

Chapter Eight
Primary Source Exercise
HIST 2111 FA 19

Reading:

George Washington, *Proclamation on the Whiskey Rebellion* (1794),

http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/gwproc03.asp

After you have read the primary source listed above (as well as Chapter Eight, and watched the video for this module), answer the following questions, based on what you know about the Washington and Adams Administrations, as well as what you know about the challenges facing the new American Republic more generally.

1. Considering Washington's words here, alongside the record of the American Revolution, what can you conclude about the Founding Fathers' ideas regarding freedom and equality? What does it mean that they fought a war for freedom against Great Britain but they will fight a war to squash this rebellion in Pennsylvania?
2. Expanding on Question #1, what can you reasonably infer about the Founding Fathers' attitude towards Americans who object to actions taken by the Federal Government? What do you think the Founding Fathers (or at least Washington) would tell people who didn't like the Whiskey Tax?
3. Based on what you know about the reasons for the American Revolution (as well as the Whiskey Rebellion), why do you think Washington goes to the trouble of explaining his rationale for military action in such detail here? Whom do you think is his intended audience? Why is it important to lay out his reasoning?
4. How might this primary source be relevant to contemporary debates in America over the proper role(s) and function(s) of the federal government? What does the existence of this source demonstrate about this conversation?