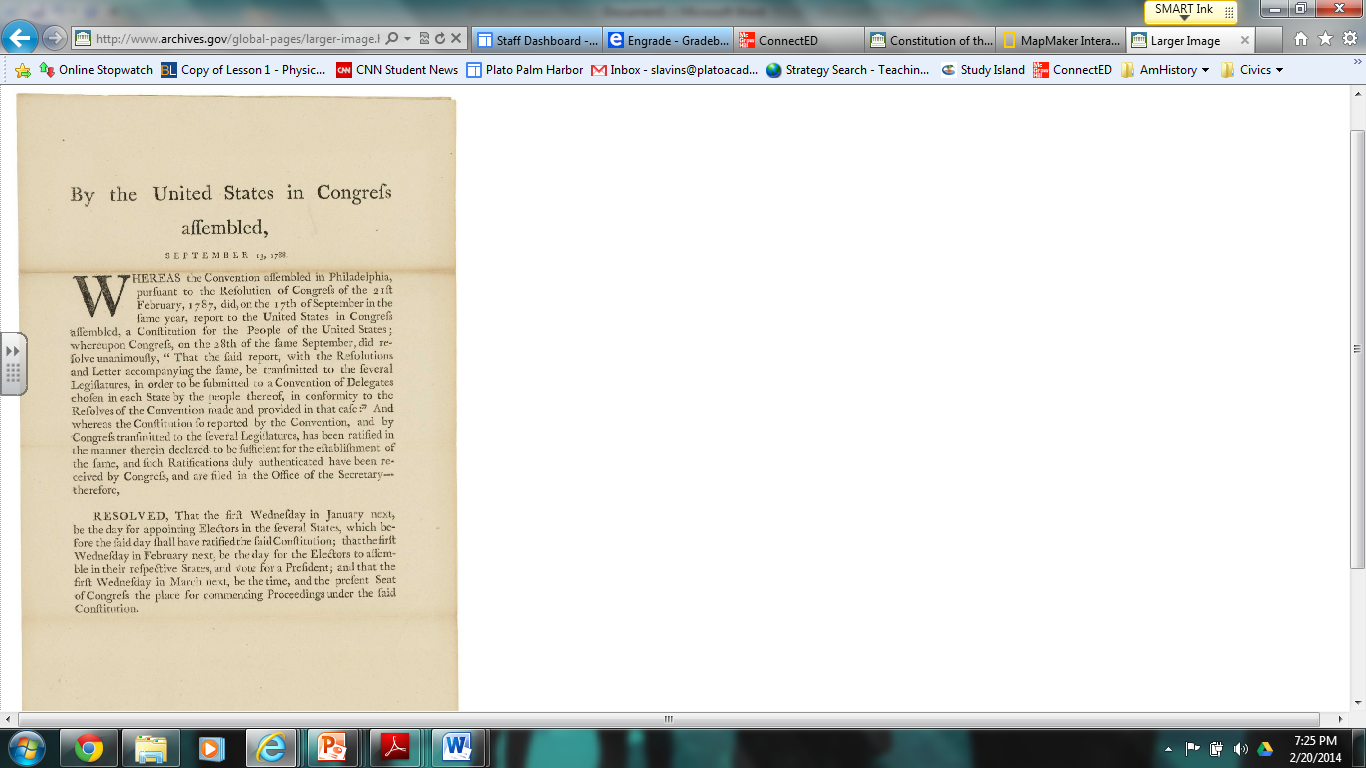
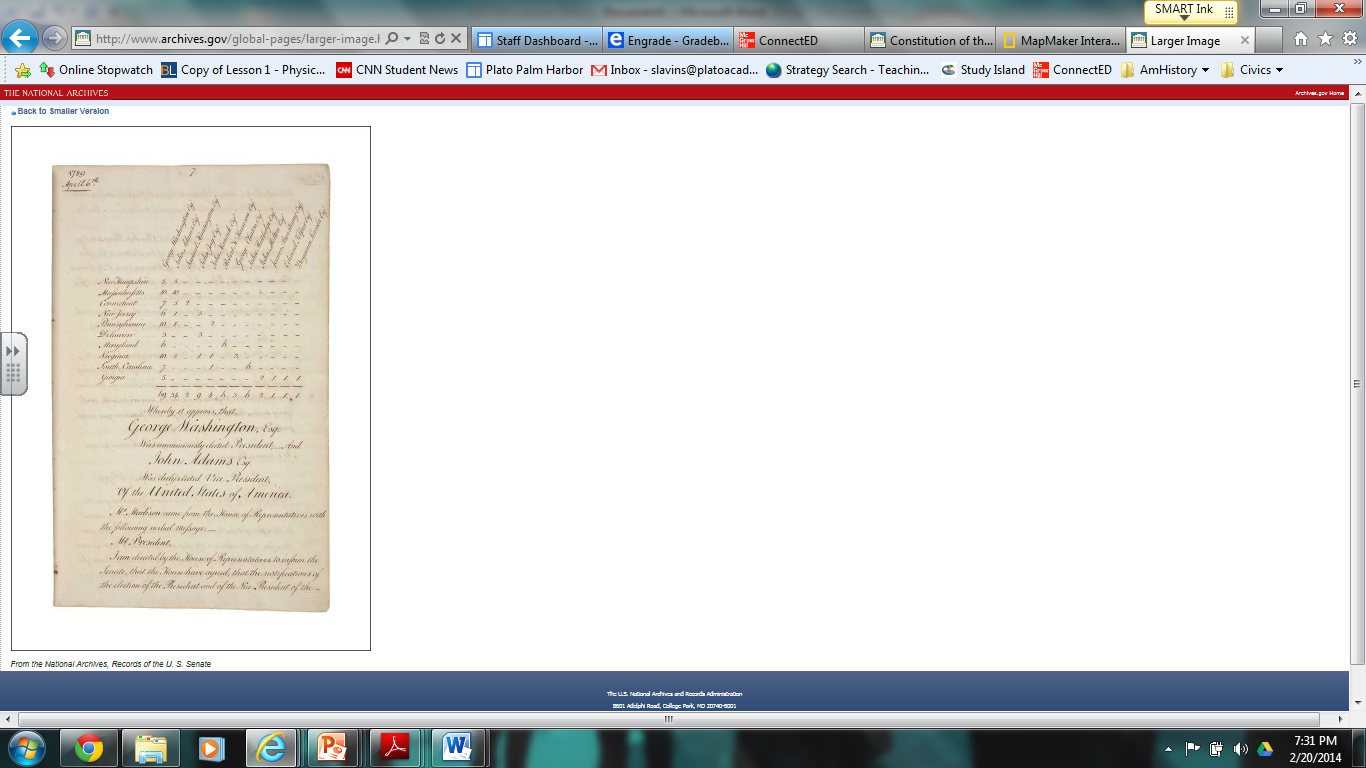
**Announcement of the First Presidential Election, Sept. 13, 1788**

