

Name: _____

The Ultimate Guide to the Presidents: “Assume the Position” - 1789-1825

George Washington

00:00-19:45

1. What made this new office of president so different in the world?
2. The Founding Fathers established strong courts, a strong legislature, but planned for a weak executive. Why?
3. Why did the Founding Fathers create the Electoral College?
4. Why did Washington create a cabinet of advisors?
5. Why was the location of the new nation's capital city controversial?
6. Washington wanted to leave the presidency after his first term. Why?

7. War broke out in Europe, prompting Washington to respond. What did he choose to do and why do you think he chose that action?
8. What precedent did the above proclamation set?
9. What significant precedent did Washington set upon leaving office?
10. As a general rule, how did the Founding Fathers view political parties?

John Adams

19:45-25:45

11. Adams had a great background that made him appear perfect for the presidency. What did he lack?
12. What did the Alien & Sedition Acts do? Why were these acts especially problematic?

Thomas Jefferson

25:45-31:15

13. Historian Libby O'Connell said, "One of the things that Jefferson brings [to the presidency] is this sense of acting out democracy." What do you think she means by this?

14. What power did the Supreme Court claim in Marbury vs. Madison?

15. In what ways did the Louisiana Purchase represent a challenge to Jefferson's principles?

James Madison

31:15-37:34

16. Describe James Madison.

17. How did Dolly Madison define the role of first lady?

18. The U.S. declared war against Britain in 1812. Why was this a huge problem for the U.S.?

19. In August of 1814, the British captured Washington, D.C. and set fire to the White House. How do you think this impacted Americans psychologically?

20. How did the War of 1812 change the way Americans viewed themselves?

James Monroe

37:34-44:10

21. In what ways was James Monroe the last of his kind?

22. What issue had the previous presidents avoided that Monroe had to finally confront? Why did he have to confront it?

23. What did Monroe claim in the Monroe Doctrine?

24. How did the post-Monroe time represent a new era for the presidency?

KEY - Episode 1

The Ultimate Guide to the Presidents: “Assume the Position” - 1789-1825

George Washington

00:00-19:45

1. What made this new office of president so different in the world?
 - There was nothing to really compare it to. Most other countries were ruled by kings.
2. The Founding Fathers established strong courts, a strong legislature, but planned for a weak executive. Why?
 - They felt that King George III was an abusive executive. They didn't want to follow the example of foreign nations, which all had strong executives.
3. Why did the Founding Fathers create the Electoral College?
 - The delegates didn't think the common people would know the candidates well enough to choose among them.
4. Why did Washington create a cabinet of advisors?
 - He wanted a group of trusted people to help him decide what was proper for a president to do.
 - His decisions were setting new precedents for the future and he wanted to make good ones.
 - He wanted to be able to consult with people who were brilliant in their respective fields, to receive their counsel and to have them run executive departments.
5. Why was the location of the new nation's capital city controversial?
 - The various regions (e.g. the South) wanted to control it, and they did not want the other region to control it.
6. Washington wanted to leave the presidency after his first term. Why?
 - He wanted to retire to his own home / farm.
 - He had exhausted himself in the service of his country.
 - He didn't like being criticized or challenged.

7. War broke out in Europe, prompting Washington to respond. What did he choose to do and why do you think he chose that action?
- He issued a neutrality proclamation.
 - Possible answers: He knew the U.S. was unable to get involved in a war; he didn't want the U.S. to function like a part of Europe; he was afraid the new nation could not survive a war.
8. What precedent did the above proclamation set?
- That it is the president and not Congress that sets American foreign policy.
9. What significant precedent did Washington set upon leaving office?
- That a president would only serve for two terms.
10. As a general rule, how did the Founding Fathers view political parties?
- Their feelings towards party politics were generally very negative.

John Adams

19:45-25:45

11. Adams had a great background that made him appear perfect for the presidency. What did he lack?
- "He wasn't George Washington." He was short, balding, overweight – in general, he didn't have the presence necessary to really be a leader.
 - He did not appear as they expected a president to appear (possible discussion: What do we expect a president to look like? How do we expect him/her to act?)
12. What did the Alien & Sedition Acts do? Why were these acts especially problematic?
- They arrest people who spoke out against the government.
 - They are problems because they are unconstitutional (they trample the 1st amendment, which was very new).

Thomas Jefferson

25:45-31:15

13. Historian Libby O'Connell said, "One of the things that Jefferson brings [to the presidency] is this sense of acting out democracy." What do you think she means by this?
- Possible answers: Jefferson felt that he was a representative of the people, and so he ought to act like the people. Jefferson attempted to practice what he preached. Jefferson felt the presidency should be low key.
14. What power did the Supreme Court claim in Marbury vs. Madison?
- The power to rule actions of the other branches unconstitutional.

15. In what ways did the Louisiana Purchase represent a challenge to Jefferson's principles?

- Jefferson believed the action was unconstitutional, since it says nothing about a president's power to acquire territories.

James Madison

31:15-37:34

16. Describe James Madison.

- He was kind of a nerd. He would have anxiety attacks. He seemed like a wizened old man even at a relatively young age.

17. How did Dolly Madison define the role of first lady?

- She made it the first lady's duty to act as a kind of hostess for diplomatic guests. She helped make the White House a center for Washington and the nation.

18. The U.S. declared war against Britain in 1812. Why was this a huge problem for the U.S.?

- The U.S. was grossly unprepared for the war, whereas Britain was completely ready.

19. In August of 1814, the British captured Washington, D.C. and set fire to the White House. How do you think this impacted Americans psychologically?

- Possible answers: It would have been devastating to see their own capital burning. It would have been frightening - perhaps many wondered if the U.S. would return to a revolutionary-war style conflict, or if the U.S. would survive at all. It also may have simply made them angry like Pearl Harbor or 9/11.

