



K-12 Civic Learning Opportunities: Information about the Office of President

THE OFFICE OF PRESIDENT

THE POWERS OF THE PRESIDENT

The office of the President of the United States is one of the most powerful positions in the world.

There are only a few hundred words in the U.S. Constitution about the president's duties and powers but those few words give the President many powers.

The origin of all presidential power is in the U.S. Constitution and to understand the presidential role as it is currently exercised, one must understand this important founding document. In addition, through time and tradition, other expectations and powers are placed on the President even though they are not spelled out in the [Constitution](#).

Article II of the U.S. Constitution outlines the office, role, responsibilities and powers of the President of the United States. (Included later in this document.)

CONSTITUTIONAL ROLES AND POWERS OF THE PRESIDENT INCLUDE:

- Address Congress and nation
- Commander-in-chief
- Conduct foreign policy
- Faithfully administer federal law
- Maintain order
- Negotiate treaties
- Nominate top officials
- Pardon for federal offenses
- Veto bills

ADDITIONAL ROLES AND INFORMAL POWERS INCLUDE:

- Bargainer and persuader
- Budget setter
- Coalition-builder
- Conflict resolver
- Crisis manager
- Legislative leader
- Morale builder
- Party leader
- Personnel recruiter
- Priority setter
- World leader



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ELECTING A PRESIDENT

Announcement - Candidate announces that he or she is entering the race.

Primaries and Caucuses - Members of the same party run against each other, trying to become the party's candidate. Each state holds its elections on specific dates in January-June.

- Primaries: Party members vote for candidates, win delegates to the convention. North Carolina's primary is May 8, 2012.
- Caucuses: Party members select delegates to the convention at meetings.

Conventions – Representatives, or delegates, of each political party meet to talk about the party platform and officially nominate their candidate. This person runs for President of the United States. 2012 conventions:

- Libertarian Party - May 3-6 in Las Vegas, Nevada
- Republican Party – August 27-30 in Tampa, Florida
- Democratic Party – September 3-7 in Charlotte, North Carolina

Fall campaign and debates – Through campaigns, speeches, political ads and debates, the candidates communicate their positions on different issues. This is an important time when voters learn about the candidates, think about their positions, and decide who to vote for.

Election Day - Voters vote for president. This is called the “popular vote.”

- Election Day is November 6. In North Carolina, Early Voting begins in late October.

Electoral College – Through the “popular vote”, voters are really voting for electors who are pledged to a candidate. The Electoral College is made up of all of the electors.

- The electors vote in December. A candidate must get at least 270 out of 538 electoral votes to win the election.
- On January 6, Congress officially counts the ballots. If no candidate has at least 270 votes, the U.S. House of Representatives selects the president and the U.S. Senate selects the vice president.

Inauguration Day - The president and vice president are sworn into office on January 20. In 2013, it is possible that the President will have more than one swearing-in ceremony.

- January 20th is a Sunday. By law, the President must take the Oath of Office before noon. In 1985, when Ronald Reagan was sworn in on a Sunday, it was a private ceremony. A public event took place the following day.
- In 2013, January 21st is Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – a federal holiday. People who plan the Inauguration will decide if the public ceremony should happen on that date, or on Tuesday, January 22. Stay tuned for more information!



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THE PRESIDENT

From www.whitehouse.gov/our-government/executive-branch

The President is both the head of state and head of government of the United States of America, and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces.

Under Article II of the Constitution, the President is responsible for the execution and enforcement of the laws created by Congress. Fifteen executive departments — each led by an appointed member of the President's Cabinet — carry out the day-to-day administration of the federal government. They are joined in this by other executive agencies such as the CIA and Environmental Protection Agency, the heads of which are not part of the Cabinet, but who are under the full authority of the President. The President also appoints the heads of more than 50 independent federal commissions, such as the Federal Reserve Board or the Securities and Exchange Commission, as well as federal judges, ambassadors, and other federal offices. The Executive Office of the President (EOP) consists of the immediate staff to the President, along with entities such as the Office of Management and Budget and the Office of the United States Trade Representative.

The President has the power either to sign legislation into law or to veto bills enacted by Congress, although Congress may override a veto with a two-thirds vote of both houses. The Executive Branch conducts diplomacy with other nations, and the President has the power to negotiate and sign treaties, which also must be ratified by two-thirds of the Senate. The President can issue executive orders, which direct executive officers or clarify and further existing laws. The President also has unlimited power to extend pardons and clemencies for federal crimes, except in cases of impeachment.

With these powers come several responsibilities, among them a constitutional requirement to "from time to time give to the Congress Information of the State of the Union, and recommend to their Consideration such Measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient." Although the President may fulfill this requirement in any way he or she chooses, Presidents have traditionally given a State of the Union address to a joint session of Congress each January (except in inaugural years) outlining their agenda for the coming year.

The Constitution lists only three qualifications for the Presidency — the President must be 35 years of age, be a natural born citizen, and must have lived in the United States for at least 14 years. And though millions of Americans vote in a presidential election every four years, the President is not, in fact, directly elected by the people. Instead, on the first Tuesday in November of every fourth year, the people elect the members of the Electoral College. Apportioned by population to the 50 states — one for each member of their congressional delegation (with the District of Columbia receiving 3 votes) — these Electors then cast the votes for President. There are currently 538 electors in the Electoral College.

