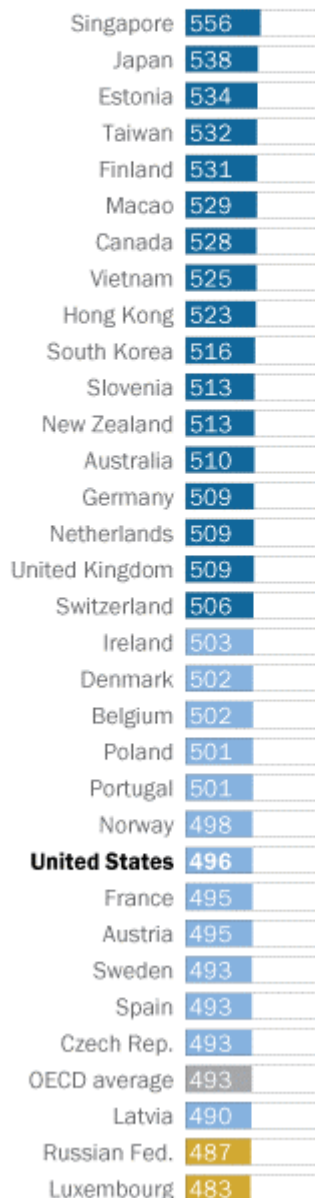


How the U.S. compares on science, math and reading scores

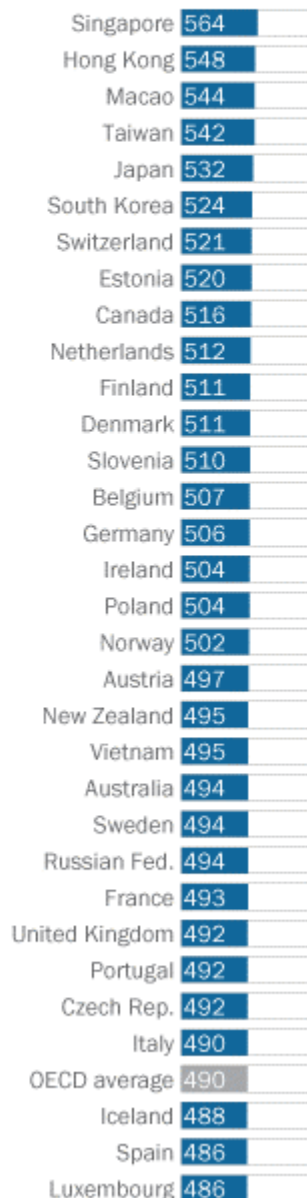
Average scores of 15-year-olds taking the 2015 Program for International Student Assessment

● Score is significantly higher than U.S. ● Score is **not** significantly different from U.S. ● Score is significantly lower than U.S.

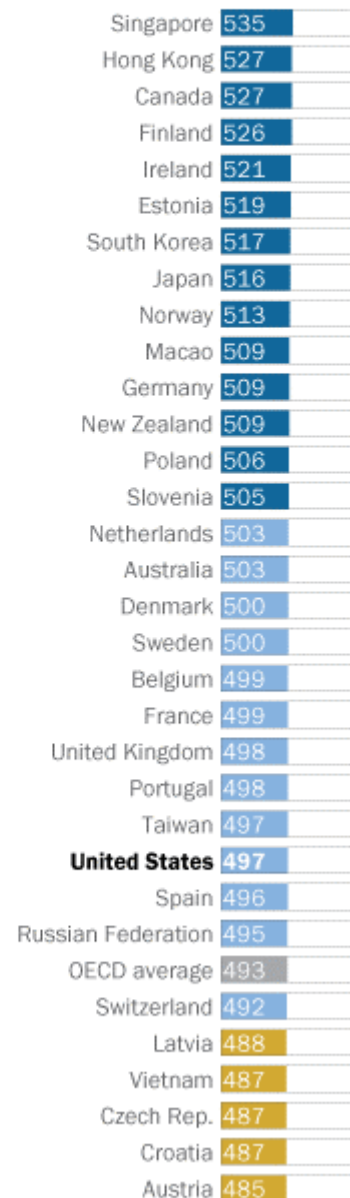
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Mathematics



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2015 Pew Research Center report, only 29% of Americans rated their country's K-12 education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics as above average or the best in the world. As parents, we must help our children embrace these subjects. A Cleveland Fed study discovered that advancing past Algebra II strongly correlates with college graduation and thriving financially in the workforce. **Washington was a master networker.** America's first president and one of its bravest leaders believed in the power of connections. He was not born of a rich family. He made connections, was a savvy social climber and married Martha Curtiss, one of the wealthiest widows in Virginia. Not that we all can marry wealthy, mind you! Empirical studies outline how children who are better at socializing have above-average reading scores and better literacy skills. According to the Brookings Institute, social and emotional competence is critically important in the workplace. Traits that employers value in employees include self-esteem, goal setting, pride in work and interpersonal skills and teamwork. Regardless of political affiliations, Americans can easily agree upon the respect for or relate to a trait or skill they admire when it comes to George Washington, the resilient leader of a new nation.