20. How did the War of 1812 change the way Americans viewed themselves?

- They went from viewing themselves as Virginians, Pennsylvanians, etc. and began to see themselves as Americans.

James Monroe

37:34-44:10

21. In what ways was James Monroe the last of his kind?

- He was the last of the revolutionary generation; the last of the founders.
- He was the last to wear knee breeches and a tricorn hat.

22. What issue had the previous presidents avoided that Monroe had to finally confront? Why did he have to confront it?

- slavery
- Missouri applies for membership in the union.

23. What did Monroe claim in the Monroe Doctrine?

- The Americas are in our sphere of influence and Europe should butt out.

24. How did the post-Monroe time represent a new era for the presidency?

- The presidents up through Monroe basically inherited the presidency, since they'd served during the revolution. Future presidents had to "earn it themselves."
- It was the end of the founder-presidents, who used their time to establish precedents for the future.

Name: _____

Ultimate Guide to the Presidents: “Power to the People” - 1824-1849

John Quincy Adams

00:00-13:37

1. John and Abigail Adams, John Quincy’s parents, had spent a significant amount of effort preparing him to be president. What was the downside of this preparation?
2. What advantages did Andrew Jackson have in the election?
3. Andrew Jackson easily won the popular vote. Why did he fail to win the presidency?
4. Adams dreamed of a nation based on ancient Rome, with a strong federal government building roads, running universities, and making scientific inquiries. How much of this was Adams able to accomplish? Why?

Andrew Jackson

13:37-26:04

5. Describe the Election of 1828.
6. What was Jackson’s approach toward the Native population? How did most Americans feel about this approach?
7. How did Jackson interact with Congress?

8. According to historian Carol Berkin, what was the result of Jackson's fights against Congress?

Martin Van Buren

26:04-31:43

9. The video talks about Van Buren's recession and says that he inherited it from Andrew Jackson. What do they mean when they say he "inherited" the recession?

10. What criticisms did the American people level at Van Buren?

William Henry Harrison

31:43-33:19

11. Why did Harrison choose to give his inaugural address without a coat and a hat?

John Tyler

33:19-36:59

12. Why did Tyler fail to get along with Congress?

13. Tyler was a less effective president. Because of this, he needed an important issue to help him win re-election. What issue did he find *and how did this impact the U.S.?*

James K. Polk

37:00-44:10

14. Why did they begin playing “Hail to the Chief” to welcome the president?
15. Historian George Forgie said, “President Polk represents the shift from the politics of economics, which was central to the Jacksonian period, to the politics of expansion.” What does this mean?
16. Polk’s greatest legacy is American expansion. This expansion, though, came at a cost. What problem stemmed from it?

KEY - Episode 2

Ultimate Guide to the Presidents: “Power to the People” - 1824-1849

John Quincy Adams

00:00-13:37

1. John and Abigail Adams, John Quincy’s parents, had spent a significant amount of effort preparing him to be president. What was the downside of this preparation?
 - It make him friendless. “He was as serious as a heart attack.” It made it difficult for him to fit in. It made him a “notorious crank.”
 - For the first time, personality played a role in the election.
2. What advantages did Andrew Jackson have in the election?
 - His personality fit better - he was very well-liked and personality mattered in this election.
 - He embodied the manliness of the western frontier. He was also a war hero.
 - He embraced the nationalistic ideals behind manifest destiny.
3. Andrew Jackson easily won the popular vote. Why did he fail to win the presidency?
 - He won the Electoral College, also, but did not win a majority there. The election was consequently decided by the House of Representative.
4. Adams dreamed of a nation based on ancient Rome, with a strong federal government building roads, running universities, and making scientific inquiries. How much of this was Adams able to accomplish? Why?
 - Very little - because he found himself in the minority, fighting against a combative congress. He refused to swallow his pride and work with his political enemies.

Andrew Jackson

13:37-26:04

5. Describe the Election of 1828.
 - The video calls it a “new low in mudslinging” and “perhaps the most vicious campaign in American history.”
 - Whatever the students put, it should reflect the fact that the election was extremely contentious.
6. What was Jackson’s approach toward the Native American Indian population? How did most Americans feel about this approach?
 - He wanted them out of the way for settlers.

- Most Americans either condoned or ignored the issue.

7. How did Jackson interact with Congress?

- He vetoed a lot of bills (12 vs. all previous presidents' combined 10). He attempted to circumvent it and set it up as a foil for him to fight against. He used the veto liberally, "fighting off Congress with a shield of populist support."

8. According to historian Carol Berkin, what was the result of Jackson's fights against Congress?

- Economic chaos. Thousands of "common men" suffer. It led to the "brewing" of a financial crisis.

Martin Van Buren

26:04-31:43

9. The video talks about Van Buren's recession and says that he inherited it from Andrew Jackson. What do they mean when they say he "inherited" the recession?

- The recession was caused by Andrew Jackson's policies.

10. What criticisms did the American people level at Van Buren?

- They said he was out-of-touch, that he was dining on French-named food while they starved, that he lived in luxury, and they were especially angry that he paid \$3000 to landscape the Executive Mansion's flower beds in a depression.

William Henry Harrison

31:43-33:19

11. Why did Harrison choose to give his inaugural address without a coat and a hat?

- He was the oldest person to serve as president until Reagan. He had been criticized as "Old Granny" and wanted to prove his "vitality."

John Tyler

33:19-36:59

12. Why did Tyler fail to get along with Congress?

- He vetoed party legislation and was consequently thrown out of it.
- His nickname was "His Accidency," which implied a lack of respect.