President Barack Obama is the 44th President of the United States. He is, however, only the 43rd person ever to serve as President; President Grover Cleveland served two nonconsecutive terms, and thus is recognized as both the 22nd and the 24th President. Today, the President is limited to two four-year terms, but until the 22nd Amendment to the Constitution, ratified in 1951, a President could serve an unlimited number of terms. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected President four times, serving from 1932 until his death in 1945; he is the only President ever to have served more than two terms.

By tradition, the President and the First Family live in the White House in Washington, D.C., also the location of the President's Oval Office and the offices of the his senior staff. When the President travels by plane, his aircraft is designated Air Force One; he may also use a Marine Corps helicopter, known as Marine One while the President is on board. For ground travel, the President uses an armored Presidential limousine.



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UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

From <http://www.house.gov/house/Constitution/Constitution.html>

Article II of the Constitution creates the Executive Branch including outlining the Office of the President and the powers of that office.

- Section 1 contains information about the qualifications and terms of office, how the President is elected by the electoral vote
- Section 2 contains information about the President's powers
- Section 3 contains information about the President's responsibilities
- Section 4 contains information about how the President can be removed from office

ARTICLE II

Section 1

Clause 1: The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America. He shall hold his Office during the Term of four Years, and, together with the Vice President, chosen for the same Term, be elected, as follows

Clause 2: Each State shall appoint, in such Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a Number of Electors, equal to the whole Number of Senators and Representatives to which the State may be entitled in the Congress: but no Senator or Representative, or Person holding an Office of Trust or Profit under the United States, shall be appointed an Elector.

Clause 3: The Electors shall meet in their respective States, and vote by Ballot for two Persons, of whom one at least shall not be an Inhabitant of the same State with themselves. And they shall make a List of all the Persons voted for, and of the Number of Votes for each; which List they shall sign and certify, and transmit sealed to the Seat of the Government of the United States, directed to the President of the Senate. The President of the Senate shall, in the Presence of the Senate and House of Representatives, open all the Certificates, and the Votes shall then be counted. The Person having the greatest Number of Votes shall be the President, if such Number be a Majority of the whole Number of Electors appointed; and if there be more than one who have such Majority, and have an equal Number of Votes, then the House of Representatives shall immediately choose by Ballot one of them for President; and if no Person have a Majority, then from the five highest on the List the said House shall in like Manner choose the President. But in choosing the President, the Votes shall be taken by States, the Representation from each State having one Vote; A quorum for this Purpose shall consist of a Member or Members from two thirds of the States, and a Majority of all the States shall be necessary to a Choice. In every Case, after the Choice of the President, the Person having the greatest Number of Votes of the Electors shall be the Vice President. But if there should remain two or more who have equal Votes, the Senate shall choose from them by Ballot the Vice President.



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Clause 4: The Congress may determine the Time of choosing the Electors, and the Day on which they shall give their Votes; which Day shall be the same throughout the United States.

Clause 5: No Person except a natural born Citizen, or a Citizen of the United States, at the time of the Adoption of this Constitution, shall be eligible to the Office of President; neither shall any Person be eligible to that Office who shall not have attained to the Age of thirty five Years, and been fourteen Years a Resident within the United States.

Clause 6: In Case of the Removal of the President from Office, or of his Death, Resignation, or Inability to discharge the Powers and Duties of the said Office, the Same shall devolve on the Vice President, and the Congress may by Law provide for the Case of Removal, Death, Resignation or Inability, both of the President and Vice President, declaring what Officer shall then act as President, and such Officer shall act accordingly, until the Disability be removed, or a President shall be elected.

Clause 7: The President shall, at stated Times, receive for his Services, a Compensation, which shall neither be increased nor diminished during the Period for which he shall have been elected, and he shall not receive within that Period any other Emolument from the United States, or any of them.

Clause 8: Before he enter on the Execution of his Office, he shall take the following Oath or Affirmation:--"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."

Section 2

Clause 1: The President shall be Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of the several States, when called into the actual Service of the United States; he may require the Opinion, in writing, of the principal Officer in each of the executive Departments, upon any Subject relating to the Duties of their respective Offices, and he shall have Power to grant Reprieves and Pardons for Offences against the United States, except in Cases of Impeachment.

Clause 2: He shall have Power, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, to make Treaties, provided two thirds of the Senators present concur; and he shall nominate, and by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, shall appoint Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls, Judges of the supreme Court, and all other Officers of the United States, whose Appointments are not herein otherwise provided for, and which shall be established by Law: but the Congress may by Law vest the Appointment of such inferior Officers, as they think proper, in the President alone, in the Courts of Law, or in the Heads of Departments.

Clause 3: The President shall have Power to fill up all Vacancies that may happen during the Recess of the Senate, by granting Commissions which shall expire at the End of their next Session.

Section 3

He shall from time to time give to the Congress Information of the State of the Union, and recommend to their Consideration such Measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient; he may, on extraordinary Occasions, convene both Houses, or either of them, and in Case of Disagreement between them, with Respect to the Time of Adjournment, he may adjourn them to such Time as he shall think proper; he shall receive Ambassadors and other public Ministers; he shall take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed, and shall Commission all the Officers of the United States.

Section 4

The President, Vice President and all civil Officers of the United States, shall be removed from Office on Impeachment for, and Conviction of, Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors.