



K-12 Civic Learning Opportunities: Presidents Day

PRESIDENTS DAY

Presidents Day is a holiday celebrated on the third Monday in February. It is a day when Americans honor the leaders who have served as President of the United States.

At first, the holiday celebrated the birthday of the first President, George Washington. Now, the holiday also celebrates the birthday of Abraham Lincoln, also born in February, as well as the lives and accomplishments of the other Presidents.

Role of the President

The US Constitution defines the President's role and requirements for taking office. Some of the specifics, such as the date of Election Day, or the number of terms the President can serve, have changed over the years.

- The president must be at least 35 years old, a natural-born citizen, and have lived in the United States at least 14 years.
- Americans vote for president every four years on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. That popular vote chooses delegates to the Electoral College, which elects the President. The President serves for four years, and can be elected to four additional years.
- The President wears many hats. The Constitution assigns the president two roles: chief executive of the federal government and Commander in Chief of the armed forces. As Commander in Chief, the president has the authority to send troops into combat, and is the only one who can decide whether to use nuclear weapons.
- As chief executive, the President enforces laws, treaties, and court rulings; develops federal policies; prepares the national budget; and appoints federal officials. He also approves or vetoes acts of Congress and grants pardons.
- The President earns \$400,000 each year, plus additional expenses and benefits such as living at the White House.

Objective and Activities

Use Presidents Day as a civic learning opportunity. Students will learn about the roles and history of the President and evaluate leadership, communication and political skills. A variety of activities are available. Modify based on your grade level or subject area. For example, you can focus students on the community, North Carolina, the United States or another country. Connect this to history, literature or in a global community.

There are many opportunities for writing, reading, small group discussion and oral



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presentation. The activity aligns with several core standards. Skills include:

- Persuasion
- Critical thinking
- Analysis
- Reading information
- Active listening
- Writing
- Civic literacy
- Media literacy
- Collaboration
- Civic leadership
- Local and State Government
- Federal Government
- Effective communication
- Family dialogue
- Group discussion
- Connecting historic events, personal knowledge, current events or global life

Learning Activities

CONNECTING KNOWLEDGE

Leaders have roles and responsibilities. Who are the different leaders at your school? City? Country? Are some of their roles similar? Different? Explain what is the same and what is different, and why you think that is.

- Family
- School
- Student Council
- School Board
- City or town
- County
- State
- United States
- Global
- Other?

WHAT'S FOR KIDS?

What does the President do or talk about that is of interest to or affects kids? How much time do you think he spends working on issues that impact kids? Does he spend more or less time on those issues than he does on adult issues? Why do you think that is?

Some topics could include education, health, environment, safety, etc.



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WRITE THE HEADLINE OR BOOK TITLE

If you were writing a biography or reporting about the President (pick any President in history, or divide the class into groups), what would your book title or news headline be?

Now, read actual titles or headlines. One easy way to do this is through Google or Amazon.com. You can also view an online Presidential Library or news source.

Were you close? Is your headline or title better? Why?

Sometimes there will be many headlines and titles, with each one saying something completely different (example: *George Washington: The Best President Ever!* or *George Washington: The Worst President Ever!*). Why do you think that is?

COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY

Watch a video of a President, or read a famous speech. How does the President communicate the information? Is he persuasive? How? What do you think is the most effective thing he does to communicate the information? Least effective?

If reading

- Does he write clearly?
- Are the sentences long or short?
- Can you summarize his main points – in a few words, what was the speech about?

If watching

- Does he read from a piece of paper?
- Does he raise or lower his voice or move his hands to illustrate a specific point?
- What emotions and expressions does the President show? Does he look confident?
- How is he dressed? Does this matter?



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LEADERSHIP

What are the roles of the President (past or present)? What are some examples of the President in these roles?

In your opinion, what are the ideal qualities in a leader? Which President(s) demonstrated those qualities?

(Examples: brave, caring, smart, healthy, cooperative, strong, decisive, curious, friendly, honest, hard-working)

What are words that come to mind when you think of a leader? A politician? Are the words the same, or different? Why?

Do you have to be an official "leader", like the President, to demonstrate those qualities? How can you be a leader in your everyday life? Give examples.