13. Tyler was a less effective president. Because of this, he needed an important issue to help him win re-election. What issue did he find *and how did this impact the U.S.*?

- Adding Texas to the Union.
- It furthered the divide between North and South and helped lead to the Civil War.

James K. Polk

37:00-44:10

14. Why did they begin playing "Hail to the Chief" to welcome the president?

- Because Polk was an unremarkable 5'8" and his wife was afraid that, without a theme song, no one would notice him entering a room.

15. Historian George Forgie said, “President Polk represents the shift from the politics of economics, which was central to the Jacksonian period, to the politics of expansion.” What does this mean?

- Prior to Polk, presidents focused on economic issues. During Polk’s leadership, the focus was on expanding the United States.

16. Polk’s greatest legacy is American expansion. This expansion, though, came at a cost. What problem stemmed from it?

- The expansion made American “bonds weaker,” which in turn led to the sectional conflict of the Civil War.

Name: _____

Ultimate Guide to the Presidents: “A House Divided” - 1849-1865

Zachary Taylor

00:00-8:09

1. What was Zachary Taylor’s political background before becoming president?
2. The issue of slavery had been “kicked down the road” since the earliest days of America. What events forced it to become an issue during Taylor’s administration?
3. What actions by President Taylor angered the South?

Millard Fillmore

8:09-12:04

4. How did the Compromise of 1850 lead to the destruction of Fillmore’s career?
5. Historian Richard Norton Smith said, “Millard Fillmore is a punch line today, but if you took Millard Fillmore out of history, America would be a very different place.” What would America have been like without Millard Fillmore?

Franklin Pierce

12:04-19:59

6. Why did they choose Franklin Pierce?
7. The hot-button issue of Pierce’s day became the route of the transcontinental railroad. Southerners agree on Stephen Douglas’s northern route in exchange for what?
8. How did the compromise in the above question lead to difficulties?

9. Historian H.W. Brands said, “The president, who is supposed to be the one who represents the country as a whole, found that there was no country as a whole to represent. There were these two different sections, and to try to somehow pull them together would have been beyond the capacity of any individual.” Agree or disagree with this statement and cite historical evidence to support your position.

James Buchanan

20:00-24:10

10. Describe Buchanan’s feelings about the South.
11. How did Buchanan respond to the Dred Scott decision?

Abraham Lincoln

24:10-44:09

12. What event triggered the secession of South Carolina?
13. The South controlled the area around Fort Sumter, but not the fort itself. Lincoln knew they needed help, but did not want to start a war. What did Lincoln choose to do?
14. Lincoln greatly expanded the power of the presidency. Name at least three ways he did so.
15. Lincoln was one of our most effective Commander-in-Chiefs. What was Lincoln’s military background?

16. In issuing the Emancipation Proclamation, what authority did Lincoln cite?
17. Historian Edward L. Ayers said, “So I think there’s an important lesson, is that we look back on these presidents, and they weren’t always monuments.” What did he mean by this?
18. *Harper’s Weekly* was America’s most popular periodical at the time of Lincoln’s assassination. What did *Harper’s Weekly* say about Lincoln?

KEY - Episode 3

Ultimate Guide to the Presidents: “A House Divided” - 1849-1865

Zachary Taylor

00:00-8:09

1. What was Zachary Taylor’s political background before becoming president?
 - He had never held office. He had never even voted.
2. The issue of slavery had been “kicked down the road” since the earliest days of America. What events forced it to become an issue during Taylor’s administration?
 - The U.S. had recently acquired a very large segment of land in the West. They had to decide what to do with slavery in the Mexican Cession.
3. What actions by President Taylor angered the South?
 - He sided with the North on the expansion of slavery. He felt that slavery should not be curtailed, but should not be allowed to expand into the West, either.

Millard Fillmore

8:09-12:04

4. How did the Compromise of 1850 lead to the destruction of Fillmore’s career?
 - It angered all of his would-be supporters.
 - The South was angry about California’s entry as a free state; the North was angry about the Fugitive Slave Act. Because both sides were frustrated, Fillmore was left without supporters.
 - Slave catchers started rounded up people whether they had been slaves or not, which brought about so much anger that the Whigs would not even nominate Fillmore.
5. Historian Richard Norton Smith said, “Millard Fillmore is a punch line today, but if you took Millard Fillmore out of history, America would be a very different place.” What would America have been like without Millard Fillmore?
 - There are many possible answers, but correct answers should reflect the importance of the Compromise of 1850 and his role in signing it.

Franklin Pierce

12:04-19:59

6. Why did they choose Franklin Pierce?
 - Because he could appeal to both pro-slavery and anti-slavery forces.

7. The hot-button issue of Pierce's day became the route of the transcontinental railroad. Southerners agree on Stephen Douglas's northern route in exchange for what?
 - Slavery would be determined by the settlers in new areas and not by the federal government (popular sovereignty - the Kansas-Nebraska Act).
8. How did the compromise in the above question lead to difficulties?
 - It led to Bleeding Kansas, a sort of mini-civil war within Kansas.
9. Historian H.W. Brands said, "The president, who is supposed to be the one who represents the country as a whole, found that there was no country as a whole to represent. There were these two different sections, and to try to somehow pull them together would have been beyond the capacity of any individual." Agree or disagree with this statement and cite historical evidence to support your position.
 - Answers will vary, but should contain solid historical reasoning. This is also a good time to discuss how historical argument works.

James Buchanan

20:00-24:10

10. Describe Buchanan's feelings about the South.
 - Even though he was from Pennsylvania, he felt a great deal of sympathy for the South. He felt that they had been "sinned against" by the North.
 - He was waiting to see what the decision was in the Dred Scott case and said he would go with that choice.
11. How did Buchanan respond to the Dred Scott decision?
 - He figured that the matter was settled. He thought that the issue was finished.

