

## Valley Forge Jigsaw

Objective: Students will show their understanding of the Valley Forge encampment by responding in writing to questions based on their reading of primary source documents.

### Procedure:

1. Divide the class into groups of four students each.
2. Select the reader for each letter or excerpt. Each group member will read a different passage.
3. Give the students time to read his or her passage and have them answer the individual questions. Allow adequate time, but hold them to a limit.
4. After they have answered the questions, allow them to share answers with someone from another group who read the same passage.
5. Have students return to their original groups and share their responses to the questions. Choose a time limit and have them switch regularly.
6. After each person has shared their responses to the questions, have the groups discuss and complete the group questions together.

### Options to close the lesson:

- A. Discuss, as a class, the four reading passages.
- B. Create a model, collage, video, or skit to illustrate an event, situation, or condition in each of the four passages and present it to the class.



Passage A

From Joseph Plumb Martin's *Private Yankee Doodle*

*“The army continued at and near the Gulf [Gulph] for some days, after which we marched for Valley Forge in order to take up our winter quarters. . We were now in a truly forlorn condition,...no clothing, no provisions and as disheartened as need be. We arrived, however, at our destination a few days before Christmas. . Our prospect was indeed dreary. . In our miserable condition, to go into the wild woods and use habitations to stay (not to live) in, in such a weak, starved and naked condition, was appalling in the highest degree, especially to New Englanders, unaccustomed to such kind of hardships at home. . However, there was no remedy, no alternative but this or dispersion. . But dispersion, I believe, was not thought of, at least, I did not think of it. . We had engaged in the defense of our injured country and were willing, nay, we were determined to persevere as long as such hardships were not altogether intolerable. . I had experienced what I thought sufficient of the hardships of a military life the year before, although nothing in comparison to what I had suffered in the present campaign. . . . . But we were now absolutely in danger of perishing, and that too, in the midst of a plentiful country. . We then had but little and often nothing to eat for days together; but now we had nothing and saw no likelihood of any betterment of our condition. Had there fallen deep snows (and it was the time of year to expect them) or even heavy and long rainstorms, the whole army must inevitably have perished. . Or had the enemy, strong and well provided as he then was, thought fit to pursue us, our poor emaciated carcasses must have ‘strewed the plain.’ But a kind and holy Providence took more notice and better care of us than did the country in whose service we were wearing away our lives by piecemeal.”*

Passage B

From *The Writings of George Washington: From the Original Sources, 1745-1799*. .  
U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1934.

*To The President of Congress*

*Valley Forge, December 23, 1777*

*Sir:*

*Full as I was in my representation of matters in the Commas. . department [Commissary Department--the department that provides supplies and food to the army] yesterday, fresh, and more powerful reasons oblige me to add, that I am now convinced, beyond a doubt that unless some great and capital change suddenly takes place in that line, this Army must inevitably be reduced to one or the other of these three things. . Starve, dissolve, or disperse, in order to obtain subsistence [food and clothing] in the best manner they can; rest assured Sir this is not an exaggerated picture, but [and] that I have abundant reason to support what I say ...*

*Soap, Vinegar, and other Articles allowed by Congress we see none of nor have [we] seen [them] I believe since the battle of Brandywine; the first indeed we have now little occasion of [for] few men having more than one Shirt ... and Some none at all; in addition to which as a proof of the little benefit received from a Cloathier Gent, and at the same time as a further proof of the inability of an Army under the circumstances of this, to perform the common duties of Soldiers (besides a number of Men confined to Hospitals for want of Shoes, and others in farmers Houses on the same Acct. . [for the same reason] we have, by a field return this day made no less than 2898 Men now in Camp unfit for duty because they are barefoot and otherwise naked....*

*We have not more than 3 Months to prepare a great deal of business in; if we let these slip, or waste, we shall be laboring under the same difficulties all next campaign as we have done this, to rectifie [rectify] mistakes and bring things to order. Military arrangements and movements in consequence, like the Mechanism of a Clock, will be imperfect, and disordered, by the want of a part.*

