

*Myth or Man?*

Situation 1:

“Martha Washington destroyed all of her correspondence with her husband when he died in 1799. After years spent in the crush of public notoriety, it was about only thing in her private life she could control. Only three letters escaped the mass eradication, two of which were found beneath a desk drawer after her death.”

Source: “A Love Letter from General Washington,” George Washington’s Mount Vernon, <http://www.mountvernon.org/george-washington/biography/washington-stories/a-love-letter-from-general-washington/>

---

Do you think it is a good thing or a bad thing that Martha Washington destroyed her personal letters between her and her husband, George Washington? Explain your answer.

---

---

---

Situation 2:

“A lot of the image that we have of the founding fathers comes in part from 19th-century historians who actually wrote that God handed down the Constitution. . . . They’re the closest thing we have to the Greek gods . . . or royalty, and so they’ve been transformed into a larger-than-life figures. The average school child in America is taught to speak of these men in kind of hushed whispers: They were all heroic figures who are going to be whisked directly up to heaven. . . . We should admire them, not because they’re superhuman . . . but because they’re ordinary people.”

—Dr. Carol Berkin, Distinguished Professor Emeritus  
Baruch College and The Graduate Center, City University of New York

Source: “Key Constitutional Concepts,” Annenberg Classroom, <http://www.annenbergclassroom.org/page/key-constitutional-concepts>

---

According to historian Carol Berkin, what are two reasons most American treat the Founding Fathers as extraordinary?

---

---

---