

Ford Becomes President

On the evening of August 8, 1974, President Nixon announced to the nation his intention to leave office. The next morning he said an emotional farewell to his Cabinet and White House staff in the East Room.

At 11:35 on the morning of August 9, Nixon's letter of resignation was delivered to Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. Minutes later, in a peaceful transfer of power, Gerald Ford was sworn in as 38th President of the United States. In his actions and in his words, Ford tried to reassure his countrymen. His address acknowledged the hurt in so many hearts, but also expressed his strength of character and his independence in declaring an end at last to "our long national nightmare."

The oath that I have taken is the same oath that was taken by George Washington and by every President under the Constitution. But I assume the Presidency under extraordinary circumstances never before experienced by Americans ... If you have not chosen me by secret ballot, neither have I gained office by any secret promises... I am indebted to no man, and only to one woman -- my dear wife -- as I begin this very difficult job.

Although he had little time to prepare for the presidency, Ford was ready to assume its responsibilities. From the beginning, his goal was to restore public confidence and lead the nation out of crisis. Just a month after taking office, hoping to put the past behind him and get on with the business of healing a broken nation, President Gerald Ford made the difficult decision to pardon Richard Nixon.

Gallery Four Activity

Presidential Speeches

Gerald R. Ford Museum

METHOD

- Read Ford's remarks on Taking the Oath of Office as President.
- Discuss: What is significant? What is the focus of the speech?
- Recreate the swearing in ceremony: One student: Chief Justice, Mrs. Ford, President Ford.

SUGGESTED POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES

Our Documents: A National Initiative on American History, Civics and Service, is a new program sponsored by the National Archives and Records Administration, National History Day, the Corporation for National and Community Service and the U.S.A. Freedom Corps to promote public exploration of how our understanding of rights and responsibilities have changed over time. Components of "Our Documents" are incorporated throughout this packet.

Visit "Our Documents" at (www.ourdocuments.gov) look at George Washington's First Inaugural Address Speech, and Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address Speech. Discuss: How are these speeches similar to Gerald Ford's? How do they differ?

Gallery Four Activity

Roles of the President Activity Description

METHOD

Divide the class into four equal groups for the following activity. Have each group select one of the events listed on the Roles of the President gallery activity. (You may also select other events from the Ford Administration.) While at the Museum, have the students find information on their subject. They should identify activities of the President for as many of the roles as possible.

SUGGESTED PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES

- Have a student read the Presidential Oath of Office to the class. Lead a brief discussion on the meaning of the Oath.
- Have students research the varied roles or responsibilities of the President. After research is completed, distribute copies of the Roles of the President matching activity. (You might prefer to make an overhead transparency.)

SUGGESTED POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES

- Have students conduct research to complete this activity.
- Read the newspaper/magazines and watch the news. What is President Obama currently doing in each of these seven roles?

Gallery Four Activity

The Roles of the President Activity Two

The President of the United States has many different responsibilities. It is sometimes said that he wears many “hats.” Each group should locate their event in the Museum exhibits. Record the date the event began, then read through the exhibits carefully. Your goal is to identify President Ford’s activities for as many of these roles as possible.

FIND THE DAY FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING AND THEN CHOOSE ONE.

- GERALD FORD BECOMES THE 38TH PRESIDENT _____ (DATE)
- VIETNAM WAR ENDS/ FALL OF SAIGON _____ (DATE)
- THE MAYAGUEZ IS CAPTURED _____ (DATE)
- AMERICA AT 200 (DOMESTIC ISSUES/ BICENTENNIAL/ 1976 CAMPAIGN) _____ (DATE)

“HATS “ OR ROLES OF THE PRESIDENT

Chief of State:

Chief Executive:

Chief Diplomat:

Commander -in- Chief:

Chief Legislator:

Chief of Party:

Chief Guardian of the Economy:

Pre-Visit Activity

Roles of the President Matching

The President of the United States has many roles to play. Match the following activities during Ford's Administration with the correct role:

- A. Chief of State
- B. Chief Executive
- C. Chief Diplomat
- D. Commander-in-Chief
- E. Chief Legislator
- F. Chief of Party
- G. Chief Guardian of the Economy