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

If you were the President, what would you do? Would you change policies? Make things happen? Solve problems? Write a short speech and tell everyone!

Or, role-play a President in history – or a leader of another country – and write your speech from that perspective.



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WEB RESOURCES

Download K-12 Civic Learning Opportunity: Presidents Day http://bit.ly/GN_PresDay

State of the Union 2012 http://bit.ly/GN_SOTU

American Presidents (C-SPAN) <http://www.americanpresidents.org/>

- Portraits <http://www.americanpresidents.org/gallery/>

- Videos <http://www.c-spanvideo.org/videoLibrary/search-results.php?tag%5B%5D=life+portraits>

- Gravesites of Presidents and Vice Presidents

http://www.americanpresidents.org/grantstomb/index_test.asp#presidents

Presidential Libraries (C-SPAN) <http://presidentiallibraries.c-span.org/>

Presidents, links by name <http://www.ipl.org/div/potus/>

George Washington (America's Library)

http://www.americaslibrary.gov/aa/wash/aa_wash_subj.html

George Washington (PBS) <http://www.pbs.org/georgewashington/>

White House <http://www.whitehouse.gov/>

Barack Obama <http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/president-obama>

Rulers of the World <http://rulers.org/>

History.com <http://www.history.com/topics/presidents-day>

MORE ACTIVITIES

Kids Voting USA

<http://www.kidsvotingusa.org/curriculum>

- *President's Hats* - Students examine the jobs of the president to discuss components of American democracy. You can also compare various roles with those at the family, school or community level. Use this for a writing or verbal activity.
- *Wish Tree* - Students make wishes for the country regarding changes they would like to see. This is a great writing activity. You can also use this activity on a family, community or similar level as appropriate.
- Several other related lessons available. Note: Kids Voting USA activities are provided directly to Charlotte area schools through Kids Voting Mecklenburg, a program of GenerationNation. If your school is in the Charlotte area and you would like a copy emailed to you, contact info@kidsvoting.org. If you are not in Charlotte or want to download from the web, visit www.kidsvotingusa.org/curriculum.

iCivics <http://www.icivics.org/subject/executive-branch>

Constitutional Rights Foundation <http://www.crf-usa.org/presidents-day/presidents-day.html>

C-SPAN <http://www.c-spanclassroom.org/Topics/PRES/The-President.aspx>



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Suggested correlations to North Carolina Standard Course of Study

Teachers are encouraged to align as appropriate to the grade and subject area.
The activities are intentionally adaptable to various uses, ages and objectives.

Kindergarten

Language Arts

Goal 3 The learner will make connections through the use of oral language, written language, and media and technology.

3.01 Connect information and events in text to experience.

3.04 Use speaking and listening skills and media to connect experiences and text:

Goal 4 The learner will apply strategies and skills to create oral, written, and visual texts.

4.04 Maintain conversation and discussions:

Goal 5 The learner will apply grammar and language conventions to communicate effectively.

All

Grade 1

Language Arts

Goal 3 The learner will make connections through the use of oral language, written language, and media and technology.

3.01 Elaborate on how information and events connect to life experiences.

3.04 Share personal experiences and responses to experiences with text:

Goal 4 The learner will apply strategies and skills to create oral, written, and

4.06 Compose a variety of products (e.g., stories, journal entries, letters, response logs, simple poems, oral retellings) using a writing process.

Social Studies

Goal 2 The learner will identify and exhibit qualities of good citizenship in the classroom, school, and other social environments.

2.02 Identify the roles of leaders in the home, school, and community such as parents, mayor, police officers, principal, and teacher.

Grade 2

Language Arts

Goal 2 The learner will develop and apply strategies and skills to comprehend text that is read, heard, and viewed.

2.07 Discuss similarities and differences in events, characters and concepts within and across texts.

Goal 4 The learner will apply strategies and skills to create oral, written, and visual texts.

4.04 Use oral communication to identify, organize, and analyze information.

4.09 Use media and technology to enhance the presentation of information to an audience for a specific purpose.

(Review a portion of the speech to observe communication skills.)

Grade 3

Language Arts



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Goal 2 The learner will apply strategies and skills to comprehend text that is read, heard, and viewed.

