

- The President of the United States has a complicated job with many roles that he or she must fulfill. After examining several similar advertisements from a local newspaper, help students to write a "Help Wanted" advertisement for the presidency, either as a class or individually. Students should include clear descriptions about the qualifications necessary to fill this complex position.
- Students can research the many monuments that honor American Presidents. For a good start to the class research, see Teresa Bateman's *Red, White, Blue and Uncle Who: The Stories Behind Some of America's Patriotic Symbols* (Holiday House, 2001). Then encourage students to create their own monuments to honor famous Presidents!
- Share some presidential inaugural addresses with your students. (See odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/P/ for written versions of these speeches and www.lib.msu.edu/vincent/presidents/ for audio recordings.) Discuss with students what they like and don't like about these speeches. What do they see as the purpose of these speeches? Using these inaugural addresses as models, encourage students to draft a speech, addressing what they would say if they were going to be inaugurated as President.
- Make a time line that illustrates the process of everything that occurs during a presidential election, including the primaries, conventions and the actual voting process on Election Day. Students can illustrate this time line, providing a picture for each step of the way. (See www2.lhric.org/pocantico/election/election.htm as a first stop in your research.)
- Conduct a presidential scavenger hunt with your class. Encourage students to find the first President to do the following things: live in the White House, be born in a log cabin, marry while in office, have a car at the White House, visit all 50 states, install a bathtub at the White House, give a speech over the radio or visit a foreign country. This search can be expanded with other fun Presidential facts!

Suggested Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our Web site at www.LibraryVideo.com

- www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/index.html
www.whitehouse.gov/history/firstladies/
The "Presidents' Hall" and "First Ladies' Gallery" offer a wealth of information about the history of the presidency. Individual biographies for each President and First Lady are presented, including a portrait of each.

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• bensguide.gpo.gov

"Ben's Guide to U.S. Government for Kids" is a wonderful site with grade-specific material on the character and history of American government. Details about the many roles of the President and how the executive branch functions are provided.

• www.whitehousekids.gov

The Web site of the White House has a special section for kids, which includes a tour of the White House, information about the President's family and an American History interactive quiz. A helpful guide for teachers and parents is also provided.

Suggested Print Resources

- Feinberg, Barbara Silberdick. *The Changing White House*. Children's Press, Danbury, CT; 2000.
- Robb, Don. *Hail to the Chief: The American Presidency*. Charlesbridge Publishing, Watertown, MA; 2000.
- Sanders, Mark C. *The White House*. Steadwell Books, Austin, TX; 2000.
- Sobel, Syl. *Presidential Elections and Other Cool Facts*. Barron's Educational Series, Hauppauge, NY; 2001.
- St. George, Judith. *So You Want to Be President?* Philomel Books, New York, NY; 2000.

TEACHER'S GUIDE CONSULTANT

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COMPLETE LIST OF TITLES

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| • AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP | • A HISTORY OF THE PRESIDENCY |
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A HISTORY OF THE PRESIDENCY

Grades K-4

This guide is a supplement designed for teachers to use when presenting programs in the video series *American Government For Children*.

Before Viewing: Give students an introduction to the topic by relaying aspects of the program overview to them. Select pre-viewing discussion questions and vocabulary to provide a focus for students when they view the program.

After Viewing: Review the program and vocabulary, and use the follow-up questions and activities to inspire continued discussion. Encourage students to research the topic further with the Internet and print resources provided.



Program Overview

The office of the presidency is an important part of American government with an interesting history! The President of the United States is the head of the executive branch of government. He or she holds a number of powers and performs many jobs, some spelled out in the U.S. Constitution, others developed through the years. The President is America's chief of state, representing the nation and its people. Presidents carry on day-to-day supervision of the federal government through cabinet members they appoint to lead government departments. The President often acts as the nation's chief diplomat in meeting and negotiating with foreign government officials. The President is also the commander in chief of the armed forces. A number of Presidents, such as Washington, Jackson, Grant and Eisenhower, were even army generals before assuming this important role!

The United States of America has had many great Presidents, such as George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt. Especially in times of danger and hardship, Americans look to those occupying the highest executive office in the land to protect them. Every child born in America can dream that he or she may some day be the President of the United States.

