

Saturday Night Live

Washington's Dream

Part 1 Preview Before you watch the video, answer these questions to the best of your knowledge.

1. How many inches are there in a foot?
2. How many feet are there in a yard?
3. How long is a ruler?
4. What system do Americans use to measure temperature?
5. What is the volume of the standard American bottle of beer?
6. How much milk is in the standard American plastic milk jug that you buy at a grocery store?
7. How do British people spell the word "color"? How about "glamour"?
8. How many points do you get in American football for kicking a field goal? How about an extra point?



Part 2 Background & Gist

- This video clip takes place during the American War of Independence (against Britain).
- At this time, George Washington is the general in charge of the US army.

As you are watching the video, think about: **According to Washington, in what situations will Americans use the metric system?**

Part 3 Comprehension After you watch the video, decide if each statement is true or false.

1. **T / F** Washington dreams of a nation that uses only liters and milliliters to measure all liquids.
2. **T / F** Washington promises that the U.S. will not use meters and kilometers for anything.
3. **T / F** Washington believes 2,000 pounds will be called a "ton" in the new system of weights and measures.
4. **T / F** In this new system, volume will be measured in inches, feet, yards, and miles.
5. **T / F** Washington predicts that 12 feet will make up one yard in the new nation.
6. **T / F** Football is described as a sport in which people never kick the ball.
7. **T / F** The new nation will use both inches and centimeters on rulers.
8. **T / F** Washington predicts that the new nation will use the most illogical scale to measure temperature.
9. **T / F** Washington declares that the new nation will not change the spelling of any English words.
10. **T / F** Washington promises that all men will be free in the new nation.

Part 4 Details *First try to answer these questions from memory. Then watch the video again and try to answer these questions.*

1. How many pounds are there in a ton?
2. What is 1,000 pounds called?
3. What liquids will be measured in liters and milliliters? (three answers)
4. What units will be used to measure milk and paint? (three answers)
5. How many inches in a foot?
6. How many feet in a yard?
7. How many yards in a mile?
8. How many feet in a mile?
9. How many points do you get for kicking a ball in football?
10. In which sports will meters be used to measure distance?
11. Which words will not use the British U in their spelling?
12. What will the American systems of weights and measures cause Europeans to do?

Part 5 Vocabulary Review *What expressions from the video have the same meaning as the highlighted expressions in the sentences below?*

1. I hear the British are sending another 5,000 [**soldiers**].
2. We fight for a country of our own, a new nation where we choose our own [**measurement systems**].
3. I must [**admit**], it feels a little [**not simple, not clear**], sir.
4. We will have rulers with inches on one side and centimeters on the other so that we can see where they [**match, correspond**].
5. One of them will [**be logical**] to the entire world, and the other will [**be illogical**].
6. That is my dream for our country, men: [**a mix of cultures**] of different measurements that will make European men [**lose their temper, blow up**].
7. In short, a land of [**freedom**].

Part 6 Discussion *Discuss these questions with your partner or group.*

1. What units does your country use to measure distance, weight, volume, and temperature?
2. The US uses a mix of the metric and imperial systems. If/When you are in the US, what part of this mix is the most confusing?
3. The imperial system (feet, pounds, gallons etc.) comes from Britain, but Britain has mostly (officially) switched to the metric system. The US has not. Why do you think the US is holding on to the imperial system?
4. Does your country use imperial units for anything? If so, what?
5. What is degrees Celsius based on? (i.e. What does 0°C and 100°C correspond to?)
6. What is the Fahrenheit scale based on? (i.e. what does 0 °F and 100 °F correspond to?)
7. What other units of measurement do you know that are not mentioned in this video? Are there any units of measurement that are unique to your country?
8. To test your knowledge:
 - How many kilometers are in a mile?
 - How many liters are in a gallon? In a quart?
 - How many pounds are in a kilogram?
 - At what point (number) do degrees Fahrenheit and degrees Celsius intersect?

Script

Soldier 2: I hear the British are sending another 5,000 troops.

Soldier 4: How will we ever win this war?

Washington: By remembering what we fight for.

Soldier 3: General Washington.

Washington: Sit, please. We need your strength for the fight ahead. We fight for a country of our own, a new nation where we choose our own laws. Choose our own leaders. And choose our own systems of weights and measures.

Soldier 3: Weights and measures, sir?

Washington: Yes. Yes, I dream of that one day our proud nation will measure weights in pounds and that 2,000 pounds shall be called a ton.

Soldier 4: And what will 1,000 pounds be called, sir?

Washington: Nothing. Because we will have no word for that.

Soldier 3: It seems like we should have a word for 1,000 pounds, sir.

Washington: And yet, we won't. Because we are free men. And we will be free to measure liquids in liters and milliliters, but not all liquids. Only soda, wine, and alcohol.

Soldier 4: Only those, sir?