2.02 Interact with the text before, during, and after reading, listening, or viewing.

2.03 Read a variety of texts, including: nonfiction

2.05 Draw conclusions, make generalizations, gather support by referencing the text.

2.06 Summarize main idea(s) from written or spoken texts using succinct language.

2.08 Listen actively.

Goal 3 The learner will make connections through the use of oral language, written language, and media and technology.

3.01 Respond to fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama using interpretive, critical, and evaluative processes.

3.02 Identify and discuss similarities and differences in events, characters, concepts and ideas within and across selections and support them by referencing the text.

3.03 Use text and own experiences to verify facts, concepts, and ideas.

3.04 Make informed judgments about television productions.

Goal 4 The learner will apply strategies and skills to create oral, written, and visual texts.

4.09 Produce work that follows the conventions of particular genres (e.g., personal narrative, short report, friendly letter, directions and instructions).

Goal 5 The learner will apply grammar and language conventions to communicate effectively.

All

Social Studies

Goal 1 The learner will characterize qualities of good citizenship by identifying people who made a difference in the community and other social environments.

1.02 Recognize diverse local, state, and national leaders, past and present, who demonstrate responsible citizenship.

Goal 7 The learner will analyze the role of real heroes in shaping the culture of communities.

7.01 Identify the deeds of local and global leaders.

Grade 4

Language Arts

Goal 1 The learner will apply enabling strategies and skills to read and write.

1.04 Increase reading and writing vocab through: reading, writing as a tool for learning, discussions

Goal 2 The learner will apply strategies and skills to comprehend text that is read, heard, and viewed.

2.02 Interact with the text before, during, and after reading, listening, and viewing by: setting a purpose using prior knowledge and text information, making predictions, formulating questions, locating relevant information, making connections with previous experiences, information, and ideas.

2.03 Read a variety of texts, including: nonfiction

2.05 Make inferences, draw conclusions, make generalizations, support by referencing text.

2.06 Summarize major points from fiction and nonfiction text(s) to clarify and retain information and ideas.

2.07 Determine usefulness of information and ideas consistent with purpose.

2.08 Verify the meaning or accuracy of the author's statement(s) by referencing the text or other resources.

2.09 Listen actively.



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Goal 3 The learner will make connections through the use of oral language, written language, and media and technology.

- 3.03 Consider the ways language and visuals bring characters to life, enhance plot development, and produce a response.
- 3.04 Make informed judgments about television and film/video productions.
- 3.05 Analyze and integrate information from one or more sources to expand understanding of text including graphs, charts, and/or maps.

Goal 4 The learner will apply strategies and skills to create oral, written, and visual texts.

- 4.02 Use oral and written language to: present info and ideas in a clear, concise manner.

Goal 5 The learner will apply grammar and language conventions to communicate effectively.

All

Social Studies

Goal 4 The learner will analyze social and political institutions in North Carolina such as government, education, religion, and family and how they structure society, influence behavior, and respond to human needs.

- 4.03 Explain the importance of responsible citizenship and identify ways North Carolinians can participate in civic affairs.
- 4.05 Identify and assess the role of prominent persons in North Carolina, past and present. (Presidents from NC.)

Grade 5

Language Arts

Goal 2 The learner will apply strategies and skills to comprehend text that is read, heard, and viewed.

- 2.02 Interact with the text before, during, and after reading, listening, and viewing by: making predictions, formulating questions, supporting answers from textual information, previous experience, and/or other sources, drawing on personal, literary, and cultural understandings, seeking additional information, making connections with previous experiences, information, and ideas.
- 2.03 Read a variety of texts, such as: nonfiction
 - 2.05 Evaluate inferences, conclusions, and generalizations and provide evidence by referencing the text(s).
 - 2.07 Evaluate the usefulness and quality of information and ideas based on purpose, experiences, text(s), and graphics.
 - 2.08 Explain and evaluate relationships that are: problem-solution
 - 2.09 Listen actively and critically.
- 2.10 Identify strategies used by a speaker or writer to inform, entertain, influence audience.

Goal 3 The learner will make connections through the use of oral language, written language, and media and technology.

- 3.02 Make connections within and between texts by recognizing similarities and differences based on a common lesson, theme, or message.
- 3.04 Make informed judgments about television, radio, video/film productions, other electronic mediums and/or print formats.
- 3.05 Integrate main idea and supporting details from multiple sources to expand understanding of texts.
- 3.07 Make informed judgments about: bias, propaganda, stereotyping, media techniques.