Abraham Lincoln

24:10-44:09

12. What event triggered the secession of South Carolina?
 - Lincoln's election.
13. The South controlled the area around Fort Sumter, but not the fort itself. Lincoln knew they needed help, but did not want to start a war. What did Lincoln choose to do?
 - He sent provisions only (no reinforcements).
14. Lincoln greatly expanded the power of the presidency. Name at least three ways he did so.
 - He sent in armed troops, censored telegraphs, shut down newspapers, and jailed city leaders.
 - He developed the notion of "war powers" for the presidency.
 - He suspended the right of habeas corpus to quarantine the die-hard rebels from their sources of support.

- Called up the militia and imposed a blockade on southern ports - without the consent of Congress.

15. Lincoln was one of our most effective Commander-in-Chiefs. What was Lincoln's military background?

- Virtually none. His only experience was a brief Indian war in 1830.

16. In issuing the Emancipation Proclamation, what authority did Lincoln cite?

- Because he did not really have the civil authority to do so, he claimed the authority as Commander-in-Chief due to wartime necessity.

17. Historian Edward L. Ayers said, "So I think there's an important lesson, is that we look back on these presidents, and they weren't always monuments." What did he mean by this?

- The great people of our nation weren't always as well regarded as they are today.

18. *Harper's Weekly* was America's most popular periodical at the time of Lincoln's assassination. What did *Harper's Weekly* say about Lincoln?

- That he would go down in history as the greatest president the United States had ever had.

Name: _____

The Ultimate Guide to the Presidents: “Executive Retreat” - 1865-1901

Andrew Johnson

0:00-12:04

1. How did being a Democrat lead to problems for Andrew Johnson?
2. Johnson made a record number of vetoes. How did Congress respond?
3. Johnson was the first president to be impeached. What led to his impeachment?
4. The political struggles of the Johnson administration are fundamentally a struggle for power between Congress and the presidency. Who won this struggle?

Ulysses S. Grant

12:28-19:50

5. How did Grant fight against the violence of the KKK?
6. What did the government do to combat the Long Depression that began in 1873?
7. What had people in Grant’s administration do that turned into scandals?

Rutherford B. Hayes

20:08-26:20

8. How did rich, powerful men like Andrew Carnegie & John D. Rockefeller increase their wealth and power?

9. The 1876 election ended with three disputed states. How did they resolve this dispute?

10. Why were the presidents too weak to lead the nation?

11. Since the presidents were almost useless, who was really in charge of the nation?

James A. Garfield

26:20-27:28

12. Garfield had been incapacitated (meaning he couldn't really function). This had almost no result on the government of the United States whatsoever. What does this tell you about the nature of the U.S. government in this period?

Chester A. Arthur

27:28-29:30

13. Why did the public dislike Arthur?

Grover Cleveland

29:30-33:02

14. How did the election of 1884 affect Cleveland's presidency?

Benjamin Harrison

33:02-34:34

15. Harrison really didn't lead when he was president. What did he do with his time?

Grover Cleveland

34:34-36:25

16. What led to the failure of Cleveland's administration and a great deal of anger against his Democratic party?

William McKinley

36:25-44:10

17. What strategy did McKinley use to get elected?

18. Why was McKinley reluctant to use the military and what finally convinced him to go to war?

19. What new roles did America take on in the Spanish-American War?

KEY - Episode 4

The Ultimate Guide to the Presidents: “Executive Retreat” - 1865-1901

Andrew Johnson

0:00-12:04

1. How did being a Democrat lead to problems for Andrew Johnson?
 - He had been elected on the Republican ticket, mostly by Republicans, and faced a Republican Congress.
2. Johnson made a record number of vetoes. How did Congress respond?
 - They began by overriding the president's vetoes (71% of them).
3. Johnson was the first president to be impeached. What led to his impeachment?
 - Congress passed a law that did not allow him to fire his own cabinet members. Johnson fired one anyway.
 - Students could also write about the extremely contentious atmosphere between Congress and the President.
4. The political struggles of the Johnson administration are fundamentally a struggle for power between Congress and the presidency. Who won this struggle?
 - Congress

Ulysses S. Grant

12:28-19:50

5. How did Grant fight against the violence of the KKK?
 - He asked Congress to pass a law suspending their rights. He then had federal troops arrest many Klan leaders and sent a surge of federal troops to disperse the rest.
6. What did the government do to combat the Long Depression that began in 1873?
 - Grant suggested putting people to work on public projects, but his idea was shot down.
 - Congress passed a law that would print money, but Grant vetoed it.
 - In the end, the government basically did nothing.
7. What had people in Grant's administration do that turned into scandals?
 - They mostly received kickbacks from railroad companies.

Rutherford B. Hayes

20:08-26:20

8. How did rich, powerful men like Andrew Carnegie & John D. Rockefeller increase their wealth and power?
 - They bought failing companies at “fire-sale prices.” They bought all of the failing companies. The video also notes that this was only possible because the government was relatively weak compared to industrialists (some students may put this).
9. The 1876 election ended with three disputed states. How did they resolve this dispute?
 - The Compromise of 1877. Republicans agreed to remove the last federal troops from the South in the three disputed states in exchange for the election of Hayes.
10. Why were the presidents too weak to lead the nation?
 - No one had forgotten what happened to Johnson when he went up against Congress and the presidents did not want to see it happen to them.
 - Because Grant’s administration was known for its corruption, people wanted quiet, uninvolved presidents.
11. Since the presidents were almost useless, who was really in charge of the nation?
 - The captains of industry.