**T**oday we can hear breaking news from around the globe twenty-four hours a day, but for eighteenth-century Americans the wait was considerably longer. The most rapid form for circulating news of that era was the broadside, a simple flyer printed on one side of a sheet of paper. Copies were posted in public places such as town halls and coffeehouses, read aloud in churches and public meetings, and often reprinted in newspapers.

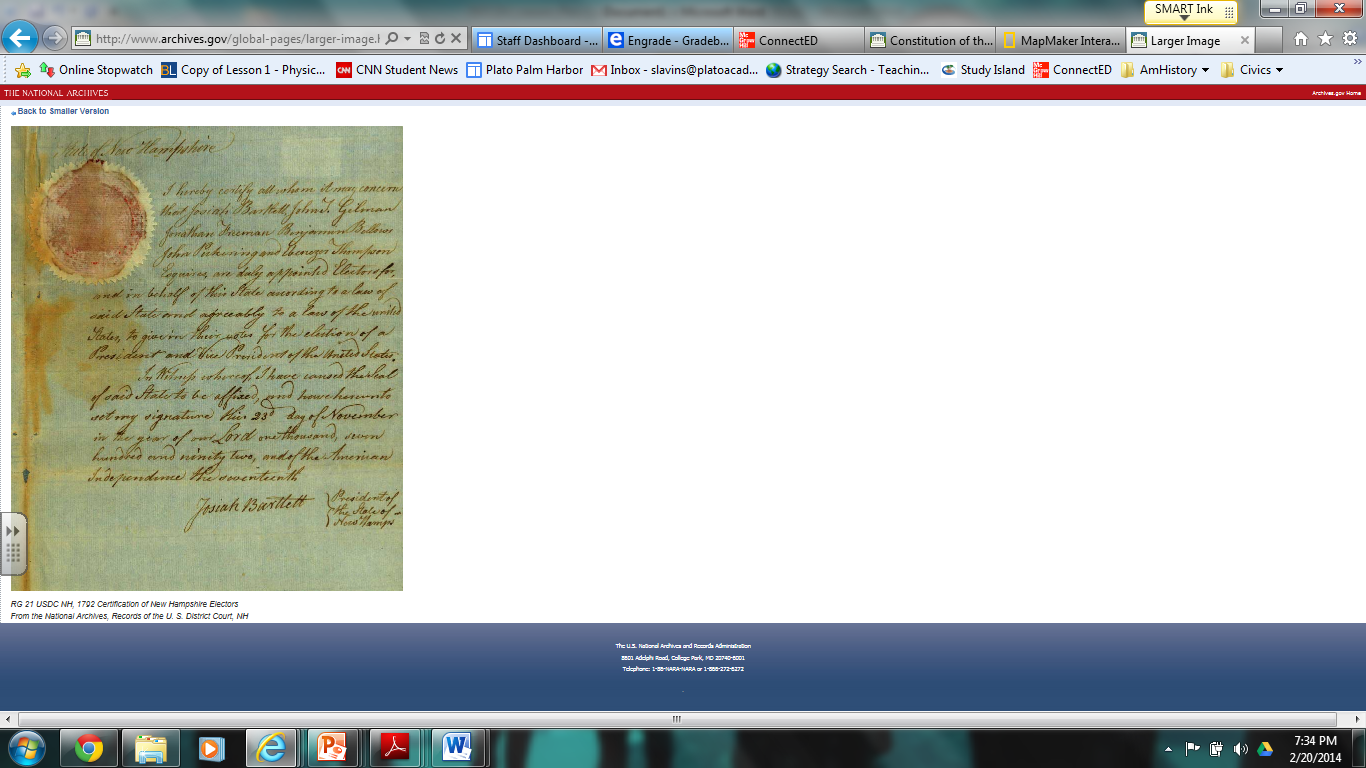
This broadside, published on September 13, 1788, lays out the procedure for selecting the first President of the United States under the newly approved Constitution of the United States. The election of the first President was by appointed electors, not by a general election. All states that had approved the Constitution by the first Wednesday in January 1789 would appoint electors on that day. Those electors would assemble on the first Wednesday in February 1789 and vote for a President, and the business of running the government under the new constitution would begin a month later.