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Goal 4 The learner will apply strategies and skills to create oral, written, and visual texts.
4.03 Make oral and written presentations to inform or persuade selecting vocab for impact.

Goal 5 The learner will apply grammar and language conventions to communicate effectively.
All

Social Studies

Goal 2 The learner will analyze political and social institutions in North America and examine how these institutions respond to human needs, structure society, and influence behavior.
2.02 Describe the similarities and differences among the local, state, and national levels of government in the United States and explain their legislative, executive, and judicial functions.
2.03 Recognize how the United States government has changed over time.
2.04 Compare and contrast the government of the United States with the governments of Canada, Mexico, and selected countries of Central America.

Goal 4 The learner will trace key developments in United States history and describe their impact on the land and people of the nation and its neighboring countries.
Incorporate a presidential perspective from a period in history

Suggested correlations to North Carolina Standard Course of Study

Teachers are encouraged to align as appropriate to the grade and subject area.
The activities are intentionally adaptable to various uses, ages and objectives.

Grade 6

Language Arts

Goal 2 The learner will explore and analyze information from a variety of sources.
2.01 Explore informational materials that are read, heard, and/or viewed.

Goal 3 The learner will examine the foundation of argument.
3.01 Explore argumentative works that are read, heard, and/or viewed: monitoring comprehension for understanding what is read, heard, and/or viewed; analyzing the characteristics of argumentative works; determining the importance of author's word choice and focus; making connections between works, self and related topics; responding to public documents (such as but not limited to editorials and school and community policies); distinguishing between fact and opinion.
3.02 Explore the problem solution process.
3.03 Study arguments that evaluate.

Goal 4 The learner will use critical thinking skills, create criteria to evaluate print/non-print material.
4.01 Determine the purpose of the author or creator by: exploring any bias, apparent or hidden messages, emotional factors, and/or propaganda techniques.
4.03 Recognize and develop a stance of a critic.

Social Studies - *Use to make knowledge connections, compare and contrast*

Goal 9 The learner will analyze the different forms of gov't developed in South America and Europe.
9.02 Describe how different types of governments such as democracies, dictatorships, monarchies, and oligarchies in selected areas of South America and Europe carry out legislative, executive, and judicial functions, and evaluate the effectiveness of each.
9.04 Describe how different governments in South America and Europe select leaders and



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establish laws in comparison to the United States and analyze the strengths and weaknesses.

Goal 10 The learner will compare the rights and civic responsibilities of individuals in political structures in South America and Europe.

10.01 Trace the development of relationships between individuals and their governments in selected cultures of South America and Europe, and evaluate the changes that have evolved.

Grade 7

Language Arts

Goal 1 The learner will use language to express individual perspectives in response to personal, social, cultural, and historical issues.

All objectives

Goal 2 The learner will synthesize and use information from a variety of sources.

2.01 Respond to informational materials that are read, heard, and/or viewed.

Goal 3 The learner will refine the understanding and use of argument.

3.01 Explore and analyze argumentative works that are read, heard and/or viewed.

Goal 4 The learner will refine critical thinking skills, create criteria to evaluate print/non-print material.

All objectives

Social Studies - *Use to make knowledge connections, compare and contrast*

Goal 5 The learner will evaluate the varied ways people of Africa, Asia, and Australia make decisions about the allocation and use of economic resources.

5.03 Explain how the allocation of scarce resources requires economic systems to make basic decisions regarding the production and distribution of goods and services, and evaluate the impact on the standard of living in selected societies and regions of Africa, Asia, and Australia.

Goal 6 The learner will recognize the relationship between economic activity and the quality of life in Africa, Asia, and Australia.

6.01 Describe different levels of economic development and assess their connections to standard of living indicators such as purchasing power, literacy rate, and life expectancy.

Goal 9 The learner will analyze the different forms of government developed in Africa, Asia, Australia.

9.02 Describe how different types of governments such as democracies, dictatorships, monarchies, and oligarchies in Africa, Asia, and Australia carry out legislative, executive, and judicial functions and evaluate the effectiveness of each.

