



The Capitol Washington, D.C.

Introduction and Instructions

At one point, the Capitol Building was the geographic center of Washington, D.C. Today, it remains as one of the most pristine examples of American neoclassical architecture, also called “Federal architecture.” In fact, the name “Capitol” (with an O) was first proposed by Thomas Jefferson, as a reference to Capitoline Hill in Rome. In addition to any prior knowledge you may have, use your research skills and the resources provided here to answer the questions below.



The Architect of the Capitol (AOC) is a government agency that maintains and preserves the Capitol. Watch this video to learn more about what they do.

WATCH: https://www.capitol.gov/#THMESEC_2010061447464|THME_2010062211742



Get a sneak peak of the Capitol Building and explore its grounds here.

READ: <http://www.virtually-anywhere.com/portfolio/uscapitol/>

1. What is the purpose of the US Capitol Building?

2. What government institutions does the Capitol house?

3. What does the Capitol building symbolize?

4. When did construction on the Capitol begin?



Learn more about the history of the US Capitol Building.

WATCH: https://www.capitol.gov/#THMESEC_2010061447464|THME_2010102715797

5. Who was the first Architect of the Capitol (AOC)?

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6. What were the challenges in building the Capitol?

7. Construction was difficult. In 1803, Congress allocated funds to continue the construction process. Who was appointed as the architect?

8. In 1811, what was added to the Capitol and what was its purpose?

9. What happened to the Capitol on August 24, 1814?

10. After Charles Bulfinch was appointed as Architect of the Capitol, what parts of the Capitol were finished?

11. Why did President Fillmore hold a competition to change the Capitol in 1850? How was it changed?

12. Why was the dome changed in 1855? How was it changed?

13. What is the name of the statue on top of the Capitol?

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One of the most notable paintings inside the Capitol is the fresco of George Washington located in the eye of the rotunda. Learn more about its symbolism and the artist who painted it.
READ: <https://www.aoc.gov/art/other-paintings-and-murals/apotheosis-washington>

14. What is the "Apotheosis of Washington?"

15. What are the six groups of figures that line the perimeter of the canopy?

16. Continue to explore this site. Find three other facts about the Capitol building and list them below.

17. Which figures from your home state are represented by statues in the Capitol?

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WHAT DO YOU THINK? *This is your chance to share your opinions, make connections, and apply what you've learned!*

1. Do you think the US Capitol Building should be considered the most important of all our government buildings? Why or why not?

2. Why do you think the architects chose to model the US Capitol Building after the buildings of Ancient Greece and Rome?



The Capitol is full of other important paintings that depict the history of the United States. See and read about them here.

READ: <https://www.aoc.gov/capitol-hill/paintings-and-murals>

3. What is the symbolism of the “Apotheosis of Washington”? Compare and contrast it to other paintings found in the Capitol Rotunda.