*I am your obedient servant,*

*G. Washington*

Passage C

From: Martha Washington to Mrs. Warren

Valley Forge March the 7th 1778

Dear Madam

*I am now to thank you for the two very kind letters which you have been pleased to favor me with....It gave me a peculiar pleasure to hear... that you and Genl Warren enjoy good health ... and this pleasure was not a little increased by hearing from yourself that you are so very happy in your state [New York]. . . . . no traces of the enemy being left; but on the other hand, plenty of every thing usefull and necessary to be percured. . . . . indeed I think providence was very bountifull in her goodness to your state: even when the enemy was in it, we found then every article in plenty, and full sufficient [sic] for the men of the army... in Virginia we have had no British troops since the cruel Dunmore left us. . . . . but how soon we shall, is not at this time known; I hope, and trust, that all the states will make a vigorous push early this spring, if every thing can be prepared for it, and thereby putting a stop to British cruelties ... and afford us that peace and liberty and happyness [sic] which we have so long contended for .*

*It has given me unspeakable pleasure to hear that Genl Burgoyne and his army are in safe quarters in your state [General John Burgoynes British army had surrendered to American forces at Saratoga in October of 1777] . . . . . would bountifull [sic] providence aim a like stroke at Genl Howe, the measure of my happyness [sic] would be compleat [sic].*

*I came to this place some time about the first of February ... . whare [sic] I found the General very well. . . . . I left my children at our House ....*

*The General is in camped [sic] in what is called the great valley on the Banks of the Schuykill officers and men are cheifly [sic] in Hutts [sic], which they say is tolerable comfortable; the army are as healthy as can well be expected in general... the Generals appartment [sic] is very small... he has had a log cabben [sic] built to dine in which has made our quarters much more tolerable than they were at first.*

*It would give me pleasure to deliver your compliments to Mrs Gates, but she lives at so great a distance from me that I have not seen her since we parted at newport, two years afore; the General joins me in offering our respectfull [sic] compliments to Genl Warren and yourself . . . . .*

*I am dr madam with esteem your affectionate  
Friend and very Hble ser't*

*Martha Washington*

*Passage D*

From: *Lafayette in the Age of the American Revolution: Selected Letters and Papers, 1776-1790.*

Edited by Stanley J. Idzerda, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1977.

[A Memorandum to General George Washington]

*At Camp the 28 December [1777]*

*Some of the general officers gave yesterday theyr [sic] opinion to your excellency for the form of our niew cloathes [sic], 1 beg leave to explain here my ideas about this point. . In considering our scarcity I try to make them as comfortable as possible.*

*1st. . The hat must be round and turn'd up in one side, the bream [sic] of about three inches ... . such a hat would be very good against the sun and the rain.*

*2d. . The stock must be black made with hair, leather, or some slight black stoff [sic] with a leather in the inside to keep it firm around the neck.*

*3d Each soldier must have three and never less than two good shirts. . Otherwise it is impossible to have him clean ....*

*4th. . Theyr [sic] hair must be cut very short no lower than the beginning of the stock and wash'd every day.*

*5th. . The blanckets [sic] must have one or two buttons to surround the breast and be a kind of great coat [overcoat].*

*6th. . The coat must be only a waist coat (at the French military fashion) with large lapels, which are turned back in a fair weather, and button'd upon the breast against the cold... . a standind [standing] collar of one inch and a half, the sleeves [cuffs] of three inches and a half. . I wish'd if possible that the ground would be uniforme, the lappels to distinguish the states, and collar and sleeves to distinguish the regiments ....*

*9. . The men should comb theyr [sic] hair every day after washing it, cut theyr beard twice a week and alwais [sic] when they are upon parade for guards, and take baths when they will have the opportunity to it.*

*12. . I wish'd too that the officers and each rank among them could be distinguished by theyr [sic] epaulets, or any other manner, and the general officers to take care that all the officers should preserve such distinctions. . It would prevent the several mistakes which happen every day in the army, and oblige the soldiers to pay due respects to theyr officers. . They should be ordered to put theyr hands to theyr hats (without pulling them off) [a salute] when they cross an officer. . . . .*

*16. . Such are the ideas which I submit to your excellency. . I know that the circumstances should admit some variations. . But in taking away the ornaments of my scheme, I think that it offers the most comfortable and easy manner of cloathing [sic] our troops.*

*The Mquis, De Lafayette M.G.*