



In Washington Town: Teacher Overview and Tips

Very little is left of the town of Washington-on-the-Brazos—but your students can now visit the town and experience the days of revolution in the 3D game "In Washington Town." The game features:

- **A historically-accurate 3D recreation of the entire town of Washington**, featuring every known building in Washington in March 1836, from the river ferry to the western edge of town. Players can explore the town and enter every home, shop, and business to examine typical furnishings.
- **Dozens of characters**, both residents going about their daily business and convention delegates visiting the town, who will stop and talk to players. The game also depicts Texians fleeing the Mexican Army in the Runaway Scrape.
- **Typical forms of transportation** from horses to wagons to ferries.

The game also features **an interactive story** that puts players in the role of Jessie Watson, a 14-year-old boy or girl living on a farm outside Washington, who must travel to town in search of their father, who has not returned from a trip into town. Set in March 1836, while the Convention was meeting in town, this story takes the player on two simultaneous journeys:

- **Discovering what happened to Pa.** His experiences are revealed through a series of flashbacks: hazy scenes recollected by people the player meets in town. After each flashback, the player must choose the most important information revealed. Over the course of the game, the flashbacks reveal Pa's progression from a political farmer to a volunteer in the fight for independence.
- **Exploration of the frontier town of Washington.** While looking for people who remember seeing Pa, the player must find food, lodging and other types of help. Most notably, the player must entertain people at the tavern by playing the banjo in a Guitar Hero-style mini-game.

As players tackle the tasks and activities that carry them closer to achieving the overarching goal, they will learn about life in 1836 Texas and the challenges facing Texians in their struggle for independence.

Practical Tips for the Game

- To display a full 3D world in a Web browser, the game requires the Unity web browser plug-in. You will be prompted to install the plug-in when starting the game. It typically takes just a minute or two to download and install, but this is best done prior to the class session in which students will play the game.
- The game takes 30-45 minutes to complete. If students register and login before starting the game, their progress is saved every few minutes, and they can quit the game in midstream and return later to pick up where they left off.
- 3D worlds are demanding of computer hardware, so the game may not run well on older computers. The game will automatically adjust the visual quality based on the computer it is running on--that is what's happening if the graphics look blurry. We have tested the game successfully on computers from 2005-2006, such as a Mac Mini, but due to the 3D nature of the game, we cannot guarantee that it will work on every computer.



Game Story Sequence

Game Title: Choose to start a new game or register/login and then start a new game or continue saved game.

Story Background: March 1836 - Texas belongs to Mexico. Texans are ruled by the distant government in Mexico City, where President Santa Anna recently declared himself dictator. Many Texans are rebelling against Santa Anna's iron fist. To crush this rebellion, Santa Anna himself has come to Texas, declaring he will take no prisoners. But war and politics seem very far away from your home....until your Pa fails to return from a trip to the nearby town of Washington.

Chapter 1: Watson Farm. The player talks to their Ma about Pa, and volunteers to ride to Washington to find him. Player can explore the Watson cabin, then take the horse and ride towards Washington.

Chapter 2: Arriving in Washington. The player meets Mr. Hall, the ferryman, and sees the first Flashback--a conversation between Pa and Hall about Pa's errands in town, plus a conversation between two delegates to the Convention. After this, and all flashbacks, the player chooses one piece of information learned and saves it in their notebook.

The player then crosses the river on the ferry and rides into town. At Lott's Tavern, Mr. Lott provides another Flashback, where Pa says that he might go fight for Texas if he were younger, but not now with a farm and family.

Chapter 3: On Pa's Trail. Following a clue from that Flashback, the player heads for Martin & Clow's Mercantile Store, where Mrs. Martin recalls, in a Flashback, that Pa was eager to return home and protect his family from the Mexican Army, should it come this way.

Chapter 4: Banjo Hero. The day is getting long, and Mrs. Martin suggests that Mrs. Lott might give the player some food. Mrs. Lott agrees to--but only if the player will entertain tavern guests with some songs on the banjo. This is a Guitar Hero-style mini-game, where the player must "play" four traditional songs (Come to the Bower, The Eighth of January, Hunters of Kentucky, and Yankee Doodle) to earn their supper. In exchange for each song, the player elicits information about the Grievances.

Chapter 5: Evening at Goodrich's. Now looking for lodging for the night, the player heads across town to the Goodrich home, where Mr. and Mrs. Goodrich offer space on their cabin's wooden floor. Mr. Goodrich also recalls, in a Flashback, that Pa admired the men who put their life on the line by signing the Texas Declaration of Independence. Antonio Navarro and soon-to-be-president David Burnet are also featured in this Flashback, talking about Tejanos and independence.

Chapter 6: News from the Alamo. Come morning, Mrs. Goodrich suggests that the player go talk to William Fairfax Gray, a visitor from Virginia who seems to record everything he sees in



his diary. Gray himself does not recall Pa, but his companion, Lorenzo de Zavala does, and through a Flashback, we learn that even as the Alamo is under siege, Colonel Travis insists that the Convention continue its task of declaring independence. Sam Houston and other delegates are also present in this Flashback, discussing the challenges facing the Convention in the midst of war.

After this Flashback, the player travels to Convention Hall (today called Independence Hall)--but along the way, encounters the Runaway Scrape, as Texians flee the Mexican Army. The player can converse with these people, then continue on and talk to George Childress, who recalls, through a Flashback, that Pa had decided that independence was worth fighting for. Afterwards, a messenger arrives with news from General Houston of the Alamo, and we eavesdrop on Convention president Richard Ellis as he shares this first report of the massacre.

Chapter 7: Write to Ma. The player returns to Lott's Tavern and, using notes from each Flashback, constructs a letter to send home to Ma, reporting on Pa.

Chapter 8: Volunteer to Ride. After finishing the letter, David Burnet and Lorenzo de Zavala burst into Lott's Tavern to announce that the convention has completed its work and established the new Republic of Texas, with Burnet and de Zavala as president and vice president. This momentous news must be taken to Sam Houston, since he was so emphatic about the need to form a proper government. Hoping to find Pa with the army, the player volunteers to take this news to General Houston. If the player is a boy, Burnet accepts; if the player is a girl, Burnet refuses, but Mrs. Lott helps the player dress as a boy, and Burnet then agrees to send the player on this mission.

Chapter 9: Reunion. Riding into the Army encampment, the player approaches the guard outside General Houston's tent—who turns out to be Pa himself. After a brief reunion, Houston emerges, hears the news from Burnet, and discusses the current state of the war. Then, after the player and Pa talk more about his decision to volunteer and all that the player has learned about the struggle for independence while in Washington Town.

Chapter 10: Conclusion. After brief summary of the subsequent events of the war, we return to the Watson homestead where Pa finally returns, more than three months after he left for a quick trip into Washington, now a citizen of the Republic of Texas.