Washington: Yes. Because for milk and paint, we will use gallons, pints, and quarts, God willing.

Soldier 3: Okay. How many liters are in a gallon, sir?

Washington: Nobody knows.

Soldier 2: And, sir, in this new country, what plans are there for men of color such as I?

Washington: Distance will be measured in inches, feet, yards, and miles. So 12 inches to a foot.

Soldier 1: 12 feet to a yard.

Washington: If it were only so simple. 3 feet to a yard.

Soldier 1: And how many yards to a mile?

Washington: Nobody knows.

Soldier 2: Okay. Well, how many feet to a mile?

Washington: 5,280, of course. It's a simple number that everyone will remember.

Soldier 3: I must confess, it feels a little complicated, sir. Why not use meters and kilometers?

Washington: We will, soldier. But only in certain unpopular sports like track and swimming. For popular sports like football, we will use yards.

Soldier 4: Football, sir?

Washington: Yes. It's a sport where you throw a ball with your hands.

Soldier 3: So in football, there is no kicking?

Washington: There's a little kicking. You kick the ball to get points.

Soldier 1: How many points, sir?

Washington: Sometimes one and sometimes three.

Soldier 3: I'm very confused, sir.

Washington: Do not worry. For our new nation, we will have rulers with two sets of numbers. Inches on one side, centimeters on the other.

Soldier 4: So we can see where they line up?

Washington: Yes, except that they don't line up, and they never will.

Soldier 4: Why?

Washington: Liberty, son. Liberty.

Soldier 2: And the slaves, sir, what of them?

Washington: You asked about the temperature.

Soldier 2: I did not.

Washington: We shall have two different unrelated scales of temperature. One of them will make sense to the entire world, and the other will be super random. Our great nation will use the random one.

Soldier 4: What is the scale called, sir?

Washington: Fahrenheit.

Soldier 4: Spell that for me.

Washington: Impossible. But one day, if we are brave, we will get rid of the U in a lot of British words like color and armor. But by God, we will keep the British U in the word glamour.

Soldier 3: Only glamour, sir?

Washington: Only glamour. That is my dream for our country, men: a melting pot of different measurements that will make European men throw tantrums. In short, a land of liberty.

Soldier 2: Where all men are free. Where all men are free, right?

Answers

Part 1

1. How many inches are there in a foot? **12**
2. How many feet are there in a yard? **3**
3. How long is a ruler? **30 cm / 12 inches**
4. What system do Americans use to measure temperature? **Fahrenheit**
5. What is the volume of the standard American glass beer bottle? **355ml / 12 oz.**
6. How much milk is in the standard American plastic milk jug that you buy at a grocery store? **1 gallon**
7. How do British people spell the word "color"? How about "glamour"? **colour, glamour**
8. How many points do you get in American football for kicking a field goal? How about an extra point? **3 points, 1 point**

Part 3

1. **False** Washington dreams of a nation that uses only liters and milliliters to measure all liquids.
2. **False** Washington promises that the U.S. will not use meters and kilometers for anything.
3. **True** Washington believes 2,000 pounds will be called a "ton" in the new system of weights and measures.
4. **False** In the new system, volume will be measured in inches, feet, yards, and miles.
5. **False** Washington predicts that 12 feet will make up one yard in the new nation.
6. **False** Football is described as a sport in which people never kick the ball.
7. **True** The new nation will use both inches and centimeters on rulers.
8. **True** Washington predicts that the new nation will use the most illogical scale to measure temperature.
9. **False** Washington declares that the new nation will not change the spelling of any English words.
10. **False** Washington promises that all men will be free in the new nation.

Part 4

1. How many pounds are there in a ton? **2000**
2. What is 1,000 pounds called? **Nothing**
3. What liquids will be measured in liters and milliliters? **Soda, wine, alcohol**
4. What units will be used to measure milk and paint? **Gallons, pints, quarts**
5. How many inches in a foot? **12**
6. How many feet in a yard? **3**
7. How many yards in a mile? **No one knows**
8. How many feet in a mile? **5 280**
9. How many points do you get for kicking a ball in football? **Sometimes 1, sometimes 3**
10. In which sports will meters be used to measure distance? **Unpopular sports like track (running) and swimming**
11. Which words will not use the British U in their spelling? **Color, Armor**
12. What will the American systems of weights and measures cause Europeans to do? **Throw tantrums (get angry)**

Part 5

1. I hear the British are sending another 5,000 [**troops**].
2. We fight for a country of our own, a new nation where we choose our own [**systems of weights and measures**].
3. I must [**confess**], it feels a little [**complicated**], sir.
4. We will have rulers with inches on one side and centimeters on the other so that we can see where they [**line up**].
5. One of them will [**make sense**] to the entire world, and the other will [**be super random**].
6. That is my dream for our country, men: [**a melting pot**] of different measurements that will make European men [**throw tantrums**].
7. In short, a land of [**liberty**].