



WORDS

agree = to say yes

bill = a plan for a new law which is discussed in parliament

commander = the person who is in control of ...

Congress = the group of people who make laws in the United States

defence = everything that a country uses to protect itself from being attacked

elect = to choose somebody by voting for him

environment = the world around us

executive branch = a part of government that makes sure that people follow the law

hold office = to be President

law = the system of rules in a country

lead = to be the first

make sure = to check and see if something has been done

pass a law = make a new law

put into effect = here: they should be followed or obeyed

relationship = connection

remove = replace by someone else

rule = to govern

serve = work for

sign = to put your name on a document

The American President

The President of the United States is one of the most powerful people in the world. He must **lead** a strong nation and **make sure** that **laws** are **put into effect**. He is the **commander** of the army and can send American soldiers to war. The President also decides which **relationships** America has with other countries. He is the Head of State and meets with leaders of other nations.

To become president a person

- must be at least 35 years old
- must have lived in the United States for at least 14 years
- must be born in the United States

A president **serves** his country for four years. He can also be **elected** a second time. Until 1951 US presidents were able to **hold office** for more than eight years. Franklin D. Roosevelt, for example, was **elected** four times and was president from 1933–1945.

If **Congress** finds out that a president has done something wrong he can be **removed** from the White House.

A President's Job

The President is the head of the **executive branch** of government. When the Senate and the House of Representatives want a new **law** to be **passed**, they send a **bill** to the President. If he **agrees**, he **signs** the bill and it becomes a **law**.

However, if the President does not like it he doesn't have to **sign** it. This is called a veto. The **bill** goes back to Congress and if two thirds of all members vote against the veto it becomes a **law**.

The Cabinet

The President does not **rule** the country alone. The Cabinet is a group of people who get together and give the President information on many things. The President himself chooses them and they meet at least once a week. They are experts in many fields like **defence**, the **environment**, education and others.





The American President

Life of a President

WORDS

abroad = another country

assassinate = to murder an important person

candidate = person who wants to become president

closely protected = carefully guarded

election = when people vote to choose somebody

in office = when a person is President

journey = travelling from one place to another

leader = people who are in high positions in their countries

primary = an election at which people vote for a party's candidate

relax = rest

retreat = a place where you can go to, where it is quiet and safe

several = many

An American President is always busy. He has **several** conferences and meets up to a hundred or more people every day.

The President lives in the White House in Washington, D.C.

Most of the time he does his work in the Oval Office. There, he meets his helpers, **leaders** from other countries and other people.

Presidents often spend their weekends at Camp David, a **retreat** in the Maryland mountains. There they **relax**, play golf, go riding and fishing and have time for their families.

The Secret Service protects the American President around the clock. It checks food and the hotels where a President lives and plans his trips and **journeys**.

A President travels across the country or **abroad** in his own plane—Air Force One. It is a Boeing 747 in which he can work and live as in the White House.

Even though presidents are **closely protected** some of them were killed **in office**. Abraham Lincoln was **assassinated** in 1865 when he was at a theatre performance. John F. Kennedy was murdered on the streets of Dallas, Texas in 1963.



The Road to the White House

1. Primaries

There are many people who would like to become President. From January to June of the election year, the two big parties, Republicans and Democrats, hold **primaries** in many states. In these primaries, people decide who should become the party's **candidate** for the presidential **election** in November.





WORDS

candidate = person who wants to become president

certain = special

concentrate = focus on

elect = to chose somebody by voting for him

election = when people vote to chose somebody

Electoral College = a group of people who are chosen by the voters of the USA. They get together to elect a President