James A. Garfield

26:20-27:28

12. Garfield had been incapacitated (meaning he couldn’t really function). This had almost no result on the government of the United States whatsoever. What does this tell you about the nature of the U.S. government in this period?
 - Virtually all of the power resided with Congress.
 - “Presidential responsibility had dropped a great deal.”

Chester A. Arthur

27:28-29:30

13. Why did the public dislike Arthur?
 - He had done virtually nothing. He had never really been elected to a major office. Instead, he was a product of the spoils system.

Grover Cleveland

29:30-33:02

14. How did the election of 1884 affect Cleveland’s presidency?
 - The media was highly partisan, so Cleveland never trusted them and ran the country accordingly.

Benjamin Harrison

33:02-34:34

15. Harrison really didn’t lead when he was president. What did he do with his time?

- He would sneak out at noon and go hunting.

Grover Cleveland

34:34-36:25

16. What led to the failure of Cleveland's administration and a great deal of anger against his Democratic party?

- He did not believe in government intervention to help people in economic hard times.

William McKinley

36:25-44:10

17. What strategy did McKinley use to get elected?

- He spent most of his money on pamphlets and posters and only gave political speeches from his front porch.

18. Why was McKinley reluctant to use the military and what finally convinced him to go to war?

- Because he was a veteran of the Civil War and had seen war's destruction.
- The destruction of the Maine and increasing public pressure.

19. What new roles did America take on in the Spanish-American War?

- Colonial power; world power

Name: _____

The Ultimate Guide to the Presidents: “Call of Duty” - 1899-1921

Theodore Roosevelt

00:00-21:18

1. Roosevelt was a weak and sickly child, but was a strong and healthy adult. What did he do to make that change?
2. Why was Roosevelt concerned about the control wielded by big business?
3. Roosevelt’s attitude to toward presidential powers was significantly different than previous presidents. When Roosevelt looked at the constitution, for what did he look?
4. Roosevelt was the first president to really advocate policy directly with the American people. How did Roosevelt increase his popularity and keep the attention on the presidency? Name at least three ways.
5. Theodore Roosevelt’s daughter said, “To understand my father, you need to realize that he must be the bride at every wedding and the corpse at every funeral.” What does this quote reveal about Roosevelt?
6. What is an Executive Order?
7. Roosevelt dreamt of building a canal to make transoceanic naval transport easier. What problem did he run into and how did he solve it?

8. Roosevelt sent the new, expanded navy around the world. It was called “The Great White Fleet.” What was the purpose of this journey?

William Howard Taft

21:18-2:

9. How did Taft view the presidency?
10. Describe the division within the Republican Party and explain how Taft increased this rift.
11. What were the “long-lasting implications” of Roosevelt’s choice to leave the Republican Party?

Woodrow Wilson

26:24-44:10

12. Wilson wanted to improve conditions for America’s poor. How did he get Congress to go along with his plans?
13. Wilson felt America was tied up by special interest groups. He wanted to fix this and “make America a fair playing ground again.” How did Wilson attempt to resolve this problem?

14. The narrator said, "Fighting for democracy abroad gave Wilson the power to curtail freedom at home." Explain what this means and give an example from Wilson's presidency.

15. How did U.S. involvement in WWI represent a change from previous U.S. policy?

16. Why was Wilson unable to get the League of Nations treaty ratified?

17. Wilson said, "The president can be as big a man as he can be." What did he mean by this?

KEY - Episode 5

The Ultimate Guide to the Presidents: “Call of Duty” - 1899-1921

Theodore Roosevelt

00:00-21:18

1. Roosevelt was a weak and sickly child, but was a strong and healthy adult. What did he do to make that change?
 - He took up boxing; he went West and became a cowboy.
2. Why was Roosevelt concerned about the control wielded by big business?
 - Food consumed half of the average family's salary.
 - Business interests controlled the government and he believed that the people should control it.
 - Businesses were preventing smaller businesses from starting/growing.
3. Roosevelt's attitude toward presidential powers was significantly different than previous presidents. When Roosevelt looked at the constitution, for what did he look?
 - Whether the Constitution prevented him from doing something. “Can I not do it?” If it didn't say he couldn't, then he could.
4. Roosevelt was the first president to really advocate policy directly with the American people. How did Roosevelt increase his popularity and keep the attention on the presidency? Name at least three ways.
 - He used all the new gadgets and made sure he was photographed using them.
 - He was an enormous multi-tasker, doing things like giving interviews while being shaved.
 - He was constantly speaking and made sure his thoughts were recorded.
 - He “turned his personal life into a photo op.”
5. Theodore Roosevelt's daughter said, “To understand my father, you need to realize that he must be the bride at every wedding and the corpse at every funeral.” What does this quote reveal about Roosevelt?
 - He always wanted to be the center of attention.
6. What is an Executive Order?
 - When the president bypasses the legislative process and issues policy directly.
7. Roosevelt dreamt of building a canal to make transoceanic naval transport easier. What problem did he run into and how did he solve it?

- The land where he needed to build his canal was owned by Colombia and they would not allow it.
 - To solve the problem, Roosevelt fomented a revolution among the Panamanians.
8. Roosevelt sent the new, expanded navy around the world. It was called “The Great White Fleet.” What was the purpose of this journey?
- He was setting the stage for the U.S. to become an international power player.
 - To show the “big stick.”
 - To make a statement about U.S. power.

William Howard Taft

21:18-2:

9. How did Taft view the presidency?
- He did not want to be president - he saw it as a prison.
10. Describe the division within the Republican Party and explain how Taft increased this rift.
- It was a battle between the conservatives and the progressives.
 - Taft increased the rift when he sided with the conservatives on many issues. When he tried to compromise and went after the steel trust, it only angered the progressives more because Roosevelt believed it was one of the few “beneficial” trusts.
11. What were the “long-lasting implications” of Roosevelt’s choice to leave the Republican Party?
- The progressives left with him. They never really returned to the Republican Party.

