

Who is Gerald Ford?

Early Years through Marriage

Gerald Ford was born Leslie Lynch King, Jr. on July 14, 1913, in Omaha, Nebraska. The King household was not a happy one. Shortly after the birth of her son, Dorothy Gardner King moved to Grand Rapids, Michigan, where she settled with the young boy. In December 1913 her brief marriage to Leslie King ended in divorce. Three years later she married Gerald Ford, Sr., who would give his name to Dorothy's first son - and set an example of rigorous honesty and self-discipline to young "Junie" Ford.

In the Ford household three rules were absolute. *Tell the truth, work hard and come to dinner on time.* Encouraged by their parents, Jerry Ford and his three half brothers shared household chores, took part time jobs and were active in community and church.

Young Ford enrolled at the University of Michigan in the autumn of 1931. He majored in economics and political science, and was named Most Valuable Player on the 1934 football team. In 1938 Gerald Ford entered Yale Law School. He graduated three years later in the top third of his class and returned to Grand Rapids where he and friend Phil Buchen opened a law practice. When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor in December 1941, Ford's attention turned from law to military service. He would eventually serve on the aircraft carrier USS *Monterey*.

After the war, Ford returned to Grand Rapids, where he joined a well-established law firm, became active in the community, and met Betty Bloomer Warren. By February 1948 "the most eligible bachelor in town" was preparing to make two decisions that would change his life forever. The following October he and Betty married. Weeks later Gerald Ford was elected to his first of thirteen terms in the United States House of Representatives.

1948 Campaign and Congress

Wartime experiences transformed Ford's thinking about the United States and its role in the world. By the time he returned to Michigan in 1946, Ford had come to believe that world peace depended on American leadership - - beginning with the reconstruction of war-ravaged Europe. His decision to run for the United States House of Representatives would enable him to put ideas into action.

Quickly rising through the Republican ranks, serving on the House Appropriations Committee and Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, he became House Minority Leader in 1965. Every assignment gained in the House brought him closer to his long-time political goal, Speaker of the House. During his nine years as Minority Leader, Ford honed his leadership skills. He was a consensus builder, someone who took the time to listen and learn from others. Because he trusted his colleagues, they trusted him.

Gallery Three Activity

Who is Gerald Ford? Activity Description

METHOD

Copy the activity for your 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.

Discuss Gerald Ford with your students prior to visiting the Museum. Some questions you might ask include: Who is he? What is he famous for? Where is he from?

SUGGESTED POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES

- After visiting the Gerald R. Ford Museum you may want to complete the Venn Diagram, comparing Presidents Gerald Ford and Barack Obama. Students may need to do additional research to complete this activity. This activity is located in the Gallery Four section of this packet.

Gallery Three Activity

Who is Gerald Ford?

Gerald Ford was born in Omaha, Nebraska on July 14, 1913. He grew up right here in Grand Rapids. In 1974, he became the 38th president of the United States. See if you can answer these questions about President Ford, Mrs. Ford and their family.

- What were Gerald Ford's mother's three rules?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
- Why do you think these rules are important?
- What organization for boys did he join?
- Where does the nickname "Junie" come from?
- What sports did he play in high school and college?
- What branch of the military did Gerald Ford serve in during WWII?
- What activities did Mrs. Ford enjoy when she was young?
- What are the names of President and Mrs. Fords' four children?

Gerald Ford Becomes President

Gerald Ford was elected to the United States House of Representatives in 1948. He was reelected every two years until he was asked to become Vice President of the United States in 1973. When Richard Nixon resigned as President of the United States, Mr. Ford became the new President.

- When did Gerald Ford become the 38th President of the United States?
- Can you name three things the President does?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.

Gallery Three Activity

Who is Gerald Ford? – ANSWER KEY

Gerald Ford was born in Omaha, Nebraska on July 14, 1913. He grew up right here in Grand Rapids. In 1974, he became the 38th president of the United States. See if you can answer these questions about President Ford, Mrs. Ford and their family.

- What were Gerald Ford's mother's three rules?
 1. *Tell the truth*
 2. *Work Hard*
 3. *Come to dinner on time*
- Why do you think these rules are important?
- What organization for boys did he join?
Boy Scouts
- Where does the nickname "Junie" come from?
*Gerald R. Ford **Junior***
- What sports did he play in high school and college?
Football, Basketball, Track
- What branch of the military did Gerald Ford serve in during WWII?
Navy
- What activities did Mrs. Ford enjoy when she was young?
Dancing, Modeling
- What are the names of President and Mrs. Fords' four children?
Michael, John, Steve, Susan

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1974
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Gallery Three Activity

Young Biographer Activity Description

METHOD

While at the Museum, work with your students as they answer as many of their questions as possible.

SUGGESTED PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES

- Discuss biographies with your students. What biographies have they read? Brainstorm things your students might want to learn about President Ford. Have your students compile a list of questions they have about President Ford. You may want to use the Biographical Information Collection Sheet with your students.

SUGGESTED POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES

- Have your students conduct research to find answers to any remaining questions. After all research is complete, have the students write their own "Biography of Gerald Ford."
- The summer after his first year at Yale, Gerald Ford worked at Yellowstone National Park. You can have your students view and analyze the Act Establishing Yellowstone National Park at www.ourdocuments.gov.

Young Biographer
Biographical Information- Collection Sheet

PERSONAL INFORMATION:

Year of Birth: _____

Place of Birth: _____

Schools Attended: _____

Family: _____

Work and Other Activities: _____

Political Affiliation: _____

Congress: _____

Positions held/ Committees: _____

Year Elected: _____

Term(s) Served: _____

Name of Vice President: _____

Political beliefs: _____

Describe two accomplishments during presidency: _____

Describe one conflict that was dealt with during presidency: _____

Other information: _____