electors = member of the Electoral College

electoral votes = votes that each state has in the Electoral College

few = not very many

good chance of becoming = it is very possible

primary = an election at which people vote for a party's candidate

represent = vote for

select = chose

speech = to talk to a group of people about many things

take an oath = a very serious promise

take part = to be a candidate in

term = the time when a person is President

vote = elect

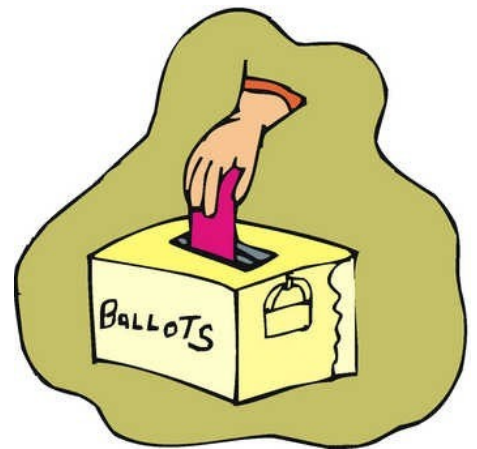
The American President

2. Conventions

At the end of the **primaries**, each party organises a big party called a convention. Thousands of party members meet and **select** the **candidate** who was the best in the primaries. At the convention, the candidate also tells the people who will become Vice President if he gets **elected**.

3. General Election

From August to November the **candidates** of each party travel all over the country, hold **speeches** and try to get the people to vote for them. On the 1st Tuesday in November the American people **vote** for one of the presidential **candidates**.



In most cases, there are only two candidates, a Republican and a Democrat, but in the last **elections** candidates from other parties have **taken part** in the election.

4. Electoral College

Americans do not **vote** for the President directly. They select **electors** who **represent** them in the **electoral college**.

Each state has a **certain** number of electors. Big states with a large population, like California have many electors (54) and small states, like Hawaii only have a **few** electors. All together there are 538 electors who get together in the Electoral College.

In December all the **electors** meet and **elect** a president. Most of the time they vote for the **candidate** who has won in their state. The candidate who has 270 or more **electoral votes** becomes President .

Candidates often **concentrate** on the big states with lots of electors. They know that if they win in states like California, New York or Texas they have a **good chance of becoming** President.

5. Inauguration

On January 20th of the following year the new President and his Vice President begin the new **term**. They put their left hand on a Bible and **take an oath**.



The American President

The US election of 2000

WORDS

although =while

ballots = a piece of paper on which you vote

candidate =person who wants to become president

case =argument

certain =final, clear

closest =here: both candidates almost had the same number of votes

contest = here : same as election

court = a place where it is decided if something is against the law or not

county = a part of a state that has its own small government

decide =here: to influence the outcome of

defeat = to win against

electoral votes =votes that each state has in the Electoral College

majority = when a person wins more than half

punch = to push a hole through something

recount = count again

turn out =to happen

unusual = different from what is normal

The US election of 2000 was one of the **closest** and most **unusual** presidential elections in history. 5 weeks after the election it was finally **certain** that George Bush, a Republican from Texas had **defeated** Vice President Al Gore.

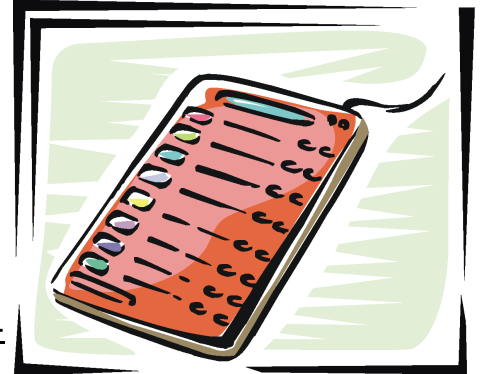
On November 7, 2000 more than 100 million Americans went to vote. Because of the American election system, the **candidate** who has the **majority of electoral votes** becomes President. **Although** all across America more people voted for Al Gore, he didn't get enough **electoral votes** to win.

As the election evening went on, it became clear that the **contest** would be **decided** in Florida, a state with 25 **electoral votes**.

On the morning after the election it **turned out** that Bush had won Florida by only a few hundreds votes. But many **ballots** had to be counted again because it was not clear who they were for. In some Florida **counties** people must vote by **punching** a hole in cards with a machine. Some machines couldn't read the cards and they were thrown away.

