AMERICAN HISTORY 1

**A Close Reading of George Washington’s Farewell Address**

**DIRECTIONS: For each excerpt, circle at least 2 key words (key words can be words that are important OR words you do not know the definition of) and define them below. Then, rewrite the excerpts in your own words.**

Excerpts from the Farewell Address (1796)

1. “The great rule of conduct for us, in regard to foreign nations, is in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements, let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith. Here let us stop.”

Key Words:

Summary:

1. “Europe has a set of primary interests, which to us have none, or a very remote relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves….in the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities.”

Key Words:

Summary:

3. Respect for [the Constitution’s] authority, compliance with its laws, acquiescence

in its measures, are duties enjoined by the fundamental maxims of true liberty.

Key Words:

Summary:

4. The basis of our political systems is the right of the people to make and to alter

their constitutions of government. But the Constitution which at any time exists,

till changed by an explicit and authentic act of the whole people, is sacredly

obligatory upon all.

Key Words:

Summary:

5. “It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world; so far, I mean, as we are now at liberty to do it;…I repeat it, therefore, let those engagements be observed in their genuine sense. But, in my opinion, it is unnecessary and would be unwise to extend them.”

Key Words:

Summary:

6. “Taking care always to keep ourselves, by suitable establishments, on a respectable defensive posture, we may safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies…”

Key Words:

Summary:

Source:“Washington’s Farewell Address 1796.” The Avalon Project at Yale Law School.

<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/washing.htm>

**Writing Assignment:**

Answer the following questions in a MAXIMUM of 2 paragraphs (5-7 sentences each) and citing 2 pieces of evidence to support your answer.

**QUESTION: Do you believe the United States has followed George Washington’s recommendations in his farewell address?**

ANSWER: