In the first engagement of the French and Indian War, a Virginia militia under 22-year-old Lieutenant Colonel George Washington defeats a French reconnaissance party in southwestern Pennsylvania. In a surprise attack, the Virginians killed 10 French soldiers from Fort Duquesne, including the French commander, Coulon de Jumonville, and took 21 prisoners. Only one of Washington's men was killed.

The French and Indian War was the last and most important of a series of colonial conflicts between the British and the American colonists on one side, and the French and their broad network of Native American allies on the other. Fighting began in the spring of 1754, but Britain and France did not officially declare war against each other until May 1756 and the outbreak of the Seven Years War in Europe.

In November 1752, at the age of 20, George Washington was appointed adjutant in the Virginia colonial militia, which involved the inspection, mustering, and regulation of various militia companies. In November 1753, he first gained public notice when he volunteered to carry a message from Virginia Governor Robert Dinwiddie to the French moving into the Ohio Valley, warning them to leave the territory, which was claimed by the British crown. Washington succeeded in the perilous wilderness journey and brought back an alarming message: The French intended to stay.

In 1754, Dinwiddie appointed Washington a lieutenant colonel and sent him out with 160 men to reinforce a colonial post at what is now Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Before Washington could reach it, however, it was given up without bloodshed to the French, who renamed it Fort Duquesne. Washington moved within about 40 miles of the French position and set about building a new post at Great Meadows, which he named Fort Necessity. From this base, he ambushed an advance detachment of about 30 French, striking the first blow of the French and Indian War. For the victory, Washington was appointed a full colonel and reinforced with several hundred Virginia and North Carolina troops.

On July 3, the French descended on Fort Necessity with their full force, and after an all-day fight Washington surrendered to their superior numbers. The disarmed colonials were allowed to march back to Virginia, and Washington was hailed as a hero despite his surrender of the fort. The story of the campaign was written up in a London gazette, and Washington was quoted as saying, "I have heard the bullets whistle; and believe me, there is something charming in the sound." Reading this, King George II remarked, "He would not say so if he had been used to hear many."

In October 1754, Washington resigned his commission in protest of the British underpayment of colonial offices and policy of making them subordinate to all British officers, regardless of rank. In early 1755, however, British General Edward Braddock and his army arrived to Virginia, and Washington agreed to serve as Braddock's personal aide-de-camp, with the courtesy title of colonel. The subsequent expedition against Fort Duquesne was a disaster, but Washington fought bravely and succeeded in bringing the survivors back after Braddock and 1,000 others were killed.

With the western frontier of Virginia now dangerously exposed, Governor Dinwiddie appointed Washington commander in chief of all Virginia forces in August 1755. During the next three years, Washington struggled with the problems of frontier defense but participated in no major engagements until he was put in command of a Virginia regiment participating in a large British campaign against Fort Duquesne in 1758. The French burned and abandoned the fort before the British and Americans arrived, and Fort Pitt was raised on its site. With Virginia's strategic objective attained, Washington resigned his commission with the honorary rank of brigadier general. He returned to a planter's life and took a seat in Virginia's House of Burgesses.

The French and Indian War raged on elsewhere in North America for several years. With the signing of the Treaty of Paris in February 1763, France lost all claims to the mainland of North America east of the Mississippi and gave up Louisiana, including New Orleans, to Spain. Fifteen years later, French bitterness over the loss of their North American empire contributed to their intervention in the American Revolution on the side of the Patriots, despite the fact that the Patriots were led by one of France's old enemies, George Washington.

1. Name the lieutenant who in the first engagement of the French and Indian war defeated a small reconnaissance team which resulted in the death of 10 French soldiers in southwest Pennsylvania?

2. When did France and Great Britain officially declare war against each other?

3. In 1754 George Washington set up a fort about 40 miles outside of the French position at Fort Duquense. What was the name of this fort?

4. After George Washington had resigned his commission with the honorary rank of Brigadier General in 1758 he returned to what type of lifestyle?

5. What treaty was signed in 1763 ending the French and Indian War?