During the next few weeks it was the problem of the **courts** to decide if the Florida **ballots** should be **recounted** or not. Some **courts** said they should, others said they shouldn't.

The **case** went to the Supreme Court of the United States, the highest court of the country. It stopped the **recounting** of **ballots** and Bush became the winner of Florida's 25 **electoral votes**. Although Gore **defeated** Bush by half a million votes , George Bush became the 43rd president of the United States.

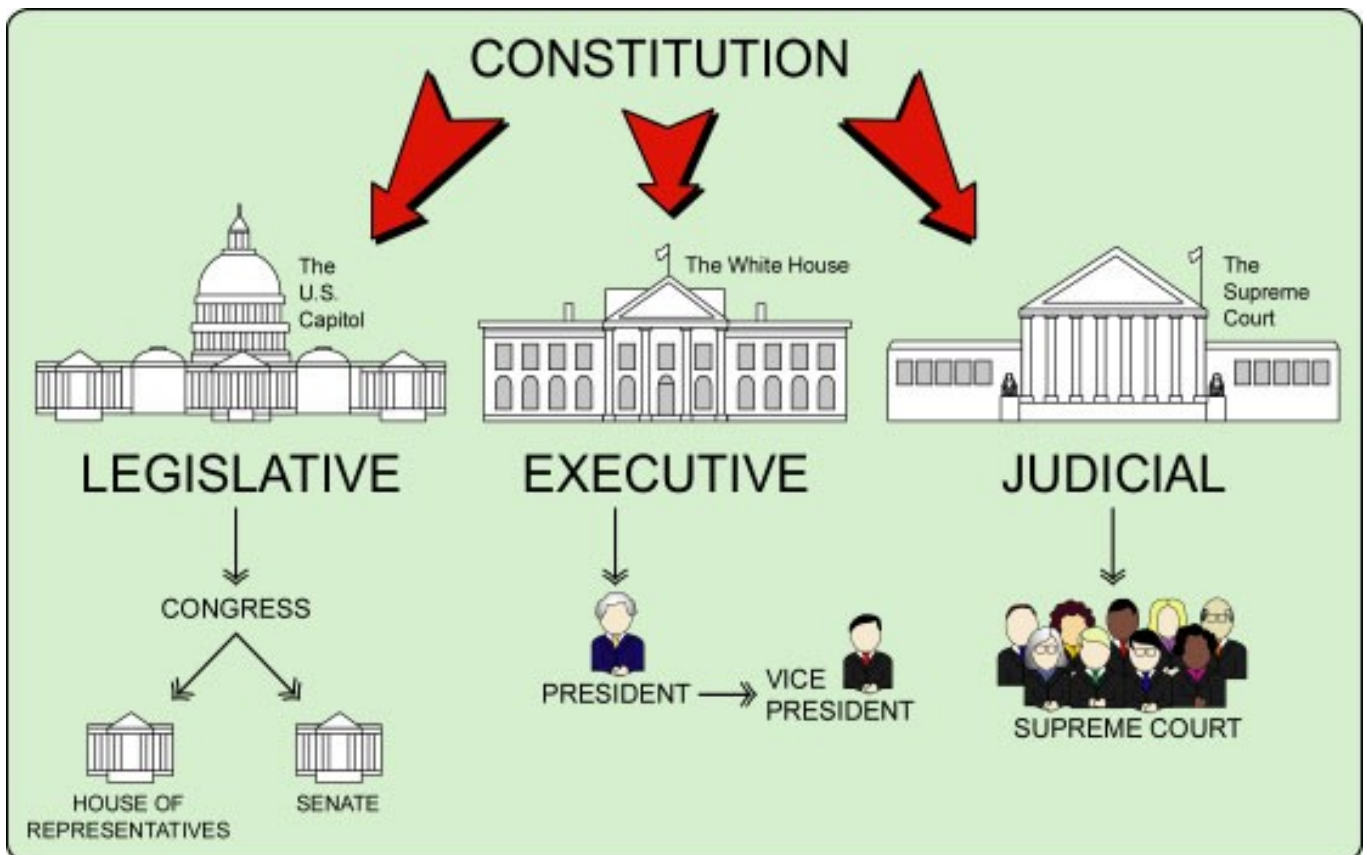


Florida



The American President

How Government Works



The **legislative branch** makes laws for the country. This is done in Congress, which is made up of two parts. The House of Representatives has 435 members. Small states have only a **few** members and big states, like California or New York have many **representatives**. The Senate has 100 senators, two from each state. Members of Congress are elected every two years.

The **executive branch** **makes sure** that people follow the **laws**, that the **legislative branch** makes. The leaders of this branch are the President and his Vice President. They are elected by the people every four years.

When people are not sure about the **meaning** of a law, the **judicial** branch listens to the **opinions** and makes a **decision**. It is made up of **courts**. The U.S. Supreme Court is the highest in the country. 9 **judges**, who are **appointed** by the President, meet in a building in Washington D.C.

WORDS

appoint = chose by somebody

court =the place where a judge and a jury decides if a person is guilty or not

decision =judgement

executive branch = a part of government that makes sure that people follow the law

few = not very many

judge = the person who is in control of a court

judicial branch = the system of courts in a country

law =a set of rules in a country

legislative branch = the part of government that makes the laws

representatives = members

make sure = to check and see if something has been done

meaning = what it means

opinion =what people believe or think



The American President

Famous Presidents

George Washington



George Washington is best known as America's first president. But he was much more than that. He fought against and **defeated** the British army in the **War of Independence** (1775 -1783) and he helped to write the American **constitution**.

As a boy, Washington had an exciting life. He worked on his parents' **plantation** and learned how to plant **tobacco** and grow **crops**. He also loved to **explore** the **wilderness**, hunt for food and sleep in the open.