Woodrow Wilson

26:24-44:10

12. Wilson wanted to improve conditions for America’s poor. How did he get Congress to go along with his plans?
- He “seduced” them. He invited them to come and participate in meetings at the White House. He made them think that his ideas were their own. He convinced them through the power of his oratory.
13. Wilson felt America was tied up by special interest groups. He wanted to fix this and “make America a fair playing ground again.” How did Wilson attempt to resolve this problem?
- He convinced Congress to pass the Federal Reserve Act of 1913. He established the Federal Reserve System.
14. The narrator said, “Fighting for democracy abroad gave Wilson the power to curtail freedom at home.” Explain what this means and give an example from Wilson’s presidency.

- It means that in times of war the American people and Congress tend to choose security over freedom, allowing the president increased power over them.
- Wilson jailed some people, including some he had run against (Eugene Debs). He urged Congress to pass the Lever Fuel and Control Act, which allowed Wilson to dictate price and distribution of things necessary for the war.

15. How did U.S. involvement in WWI represent a change from previous U.S. policy?

- Since Washington, the U.S. had stayed out of European affairs, and now Wilson was charging into involvement with Europe.

16. Why was Wilson unable to get the League of Nations treaty ratified?

- The Republican-controlled Congress did not like Article X (that required defense of member nations). Wilson refused to compromise.
- He had a stroke while speaking on the topic in Pueblo, Colorado and could not continue pushing his ideas.
- Wilson refused to sign a modified version of the treaty.

17. Wilson said, "The president can be as big a man as he can be." What did he mean by this?

- The man can make the office. If you have an imaginative enough idea of the presidency, then you can transform the office and what it can do.

Name: _____

Ultimate Guide to the Presidents:

“Changing of the Guard” - 1920-1945

Warren Harding

00:00-9:08

1. In the election of 1920, why were the American people crying for change?
2. There were many factors that led to the election of Warren Harding. Name at least **two**.
3. According to the video, Harding was a terrible president. What made him so bad?
4. Harding had a few major scandals. All of these scandals have the same basic cause. What was the cause of the scandals?

Calvin Coolidge

9:08-16:55

5. Coolidge was left cleaning up after the scandals of Harding’s administration. What did he do to restore the dignity of the presidency?
6. For what personality trait was Coolidge known?
7. The `20s was an especially prosperous time. According to the video, what led to this prosperous state?

Herbert Hoover

16:55-21:32

8. Herbert Hoover had a different background from most other presidents. What was Hoover's background?
9. Historian H.W. Brands said, "If he'd been elected in 1920, Herbert Hoover would have been a great president...It was his misfortune to be the right man at the wrong time." What did Brands mean by this?
10. Why wouldn't Hoover help the desperate American people during the Depression?
11. How did Depression-era American view Hoover?

Franklin Delano Roosevelt

21:32-44:10

12. How did Roosevelt's inaugural address help the nation?
13. Roosevelt's first step was to shut down and restructure the banks. Most notably, he started insuring the banks. When they reopened, what happened?
14. How did Roosevelt control his public image?
15. FDR was frustrated when the Supreme Court ruled against him. What did he do in response?

16. In spite of all of FDR's New Deal programs, what was the economy of the 1930s like?
17. What role did Eleanor Roosevelt play in the administration?
18. Roosevelt faced an isolationist Congress. Since he knew Congress wouldn't declare war, what did Roosevelt do?
19. According to historian Michael Flamm, what ended the Great Depression?
20. Roosevelt made a great many changes, especially increasing employees for the war effort. Why did Congress go along with FDR's plans?
21. What was "one of the great flaws or mistakes" of Roosevelt's presidency?
22. In what ways did Roosevelt change the American presidency and raise expectations of a president?

KEY - Episode 6

Ultimate Guide to the Presidents: “Changing of the Guard” - 1920-1945

Warren Harding

00:00-9:08

1. In the election of 1920, why were the American people crying for change?
 - They had been “dieting” too long. For the past 20 years, presidents had been asking for their sacrifices in many ways, (war, economic collapse, and labor strikes) and now they more reward for their efforts.
2. There were many factors that led to the election of Warren Harding. Name at least **two**.
 - He promised “normalcy.”
 - He was a regular guy who wanted to please everybody.
 - He was affable and non-threatening.
 - The people wanted more conservatism and less progressivism.
3. According to the video, Harding was a terrible president. What made him so bad?
 - He didn’t understand how to do the job, so he just let others do it for him. He threw lots of large, wild parties at the White House, while the people expected him to set the example
4. Harding had a few major scandals. All of these scandals have the same basic cause. What was the cause of the scandals?
 - Harding had given up control of his administration to people who used the power for personal gain.
 - One of the talking heads says “he was just weak,” so I’ll take that answer, too.

Calvin Coolidge

9:08-16:55

5. Coolidge was left cleaning up after the scandals of Harding’s administration. What did he do to restore the dignity of the presidency?
 - He ordered a thorough investigation into the Teapot Dome Scandal.
 - He committed his presidency to firm, clear principles.
6. For what personality trait was Coolidge known?

- He was a very reserved, quiet man.
7. The '20s was an especially prosperous time. According to the video, what led to this prosperous state?
- Extremely low taxes and therefore high consumer spending.