**Journal of the Senate of the United States, April 6, 1789**

The first Presidential election had little in common with the public, televised, and sustained political campaigns of today. In late eighteenth century America, campaigning for public office-or even expressing an interest in being elected-was considered proof that an individual was overly ambitious and unfit to serve. Everyone knew that George Washington-the man who embodied the American Revolution-was almost certain to be elected President. But Washington, tired from his years of public service, believed that becoming a candidate was disreputable. After Alexander Hamilton convinced Washington that refusing to serve was even more dishonorable, he allowed his name to be put forward, while continuing to act unaware of his candidacy.

On April 6, 1789, the United States Senate met formally for the first time. After electing its temporary President, the Senate turned to its constitutional duty of counting the electoral ballots for President and Vice President. Only electors from the ten states that had ratified the Constitution voted. This page from the First Journal of the United States Senate shows the results of that election: Washington was unanimously elected President and John Adams of Massachusetts, who finished second in the balloting, was elected Vice President.

**Certification of NH Electors – 1792**

You may know Josiah Bartlett only as the President of the United States in the TV show "The West Wing". But he was a real flesh-and-blood revolutionary and signer of the Declaration from NH. Dr. Josiah Bartlett was the second man to sign the Declaration of Independence (after John Hancock). William Whipple and Matthew Thornton also signed from New Hampshire. Born in Amesbury, MA, Bartlett practiced medicine in the nearby little town of Kingston, NH. He was respected as a staunch patriot. Bartlett twice attended the Continental Congress and, after the Revolutionary War, became a "president" of New Hampshire.

Josiah Bartlett certified New Hampshire's six presidential electors for the second presidential election in 1792. Shortly afterwards his title was changed to "governor" and he became the first man to hold that title in New Hampshire.

Use the documents provided and information available from the [U.S. Electoral College Home Page](http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/electoral-college/).

1. Respond:
   1. When and how did the first presidential election occur?
   2. Who ran in the first presidential election? Who won?
   3. Which states participated in it? For whom did they vote?
   4. How was it different from modern elections?
2. Create visual representations (bar graphs) of electors' votes for 1789 using [historical election results found on the U.S. Electoral College website](http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/electoral-college/historical.html).

Respond:

* 1. Which states had the largest and smallest populations?
  2. What was the average number of electors per state?
  3. What might have changed the election's outcome?

1. Refer to the [U.S. Constitution, Article II](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_transcript.html), and ["What is the Electoral College?"](http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/electoral-college/about.html) on the U.S. Electoral College website, to study how we elect a President today compared to the first Presidential election.

**Other Resources**

* [Constitution of the United States](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution.html)
* [Meet the Founding Fathers](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_founding_fathers.html)
* [Every Four Years: Electing a President](http://www.trumanlibrary.org/museum/4years/index.htm)
* [Presidential Timeline: Presidential History](http://www.archives.gov/global-pages/exit.html?link=http://www.presidentialtimeline.org)
* [USA.gov](http://www.usa.gov/)
* http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/electoral-college/