At an early age Washington became a **surveyor** and helped new **settlers** buy land. When he grew older he became a soldier and fought with the British against the French and the Indians.

When Great Britain started to collect more and more **taxes** from the **settlers** war broke out between the American **colonists** and British soldiers. George Washington became **commander** of the American army.

Washington had many problems during the war. The British had more soldiers and **weapons**. Winters were cold and long. Many soldiers left him and his **troops** didn't have enough clothes.

When Washington surprised the British army at Yorktown, Virginia almost 8,000 British soldiers gave up. The British king started to **lose interest** in the colonies and in 1783 the war ended. Washington and his soldiers had won America's **independence**.

In the following years George Washington and many other leaders helped to write a **constitution** for the new country. In 1789, Washington was elected as the country's first president. Nobody was against him. He didn't want a second **term** but his friends **convinced** him that he was the best person for his country. In 1797, at the age of 65, Washington went back home to his farm. He died on December 14, 1799.

No other American has become more famous than George Washington. The nation's capitol was named after him. Many towns, streets, lakes and parks have his name. Even a state is called Washington. His **portrait** is on **stamps** and the one dollar **bill**.

WORDS

bill = banknote

colonist = someone who settles in a new colony

commander = a person who is the boss of a soldiers

constitution = a set of laws that a country is organized by

convince = to talk someone into doing something

crops = a plant that farmers grow and sell as food

defeat = to win against

explore = to go somewhere for the first time and find out about something

independence = freedom, liberty

lose interest = not interested any more

plantation = a large farm

portrait = somebody's face

settler = someone who lives in a place where not many people have lived before

stamp = a small piece of paper that you buy and put on a letter

surveyor = a person who measures land

tax = the money you pay to your government ; it is used to pay for the country's needs

term = the time when a person is President

tobacco = dry leaves that are smoked in cigarettes

troops = same as soldiers

War of Independence = the war in which the people in the British colonies of America became independent

