



Washington's Whiskey Legacy: The Distillery at Mount Vernon

Students will learn...

- How to analyze primary sources and draw their own conclusions
- How Washington and Mount Vernon's image has been used throughout history

You will need...

- Mount Vernon Whiskey ads and objects
 - *Optional:* [Virtual tour of the Distillery](#)
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Opener: Washington in Marketing

- Ask your students where they have seen Washington's image be used to sell items.
 - *Optional:* Show Modern Ads Example
 - Why do they think a company would use Washington's image to sell something?
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Task 1: Washington Whiskey

- Using Washington's image to sell things is nothing new. People have been doing it since when Washington was alive.
- Tell your students about the Distillery:

George Washington was the only one prominent leader of the founding era who owned a commercial distillery. Washington was committed to simplifying his farming operations. Always keen to earn extra income, Washington was intrigued by the profit a distillery might bring in. Eventually, it became his most profitable business, earning more money than his mill and fishery combined. After his death, the distillery fell into disrepair but was recreated in 2007.

- In pairs or small groups, give your students the 1-2 images of Mount Vernon Whiskey

ads. Have them discuss:

- What are some favorable adjectives used to describe Washington? How is his (or Mount Vernon's) image being used to transfer those adjectives to the product?
 - What is the ad or object's message?
 - How do they portray Washington or Mount Vernon?
 - How does that portrayal enforce or perhaps diminish their message?
 - Does their portrayal compare to your understanding of Washington?
- Have pairs or groups share their observations with other pairs to compare images and conclusions.
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Task 2: Make Your Own Ad

- Now it is time for them to come up with an ad using George Washington.
 - What are they going to advertise using Washington's image? In what way are they going to portray Washington and why?
 - *Optional:* If your students are too hung up on the idea that they "can't draw," print out pictures of Washington and give them used magazines, where they can cut out the objects and make a collage.
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Closer: Reflections

- Have the students present their work and come up with a few class favorites.
- *Optional:* Have your students write a little explanation on why they chose the images and wording that they did.