Herbert Hoover

16:55-21:32

8. Herbert Hoover had a different background from most other presidents. What was Hoover's background?
- He was a businessman.
9. Historian H.W. Brands said, "If he'd been elected in 1920, Herbert Hoover would have been a great president...It was his misfortune to be the right man at the wrong time." What did Brands mean by this?
- Hoover's policies would have worked perfectly in a prosperous era but he was ill-equipped to handle the Depression. As it was, his policies made the Depression worse.
10. Why wouldn't Hoover help the desperate American people during the Depression?
- He didn't think it was the place of the government to help the people or interfere in the economy. He thought if the government interfered with the economy, it might just make things worse.
11. How did Depression-era American view Hoover?
- Very negatively. They blamed him for the Depression and called homeless camps "Hoovervilles."

Franklin Delano Roosevelt

21:32-44:10

12. How did Roosevelt's inaugural address help the nation?
- It began to address their "psychological needs." It helped to engender confidence in America.
13. Roosevelt's first step was to shut down and restructure the banks. Most notably, he started insuring the banks. When they reopened, what happened?
- People actually lined up to put their money into the banks.
14. How did Roosevelt control his public image?
- He did not allow himself to be photographed in his wheelchair, but most importantly he held a series of "fireside chats." He understood that the presidency was theatre.

15. FDR was frustrated when the Supreme Court ruled against him. What did he do in response?
- He tried to pack the Supreme Court – to add six new justices.
16. In spite of all of FDR's New Deal programs, what was the economy of the 1930s like?
- It was a depression within the Great Depression – it was especially terrible. Note that Republicans increased seats in both houses due to this.
17. What role did Eleanor Roosevelt play in the administration?
- She would travel, gather information, and leave her husband reports on what was going on (in labor and race relations in particular). She was the president's "eyes and ears."
18. Roosevelt faced an isolationist Congress. Since he knew Congress wouldn't declare war, what did Roosevelt do?
- Prepared for war. He doubled the size of the Navy, instituted a draft, and supported Britain with weapons. Basically, he turned the U.S. into the "arsenal of democracy."
19. According to historian Michael Flamm, what ended the Great Depression?
- World War II – specifically, the enormous federal spending to support it.
20. Roosevelt made a great many changes, especially increasing employees for the war effort. Why did Congress go along with FDR's plans?
- Because Congress was frightened, too.
21. What was "one of the great flaws or mistakes" of Roosevelt's presidency?
- The Japanese-American relocation and internment.
22. In what ways did Roosevelt change the American presidency and raise expectations of a president?
- People will now look to the president in times of crisis, to take care of them, and to solve their problems.

Name: _____

The Ultimate Guide to the Presidents

“Hail to the Chief” - 1945-1964

Harry S. Truman

00:00-19:45

1. Describe Truman's background.
2. Why did Truman decide to use the atomic bomb?
3. Truman had to deal with a new problem - the economy. How did Truman's problem with the economy differ from most other president's economic problems?
4. How was Europe divided between the U.S. and the Soviet Union?
5. How did changes in the government in the early Cold War period increase the power of the presidency?
6. What was Truman's platform as he ran for reelection (what was his big message for the American people)?

7. Why did Truman fail to get a formal declaration of war in Korea?

Dwight D. Eisenhower

19:45-25:10

8. Eisenhower did not want to commit troops to battle. What did he do instead?
9. “Basically everything that Eisenhower does in domestic affairs is in some ways linked...to national security concerns.” Give at least one example of this.
10. What was Eisenhower’s final warning to the American people?

John F. Kennedy

25:10-36:48

11. Kennedy was very much an idealist. Why did he have difficulty turning his ideas into action?
12. Most of Kennedy’s advisors insisted that the U.S. invade Cuba. Kennedy instead followed his brother’s advice. What did Kennedy do?
13. For two years, Kennedy said he would end segregation “with the stroke of a pen.” When he did not do so, what did African-Americans do?

Lyndon B. Johnson

36:48-44:13

14. What was the “Johnson Treatment?”

15. What was Johnson’s attitude towards the poor and minorities?

16. Johnson called his plan for America the “Great Society.” What did the Great Society program entail?

17. Why did Johnson get America involved in the war in Vietnam?

Key - Episode 7

The Ultimate Guide to the Presidents 1945-1964

Hail to the Chief:

Harry S. Truman

00:00-19:45

1. Describe Truman's background.
 - He was not very successful - he could not serve in the military and could not afford college, so he worked the family farm. He was largely self-educated, eventually working his way up to Senator before becoming vice president late into FDR's administration.
2. Why did Truman decide to use the atomic bomb?
 - He had reports that an all-out invasion would cost a lot of American lives - he wanted to avoid that.
3. Truman had to deal with a new problem - the economy. How did Truman's problem with the economy differ from most other president's economic problems?
 - There was *too much money* - therefore prices went up and products couldn't be found
4. How was Europe divided between the U.S. and the Soviet Union?
 - The sphere of influence of the U.S. existed in the western part of Europe; the U.S.S.R. controlled the east.
5. How did changes in the government in the early Cold War period increase the power of the presidency?
 - The National Security Act gave him access to intelligence that was available to him alone - it was not even available to Congress.
 - They formed the CIA, which provides intelligence information that only the president can access.
6. What was Truman's platform as he ran for reelection (what was his big message for the American people)?
 - He ran against Congress - what he termed a do-nothing congress.
7. Why did Truman fail to get a formal declaration of war in Korea?
 - He was afraid that getting involved in a full-scale war in Korea would leave Western Europe open to Soviet aggression.

Dwight D. Eisenhower

19:45-25:10

8. Eisenhower did not want to commit troops to battle. What did he do instead?

- He focused on covert action in proxy wars - he used the CIA to topple governments and used financial resources to shore up other groups (like Vietnam).
9. “Basically everything that Eisenhower does in domestic affairs is in some ways linked... to national security concerns.” Give at least one example of this.
- The federal highway system was built to evacuate cities or move troops.
 - He pushed for more education in areas that are important to national security.
10. What was Eisenhower’s final warning to the American people?
- Guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence by the military-industrial complex.