weapon = things you use to fight in a war

wilderness = a place where nobody has lived before



The American President

Abraham Lincoln

WORDS

attend = to go to

battle = one fight in a war

break apart = if one country becomes two

break away = to leave

Civil War = the war that was fought between 1861 and 1865 in which the southern states formed their own country

crisis = a time when there are a lot of problems in a country

decade = ten years

declare = to officially say

landowner = someone who owns or has land

law = the rules of a country

lawyer = a person who defends people in court or gives them advice about the law

murder = kill

performance = presentation

plough = to turn over the earth so that you can plant crops

politics = government and affairs of the country

slavery = the system of having slaves in a country

slaves = someone who is owned by another person and works for them for no money

successful = here: very good and famous

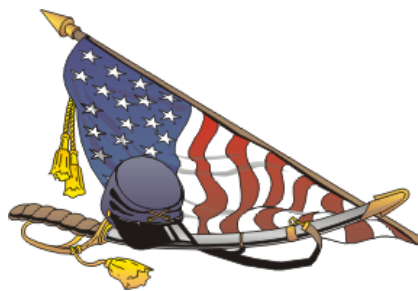
Abraham Lincoln was one of the greatest presidents in American history. He helped end **slavery** and stopped America from **breaking apart** in the **Civil War** (1861–1865). He was also the first president to be **murdered** in office.

Lincoln grew up in Kentucky in the early 19th century. During his childhood his family moved to Indiana and then to Illinois.

As a young man, Lincoln was tall and thin. He had dark skin and his hair was black. He did all kinds of work, like cutting wood or **ploughing** the fields and growing corn.

In Illinois, Abe started to get interested in **politics**. He was a great speaker and people liked to listen to him. Lincoln started studying **law** and became a **successful lawyer**.

In 1860 Abraham Lincoln won the presidential elections for the Republican party. It was a time of **crisis** in America. **Slavery** was a big problem. The Southern states needed **slaves** to work on their big farms and the people in the North were against **slavery**.



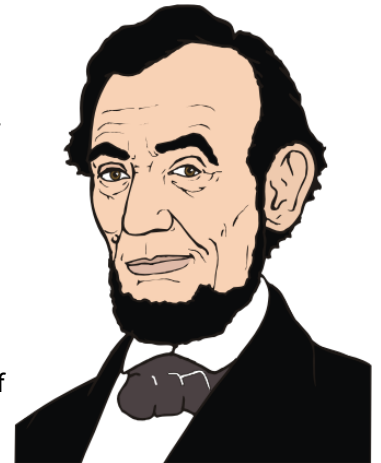
In 1861 the American Civil War started. The Southern states **broke away** from the North and formed their own army. It became the bloodiest war in American history.

On January 1st 1863, Lincoln **declared** that all slaves in America were free. But nothing really changed for them. They kept on working for white **landowners** in the Southern states for the next **decades**.

As the war went on, the Northerners won many **battles**—the most famous one was at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. On April 9th 1865 the South gave up and the war was over.

Five days later Lincoln attended a theatre **performance** in Washington. Shortly after 10 o'clock he was shot in the head by John Booth, a famous actor. Lincoln died a few hours later.

Many people say that Lincoln was America's most important president. He ended **slavery** and helped America stay one country.





The American President

Franklin D. Roosevelt



WORDS

attack = the use of weapons against an enemy in a war

career = here : life

create = make

cripple = to hurt somebody so that they cannot walk or move well

damage = hurt, destroyed

declare = officially begin

depression = a time when there are not many jobs and people cannot buy things because they don't have the money

divide = to cut into parts

FDR = short for Franklin D. Roosevelt

health = the physical condition of a person

government = the people who rule a country

illness = disease

in office = as president

polio = a serious illness of the nerves. You cannot move many parts of your body

population = the people of a country

serve = work for

stay out = not to take part

suffer = to be in a bad situation

term = the time when a person is President

wheelchair = a chair with wheels that is used by a person who cannot walk

Franklin D. Roosevelt was the only president who was elected four times and he **served** his country for 12 years. He died 83 days after he started his fourth **term**.