- ___ 1. President Nixon nominates Gerald Ford for Vice President.
- ___ 2. President Ford delivers a speech to joint sessions of Congress.
- ___ 3. President Ford meets with Israel's Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.
- ___ 4. President Ford meets with Chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus.
- ___ 5. President Ford meets with his Cabinet.
- ___ 6. President Ford appears on television to announce his pardon of Nixon.
- ___ 7. The President meets with the head of the CIA.
- ___ 8. President Ford entertains Queen Elizabeth during the American Bicentennial Celebration.
- ___ 9. President Nixon calls for the firing of his Attorney General.
- ___ 10. The President signs a bill into law.
- ___ 11. President Ford writes a Proclamation on Women's Equality.
- ___ 12. President Ford develops a plan for deserters.
- ___ 13. President Ford oversees the *Mayaguez* rescue.
- ___ 14. President Ford sent Secretary of State Kissinger to the Middle East for Peace Talks.
- ___ 15. President Ford maintains strong national defenses.
- ___ 16. President Ford works on energy policies and the Conservation Act.
- ___ 17. The President appoints a Supreme Court Justice
- ___ 18. President Ford participates in the 1976 Presidential Debates.
- ___ 19. The President promotes arms controls with the Soviets.
- ___ 20. The President negotiates the SALT II Treaty.
- ___ 21. The President supports the development of Patriot and Tomahawk missiles, later used in the Persian Gulf War.
- ___ 22. President Ford's election campaign starts with a stop in Russell, Kansas, the home of running mate Bob Dole.
- ___ 23. The President works to hold down taxes and the cost of living.

Pre-Visit Activity
Roles of the President Matching – ANSWER KEY

The President of the United States has many roles to play. Match the following activities during Ford's Administration with the correct role:

- A. Chief of State
- B. Chief Executive
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- D. Commander-in-Chief
- E. Chief Legislator
- F. Chief of Party
- G. Chief Guardian of the Economy

- F 1. President Nixon nominates Gerald Ford for Vice President.
- B 2. President Ford delivers a speech to joint sessions of Congress.
- A 3. President Ford meets with Israel's Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.
- E 4. President Ford meets with Chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus.
- B 5. President Ford meets with his Cabinet.
- A 6. President Ford appears on television to announce his pardon of Nixon.
- B 7. The President meets with the head of the CIA.
- A 8. President Ford entertains Queen Elizabeth during the American Bicentennial Celebration.
- B 9. President Nixon calls for the firing of his Attorney General.
- B 10. The President signs a bill into law.
- E 11. President Ford writes a Proclamation on Women's Equality.
- D 12. President Ford develops a plan for deserters.
- D 13. President Ford oversees the *Mayaguez* rescue.
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Gallery Four Activity

Venn Diagram – Who is Gerald Ford Activity Description

METHOD

- Copy activity for students. While at the Museum, students may work individually or in small groups to answer the questions. They will find the answers in galleries 3 and 4.

SUGGESTED POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES

- Have students fill out the Venn Diagram comparing Gerald Ford and Barack Obama.

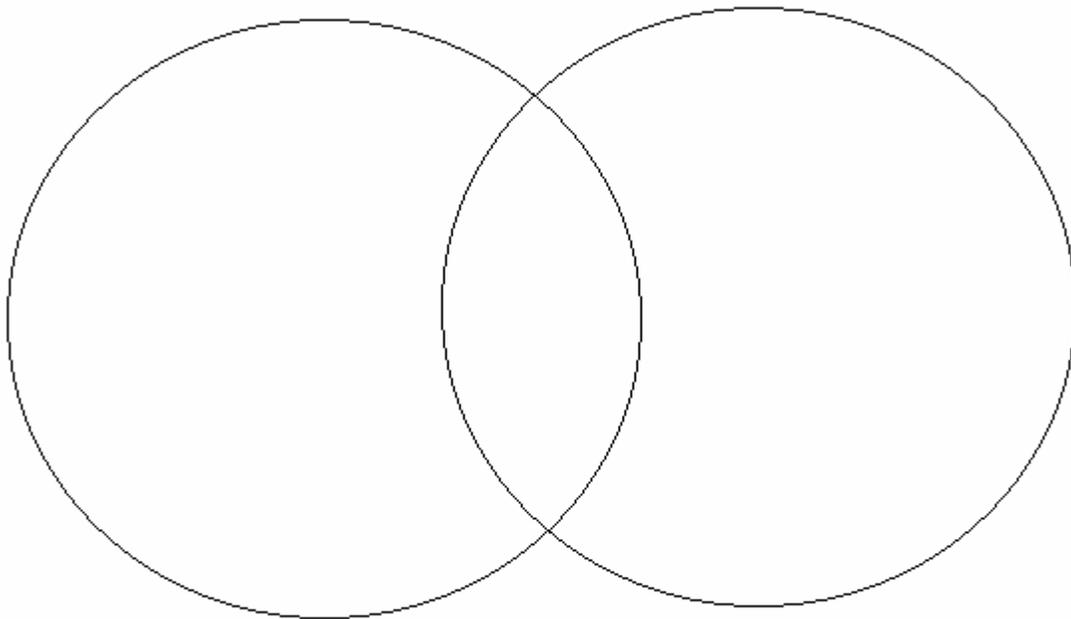
After visiting the Gerald R. Ford Museum you may want to complete the Venn Diagram, comparing the Presidents. Students may need to do additional research to complete this activity.

Venn Diagram

President Ford and President Barack Obama

President Ford

President Barack Obama



You may want to compare some of these: family, pets, number of years as president, Political careers: offices held political parties, ages, sports and hobbies. Can you think of other things?