John F. Kennedy

25:10-36:48

11. Kennedy was very much an idealist. Why did he have difficulty turning his ideas into action?
- Congress opposed him.
12. Most of Kennedy’s advisors insisted that the U.S. invade Cuba. Kennedy instead followed his brother’s advice. What did Kennedy do?
- He pledged not to invade Cuba and privately agreed to remove his missiles from Turkey.
13. For two years, Kennedy said he would end segregation “with the stroke of a pen.” When he did not do so, what did African-Americans do?
- Either sent him pens or 250,000 marched on Washington, D.C.

Lyndon B. Johnson

36:48-44:13

14. What was the “Johnson Treatment?”
- He would get in close to you and invade your personal space until he had your vote.
15. What was Johnson’s attitude towards the poor and minorities?
- He wanted to help them - he had a great deal of empathy. He wanted everyone to be treated equally.
16. Johnson called his plan for America the “Great Society.” What did the Great Society program entail?
- It fundamentally changed who we are. Medicare, Medicaid, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The Arts & Humanities Act. Head Start. The first environmental legislation in America.
17. Why did Johnson get America involved in the war in Vietnam?
- He wanted to keep his popularity in order to keep support for his Great Society programs. There was also a belief that the war was absolutely necessary to prevent the spread of communism in Asia.

Name: _____

The Ultimate Guide to the Presidents “Mantle of Power” - 1965-2013

Lyndon B. Johnson (began in previous episode)

00:00-03:42

1. How did the war in Vietnam affect how the American people viewed Johnson?

Richard Nixon

03:42-11:44

2. Nixon inherited a nation that had several major problems. What problem did it face that was as bad as it had been right after the Civil War?

3. How did Nixon change U.S. policy toward China?

4. In an interview with David Frost, Nixon said, “When a president does it, that means it’s not illegal.” How did this attitude hurt Nixon’s political career?

Gerald Ford

11:44-16:17

5. One of Gerald Ford’s first actions was to pardon, or forgive, Richard Nixon. Why did Ford pardon Nixon?

6. How had the media changed the way they treated the president?

Jimmy Carter

16:17-20:06

7. During the election, Jimmy Carter portrayed himself as an everyman - a normal person. How did this hurt him once he was president?

Ronald Reagan

20:06-29:45

8. In the election, how was Ronald Reagan different than Jimmy Carter?

9. What was Reagan's greatest strength as president?

10. How did the attempted assassination actually help Reagan?

11. Describe Reagan's relationship with the Soviet Union.

The Final Four

29:48-44:11

12. The terrorist attacks led to more than a simple military response. What did the U.S. begin to do in addition to war?

13. How has the 24-hour news cycle changed the presidency?

14. What remains the major issue regarding the power of the presidency?

15. How does a president's second term differ from the first?

KEY - Episode 8

The Ultimate Guide to the Presidents Mantle of Power: 1965-2013

Lyndon B. Johnson (began in previous episode) 00:00-03:42

1. How did the war in Vietnam affect how the American people viewed Johnson?
 - It undermined his credibility - it turned many Americans against him.

Richard Nixon 03:42-11:44

2. Nixon inherited a nation that had several major problems. What problem did it face that was as bad as it had been right after the Civil War?
 - The nation was very divided.
3. How did Nixon change U.S. policy toward China?
 - He made an alliance with China. He played China and the U.S.S.R. off against each other. He made us partners in economic affairs in particular.
4. In an interview with David Frost, Nixon said, "When a president does it, that means it's not illegal." How did this attitude hurt Nixon's political career?
 - It led him to think that he could do what he wanted, including spy on the opposing party. This essentially ended his political career.

Gerald Ford 11:44-16:17

5. One of Gerald Ford's first actions was to pardon, or forgive, Richard Nixon. Why did Ford pardon Nixon?
 - He needed to move on. He needed the press and the public to focus on a different issue.
6. How had the media changed the way they treated the president?
 - He had moved from becoming an object of respect to being an object of ridicule.

Jimmy Carter 16:17-20:06

7. During the election, Jimmy Carter portrayed himself as an everyman - a normal person. How did this hurt him once he was president?
 - He couldn't get the others on his side - he really couldn't convince the other people in Washington to go along with him. His attitude of goodness was charming in the election, but started to "wear a little thin" for the presidency itself.

Ronald Reagan 20:06-29:45

8. In the election, how was Ronald Reagan different than Jimmy Carter?

- Carter knew more, but Reagan communicated better. Carter tended to make the American people feel bad or guilty or discouraged about their country, where Reagan made them feel good about their country. Reagan seemed overwhelmingly sincere.
9. What was Reagan's greatest strength as president?
- He was the "Great Communicator." He was comfortable with the media and was able to get his ideals before the American people.
10. How did the attempted assassination actually help Reagan?
- Before that, he couldn't get Congress on his side. His approval rating shot up.
11. Describe Reagan's relationship with the Soviet Union.
- He wanted to undo détente. He was very confrontational, increasing military spending and increasing our involvement in proxy warfare.

The Final Four

29:48-44:11

12. The terrorist attacks led to more than a simple military response. What did the U.S. begin to do in addition to war?
- nation building - working to spread freedom and democracy
13. How has the 24-hour news cycle changed the presidency?
- Presidents no longer have a time to stop and think - they have to respond very quickly.
 - They focus on minute details and will remember everything a candidate says.
14. What remains the major issue regarding the power of the presidency?
- The balance between congressional and presidential power.
15. How does a president's second term differ from the first?
- They manage the accomplishments of their first term, while they have a greater freedom of action internationally.