Vocabulary

- President of the United States** — The highest official in the executive branch of American government.
- chief of state** — The role of the U.S. President as the representative of United States government and the symbol of all American people.
- chief executive** — The role of the U.S. President as the person who holds the power of the executive branch to execute, or carry out, America's laws.
- executive branch** — The part of American government that holds the power to execute, or carry out, the laws of the nation. The President is the head of the executive branch.
- chief diplomat** — The role of the U.S. President as America's representative to foreign countries.
- commander in chief** — The role of the U.S. President as the head of the American military forces.
- magistrate** — A government official. The chief magistrate is the highest government official in a country.
- constitution** — A document that describes what government is allowed to do and what it is not allowed to do. The U.S. Constitution is the highest law in America.
- candidate** — A person who runs for a government position.
- election** — A process in which people vote for the candidate of their choice.
- primary election** — The first round of elections in which voters select their party's candidate for the election.

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political party — A group of people that has similar ideas about how the country should be governed. A political party tries to influence government by supporting candidates who win elections and hold public offices.

convention — The meeting of a political party every four years, which is held before a presidential election to choose a candidate for President and for Vice President.

campaign — The activities held before an election to present a candidate's beliefs and gain public support.

presidential inauguration — The ceremony to swear in the President of the United States following an election.

inaugural address — A speech of a newly sworn-in President made during the inauguration.

Pre-viewing Discussion

- Brainstorm with students about what comes to mind when they hear the word "president." What does the President of the United States do? Why is the presidency an important position? Who is the President today? Who were some Presidents of the past?
- Encourage students to discuss the differences between a President and a king or queen. Which type of ruler would students prefer to have and why?
- Ask the students whether or not they aspire to be President some day. Why or why not? What would they want to do as President?
- What qualities should a good President have? Why do students think so? Which is the most important quality? Why?

Focus Questions

- What are some of the jobs of the U.S. President?
- What did Theodore Roosevelt have to do with national forests?
- What is a diplomat?
- How did George Washington become famous during the Revolutionary War?
- What would be wrong with addressing the President as "Your Majesty"?
- What is the U.S. Constitution?
- What are the qualifications needed to be President?
- What is a primary election?
- What are political parties?
- What do political conventions and campaigns have to do with elections?
- What is an oath and why are oaths important?
- Why was John F Kennedy a good U.S. citizen?
- What is a constitutional amendment?
- When was Franklin Delano Roosevelt President? What is something important about his presidency?

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- What is special about the White House? Where is it located?
- Who was the first President to live in the White House?
- Who was Abraham Lincoln and why was he important?

Follow-up Discussion

- Discuss with students whether or not they feel that American Presidents have too much power. Why or why not?
- Do students agree that Presidents should only serve two terms? Why should a President who does a very good job not serve a third or even a fourth term, if that is what Americans want?
- Encourage students to discuss what the following statement from President John F Kennedy's inaugural address means: "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country."
- Discuss with students what it might have been like for children to grow up in the White House. Would the students like to grow up there? What do they think would be the positive and negative aspects of growing up as the child of a President?

Follow-up Activities

- Ask students to work in groups to decide which of the Presidents of the United States was the greatest. Have them draw up a list of reasons for their answers. Then have them present their decisions to the rest of the class. Lead a class discussion about the pros and cons of each group's decision, then take a class vote to select the greatest President in the history of American government.
- Have the class hold a mock presidential convention. Have them center the convention on the views of competing candidates on two or three public issues proposed by the class. Ask the class to do some research on the issues before holding the convention.
- Take the class on a field trip to either of the following: a place associated with a President, such as a birthplace, presidential library, place where a President lived or gave a famous speech at some time in his or her life; OR a museum with historical exhibits about events associated with a particular President, such as a war in which the U.S. participated or an era such as the Great Depression, the Cold War, Westward Expansion, etc. Encourage students to find out what role the President played in the place or museum exhibit visited.
- Have your class write a letter to the President (The President, The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20500) or send an email (president@whitehouse.gov). Students might write a letter of encouragement or a persuasive letter about a certain issue.

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