9.04 Describe how different governments in Africa, Asia, and Australia select leaders and establish laws in comparison to the United States and analyze the strengths and weaknesses.

Goal 10 The learner will compare the rights and civic responsibilities of individuals in political structures in Africa, Asia, and Australia.

10.01 Trace the development of relationships between individuals and their governments in selected cultures of Africa, Asia, Australia, and evaluate changes that have evolved over time.

Grade 8

Language Arts

Goal 1 The learner will use language to express individual perspectives through analysis of personal,



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social, cultural, and historical issues.
All objectives

Goal 2 The learner will use and evaluate information from a variety of resources.
2.01 Analyze and evaluate informational materials that are read, heard, and/or viewed by:
2.02 Use multiple sources of print and non-print information to explore and create research products in both written and presentational forms by:

Goal 3 The learner will continue to refine the understanding and use of argument.
3.01 Explore and evaluate argumentative works that are read, heard and/or viewed by:
All points, especially public documents
3.03 Evaluate and create arguments that persuade by:

Goal 4 The learner will continue to refine critical thinking skills and create criteria to evaluate print and non-print materials.
All objectives

Social Studies Relate current issues and speeches to historic periods, leaders and events

Goal 2 The learner will trace the causes and effects of the Revolutionary War, and assess the impact of major events, problems, and personalities during the Constitutional Period in North Carolina and the new nation.

2.02 Describe the contributions of key North Carolina and national personalities from the Revolutionary War era and assess their influence on the outcome of the war.

Goal 4 The learner will examine the causes, course, and character of the Civil War and Reconstruction, and their impact on North Carolina and the nation.

4.04 Evaluate the importance of the roles played by individuals at the state and national levels during the Civil War and Reconstruction Period.

Goal 8 The learner will evaluate the impact of demographic, economic, technological, social, and political developments in North Carolina since the 1970's.

8.03 Describe the impact of state and national issues on the political climate of North Carolina.

Goal 9 The learner will explore examples of and opportunities for active citizenship, past and present, at the local and state levels.

9.01 Describe contemporary political, economic, and social issues at the state and local levels and evaluate their impact on the community.

Suggested correlations to North Carolina Standard Course of Study

Teachers are encouraged to align as appropriate to the grade and subject area.

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World History

Relate current issues and speeches to historic periods, leaders and events

Goal 1 Historical Tools and Practices - The learner will identify, evaluate, and use the methods and tools valued by historians, compare the views of historians, and trace the themes of history.

1.02 Analyze and interpret sources to compare views, trace themes, and detect bias.

1.04 Define the themes of society, technology, economics, politics, and culture and relate them to the study of history.



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Goal 6 Patterns of Social Order - The learner will investigate social and economic organization in various societies throughout time in order to understand the shifts in power and status.

6.04 Relate the dynamics of state economies to the well being of their members and to changes in the role of government.

Civics & Economics

Goal 1 The learner will investigate the foundations of the American political system and explore basic values and principles of American democracy.

1.08 Compare the American system of government to other forms of government.

Goal 2 The learner will analyze how the government established by the United States Constitution embodies the purposes, values, and principles of American democracy.

2.02 Explain how the United States Constitution defines the framework, organization and structure of the three branches of government at the national level.

2.09 Describe the services provided by selected gov't agencies, how funding is provided.

Goal 5 The learner will explain how the political and legal systems provide a means to balance competing interests and resolve conflicts.

5.01 Evaluate the role of debate, consensus, compromise, negotiation in resolving conflicts.

5.06 Analyze roles of individual citizens, political parties, the media, and other interest groups in public policy decisions, dispute resolution, and government action.

Goal 6 The learner will explain why laws are needed and how they are enacted, implemented, and enforced at the national, state, and local levels.

6.05 Investigate the role and responsibility of government to inform the citizenry.

Goal 10 The learner will develop, defend, and evaluate positions on issues regarding the personal responsibilities of citizens in the American constitutional democracy.

10.01 Explain the distinction between personal and civic responsibilities and the tensions that may arise between them.

10.05 Describe examples of recurring public problems and issues.

US History

Relate current issues and speeches to historical periods, leaders and events

Highlight presidents, leadership and decisions from key periods and events for different goals and objectives.