

At Work in the Oval Office

During Gerald Ford's first month in office, his schedule was filled with decision-making, official appointments, meetings, bill signings, and receptions. The Oval Office is used for many ceremonial events, meetings, and day-to-day work. Decisions impacting the nation and the world are made, and children come to visit their presidential fathers in this room.

When Gerald Ford took office, the Oval Office was immediately swept clean of all electronic listening devices. Mrs. Ford brought her warmth and style to the Oval Office when she redecorated that famous room.

The History of the Oval Office

The West Wing was constructed in 1902. After its completion, then President Theodore Roosevelt moved the Executive Offices to this location. In 1909, the first Oval Office was completed. It was located in the center of the south side of the West Wing. After the West Wing was enlarged in 1934, President Franklin D. Roosevelt had the office moved to its current location in the southeast corner near the Rose Garden.

Items that remain from the original Oval Office include the white marble mantel over the fireplace and the Presidential Seal in the ceiling. Each President furnishes the office as he likes.

The President's desk, named the Resolute desk, was created using timbers from the British ship H.M.S. *Resolute*. Queen Victoria had the desk made as a gift to President Rutherford B. Hayes after the U.S. Navy saved the *Resolute* from ice. The desk has been modified twice in history. President F.D. Roosevelt had a panel carved with the Presidential coat-of-arms in 1945, and raised the desk 2 inches. The only presidents who have not used this desk are Presidents Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard Nixon, and Gerald R. Ford.

Gallery Five Activity

At Work in the Oval Office Activity Description

METHOD

Read, or have the students read, the background information about the Oval Office. In what ways is this office similar to other offices? In what ways is it different?

Copy and distribute the At Work in the Oval Office gallery activity. Explain to your students that they will need to listen to the presentation in the Oval Office. While listening they should take notes on the President's activities. You may want to have students look at other exhibits to gather more information on what the President does in the Oval Office.

SUGGESTED POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES

- As a follow up activity use the Presidential Journal activity page and have students write a journal entry for a day at work in the Oval Office.

At Work in the Oval Office

Gallery Five

Rich with history, the Oval Office is a symbol of American democracy and power. For Gerald Ford it was very much a working office. Through a sophisticated sound and light display, you can experience a typical day in the presidency - from dawn to dinner.

As an outsider looking into the Oval Office, listen to the conversation between the President and his staff. While you listen, take notes about the things that are discussed. You will also want to look through the scrapbook located just outside the Oval Office.

When you return to school you will write a journal entry for a day at work in the Oval Office. What do you see in the Oval Office?

At Work in the Oval Office
Presidential Journal

DATE: _____

7:00 A.M.	_____

8:00 A.M.	_____

9:00 A.M.	_____

10:00 A.M.	_____

11:00 A.M.	_____

12:00 P.M.	_____

1:00 P.M.	_____

2:00 P.M.	_____

3:00 P.M.	_____

4:00 P.M.	_____

5:00 P.M.	_____

6:00 P.M.	_____

7:00 P.M.	_____

8:00 P.M.	_____

9:00 P.M.	_____