

Teacher's Unexpected Illness Questionnaire

1. Is this a primary or secondary source? Primary Source
2. How many years after Washington's death on December 14, 1799 was this memoir written? 61 years
3. Who is the author and why did he write this memoir? From what perspective does the author write the memoir?
It was written by Doctor James Jackson. The memoir was written at the request of Mr. Everett to describe the death of George Washington. As a physician, Jackson brings medical perspective in reviewing the details related to Washington's fatal illness. In the Memoir, Jackson is able to provide medical analysis of Washington's illness and the treatment he received.
4. What did George Washington do the day before his illness? What symptoms did he first experience?
On that day, George Washington was out on his farm on horseback from 10am to 3pm in very bad rain, hail, snow fall, and cold wind. The next day he had a sore throat and thought to have a slight cold. That night he awoke with difficulty breathing, speaking, and swallowing.
5. How does Dr. Jackson describe Washington's illness? Which does he consider his worst symptom? Give evidence.
Answers may vary. George Washington's worst symptom was his breathing. It caused him great pain to breathe and swallow. His strongest efforts to breathe did not supply sufficient air to his lungs. "He was in fact strangled by the closure of the windpipe, as much as if a tight cord had been twisted around his neck." (Page 8)
6. What are the treatments that Washington received? What is Dr. Jackson's opinion on the treatments in 1799 in comparison to his own time (1860)?
Dr. Jackson mentions various treatments such as blistering, the use of antimony and opium to the calomel, or other preparations of mercury (page 19, 28). He primarily discusses the common practice of bloodletting as treatment for George Washington's illness in 18th century. He also notes how new medical knowledge in his time would have treated Washington by making an opening to the trachea to allow breathing (page 30).
7. In the Memoir, what is Dr. Jackson's final diagnosis? acute laryngitis Next, take a look at "The Household Physician" and read page 207 in the book (<https://collections.nlm.nih.gov/bookviewer?PID.nlm:nlmuid-101516958-bk>). Conduct research on MedlinePlus (<https://www.medlineplus.gov/>) and write or illustrate summaries of laryngitis and epiglottitis, and how the two are diagnosed and treated today.
Encourage students to explore what the medical profession knows today about both acute laryngitis and epiglottitis. Students interested in health, medicine, and science may research the symptoms of his illness to write persuasively. Teachers can refer students to the following websites to explore the definition, causes, symptoms, tests, and treatments of the two diagnoses.
 - Laryngitis (<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001385.htm>)
 - Epiglottitis (<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/imagepages/19595.htm>)
 - Epiglottitis (<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000605.htm>)
 - Throat Disorders (<https://medlineplus.gov/throatdisorders.html>)
 - Throat Anatomy (<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/imagepages/1118.htm>)