As a young man Roosevelt became **crippled** by **polio**. He could not stand or move his legs. His muscles were also **damaged** and he spent most of his life in a **wheelchair**. When many people thought that this **illness** would end his political **career**, Roosevelt became President for the first time in 1933.

At that time, America **suffered** from bad **depression**. Many people had lost their jobs and families didn't have enough to eat. Roosevelt started a new programme called the New Deal. The **government** spent lots of money to **create** new jobs—it built roads, bridges, new schools and did other important things to help the **population**.

America's people saw that **FDR** could do a lot for his country and they **elected** him for a second time in 1936.

When Roosevelt started his third **term in office** in 1941, Europe was at war. At first, he wanted America to **stay out** of World War II but when Japanese planes attacked Pearl Harbour on December 7, 1941, the USA **declared** war on Japan and Germany.

Roosevelt's **health** was already very bad when he started his fourth **term** in January 1945. He met with the leaders of Great Britain and Russia, Churchill and Stalin, at Yalta. There the three leaders planned the final **attacks** on Germany and talked about how they would **divide** the country after the war. Roosevelt died on April 12, 1945.





The American President

John F. Kennedy

WORDS

act = to do something

advisor = someone who knows a lot about something

arrest = to put into prison

assassination = the killing of an important person

blossom = to produce flowers

bullet = a small piece of metal that comes out of a gun

career = here : life

commander = a person who is the boss of soldiers or sailors

crew = all the people who work on a plane or a ship

dynamic = full of energy and new ideas

equal rights = to have the same rights as white people

involve = to take part, to be a part of

honour = to give someone a medal

join = to become a member of

missile =rocket

politician =someone who works in politics

politics =government and affairs of the country

presidency = the time when he was president

race = here : election

remove = to take or put away

rescue = to save somebody from a dangerous situation

rush = to move very quickly

shot to death = killed

Soviet Union = a communist country that existed between 1917 and 1991

threaten =warn someone that you will do something

term = the time when a person is President

John F. Kennedy was the youngest man who has ever been elected President of the United States. His **term** ended after two years and ten months when he was **shot to death** in Dallas, Texas.

Kennedy came from an Irish family that left Ireland during the 1840's . In America the Kennedys became rich and JFK's father was a **politician** and millionaire.

After John had studied **politics** at Harvard University he **joined** the US Navy and was **commander** of a boat during World War II. He became a war hero and was **honoured** because he **rescued** the **crew** of his boat when it was bombed by Japanese airplanes.

In the 1940s Kennedy's political **career** began. He became a member of the House of Representatives and later a Senator in his home state of Massachusetts.

In 1960 Kennedy won the **race** for the White House and became the first Roman Catholic president of the USA. People liked him because he was good-looking and rich. He was a young, **dynamic** American and he had an attractive wife, Jacqueline.

Kennedy had many things to do during his short **presidency**. He helped African Americans in their fight for **equal rights**. He also sent US **advisors** to Vietnam because the Communists **threatened** to take control of it. JFK promised to put a man on the moon before the **Soviets**.

His main problem, however, was Cuba. In 1961 the **Soviet Union** put **missiles**, which could attack the US, on the island. When Kennedy **threatened** to start a war, the Russians **removed** their missiles.

On November 22, 1963 JFK's **presidency** ended when he rode in his open car through the streets of Dallas, Texas. **Bullets** hit him in the back of the head. He was **rushed** to hospital but doctors couldn't save his life. Shortly afterwards he died and Vice President Lyndon Johnson became President.

A few hours after the murder Lee Harvey Oswald was **arrested**, because he was in the building from which the shots came. The police were sure that Oswald was the murderer. A few days later, Oswald himself was killed.

The **assassination** is still a mystery today. First, it was thought that Oswald **acted** alone, but today many people think that there were more people **involved** in Kennedy's murder.

