

## **FOUNDING BROTHERS: EPISODE I**

### **Act I - Washington and the Presidency**

1. The video recounts the tremendous self-doubts Washington had on his way to his first inauguration. In the words of Richard Brookhiser, Washington felt “like a man being led to his execution.” Why did he feel this way?
2. Washington wanted to convey the power and authority necessary to lead the new nation while avoiding being compared to “the other George,” the King of England. How did he try to maintain this balance through his actions and dress?
3. Joseph Ellis says the following at the end of Act I: “Eventually we will become a government of laws. But we have to first be a government of men.” Do you agree? Didn't the constitution set up the laws to which the men were bounded?

### **Act II - The Cabinet**

4. List the figures who Washington selected for his cabinet as well as their positions and qualifications.
5. What separated the members of Washington's cabinet from the leaders of European states like England or France?
6. Vice President Adams called his position “the most insignificant office that ever the Invention of Man contrived or his Imagination conceived.” Why did he feel this way, and is there any evidence that Adams himself proved this assertion false?
7. Jefferson, an early admirer of the French Revolution, once said “The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure.” Jefferson also wrote to James Madison in 1787 that “a little rebellion now and then is a good thing, and as necessary in the political world as storms in the physical.” What did Jefferson mean by these sayings and do you agree with him?
8. Explain the way Alexander Hamilton viewed the economic situation of the United States around 1790? What was his plan for the future? Be specific.

### **Act III - The Debt and D. C.**

9. Why did James Madison oppose Hamilton's financial plan?
10. When Jefferson met Hamilton outside of Washington's office at a time when the assumption of debt plan was in peril, Hamilton looked “ruffled, depressed, overcome, and stricken,” according to Joseph Ellis. Hamilton threatened to resign if his financial plan collapsed. What did this mean to Jefferson?
11. What was decided at the dinner party attended by Jefferson, Madison, and Hamilton where the “candle light bargain” was struck? Since no official account of the evening exists, how do we know what happened?

### **Act IV - Slavery**

12. What Faustian bargain over slavery did James Madison and the framers of the Constitution make in Philadelphia in 1787? (What does Faustian bargain mean?) Why did the delegates to the convention agree to this bargain.
13. In the early days of Congress, on February 11, 1790, a Quaker delegation to Congress called for the abolition of the slave trade. Soon after, the Pennsylvania Abolition Society called for general emancipation. How did these abolitionist efforts affect the Southern defense of slavery?
14. What position did Benjamin Franklin take on slavery during 1790 and why was he well regarded by his colleagues?
15. Three weeks before Franklin died, he published a short parody in which Muslims of North Africa justify enslaving Christians with the same arguments slaveholders had used to defend the enslavement of Africans. The North Africans, in Franklin's parody, give many familiar reasons for rejecting abolition: “who is to indemnify their Masters for the Loss? Will the State do it? Is our Treasury sufficient...? And if we set our Slaves free, what is to be done with them...? Our people will not pollute themselves by intermarrying with them...[The slaves are]...better off with us, rather than remain in Europe where they would only cut each others' throats in religious wars.” Was the parody effective?