

School House
to
White House

The Education of the Presidents

Integrating the Museum Exhibit into the
First-Grade Classroom



Teacher's Guide

TO THE TEACHER

Welcome to the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum! We are proud to present **SCHOOL HOUSE TO WHITE HOUSE: THE EDUCATION OF THE PRESIDENTS**, a rare and exciting learning opportunity for your students.

In 232 years of presidential history, only 42 people have become President of the United States.* Who were these individuals who came to hold the highest office in the land?

The Presidents were once boys struggling with their studies, teenagers trying to fit in, and young men deciding on a career. They came from many different backgrounds. Most went to public schools. Others had private tutors or attended prestigious private academies. Most were good students, although an occasional poor grade appeared on a report card. Many played sports, acted in theater, or joined clubs. All acknowledged the importance and influence of their education.

We invite you and your students to journey back to the school days of our 13 most-recent Presidents, through the collections of the National Archives' Presidential Libraries. As you and your students move through the exhibit, take a good look around. You may discover that you have something in common with these uncommon men!

PRESIDENTS FEATURED IN THE EXHIBIT

President	Birthplace	Date of Birth
Herbert Hoover	West Branch, Iowa	August 10, 1874
Franklin Roosevelt	Hyde Park, New York	January 30, 1882
Harry Truman	Lamar, Missouri	May 8, 1884
Dwight Eisenhower	Denison, Texas	October 14, 1890
John Kennedy	Brookline, Massachusetts	May 29, 1917
Lyndon Johnson	Near Johnson City, Texas	August 27, 1908
Richard Nixon	Yorba Linda, California	January 9, 1913
Gerald Ford	Omaha, Nebraska	July 14, 1913
Jimmy Carter	Plains, Georgia	October 1, 1924
Ronald Reagan	Tampico, Illinois	February 6, 1911
George Bush	Milton, Massachusetts	June 12, 1924
William Clinton	Hope, Arkansas	August 19, 1946
George W. Bush	New Haven, Connecticut	July 6, 1946

*Grover Cleveland was the only president to serve two non-consecutive terms, listed as president #22 (1885 – 1889) and President #24 (1893 – 1897).



PRESIDENTIAL FACTS TO SHARE WITH YOUR STUDENTS

- In elementary school, Dwight Eisenhower’s favorite subject was spelling. He liked the sense of competition and marveled that a single letter could change the entire meaning of a word.
- Lyndon Johnson’s mother, Rebekah, taught him the alphabet by the age of three and, by age four, he could read. Lyndon wanted to learn more, so he followed his older cousins to school and sat in on their classes.
- In the first grade, George W. Bush studied reading and writing and arithmetic, music, and art. He earned straight As in all five subjects.

BEFORE YOU GO!—Read more about the **SCHOOL HOUSE TO WHITE HOUSE: THE EDUCATION OF THE PRESIDENTS** exhibit in *Prologue*, the quarterly magazine of the National Archives and Records Administration, at www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2007/spring/schoolhouse.html

EXHIBIT FOCUS—Your students will likely enjoy a focus on the early-elementary school years of the Presidents, where they will discover that they have many things in common with the boys who would become Presidents of the United States.

MAIN IDEA— When the Presidents were children, they learned about the importance of good character, whether at home, at school, at church, or by way of the community at large.

METHOD— As you move through the exhibit, select captions that focus on character development and good citizenship to share with your students. They may include the “6 Pillars of Character,” and additional core character traits. For example, a young Harry Truman wrote that with “a great deal of *courage* . . . I think a man will get through the world.” Quite a number of presidential report cards have a category for citizenship. You may want to point out to students how a future President ranked with regard to this essential character trait.

6 Pillars of Character

1. Trustworthiness
2. Citizenship
3. Respect
4. Fairness
5. Responsibility
6. Caring



BACK IN THE CLASSROOM

Following your visit to the Eisenhower Library to view the exhibit, you may request a CD of all the images included in it for your use in the classroom. Please see “contact information” on the last page.

Assist students in creating an original exhibit in their classroom, or in another appropriate place in your school, which features the importance of good character and the Presidents of the United States.

Gather age-appropriate presidential biographies. Include the presidential libraries’ web sites, check out the “Kids” or “Education” pages.

Read aloud to students portions of biographies that illustrate how and what the Presidents learned about good character while growing up. Ask students to link at least one character trait with each President.

Mount images of the Presidents (student created, commercially produced, or outlines of the Presidents colored by students) to the bulletin board. Add captions of appropriate character traits associated with each President featured in the classroom exhibit. For example, with Dwight D. Eisenhower, it is appropriate to choose “trustworthiness” as a trait often associated with his character.

Presidents Coloring Pages: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/kids/presidentsday/color/>

Locate presidential quotations that address the attributes of good character to complement the exhibit. Some sources available online are listed below.

Character Above All: An Exploration of Presidential Leadership: <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/character/>

Ethics Resource Center: <http://www.ethics.org/erc-publications/presidential-quote-list.asp>

Additional Activities: (1) On a map of the United States, locate birthplaces of the Presidents and mark with a star or some other meaningful indicator. (2) Create a timeline of the Presidents’ birthdates, beginning with Herbert Hoover and ending with George W. Bush. Match up presidential birthdates with students’ own birthdays.

THE PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARIES

Presidential Libraries, operated by the National Archives and Records Administration, house and preserve documents and artifacts saved for each President from Hoover to Clinton, including materials that tell the story of the education of these 20th-century Presidents. These are not libraries in the usual sense. They are archives and museums, bringing together in one place the materials of a President, his administration, and his era,



presenting them to the public for study and discussion without regard for political considerations or affiliations.

The **SCHOOL HOUSE TO WHITE HOUSE: THE EDUCATION OF THE PRESIDENTS** exhibit presents documents, artifacts, photographs, and film, which illustrate for you what these leaders accomplished in the classrooms of their youth. You may learn more through visits to Presidential Libraries located across the country.

Visit a Presidential Library and experience history firsthand. The Presidents are expecting you!

PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY WEB SITES

Below is a list of Presidential Libraries web sites. With a minimum of searching, usually in the “Education” or “Kids” pages, there are photographs of the presidents, including those as children, of family members, teachers and classmates, and pets and activities. You may download, print, and add these images to the classroom exhibit. In addition, a program or portion of the web site is identified, in the chart below, which may be of interest to you and your students.

Herbert Hoover	www.hoover.archives.gov	“Hoover Wore Many Hats” on the “Kids” page
Franklin Roosevelt	www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/	“Roosevelt Rap” on the “Education” page
Harry Truman	www.trumanlibrary.org	“Kids” under the Main Menu, for a great variety of online activities
Dwight Eisenhower	www.eisenhower.archives.gov	“Dreams of a Barefoot Boy: 1890 – 1911,” on the “Education page”
John Kennedy	www.jfklibrary.org	“A President’s Day,” “Education and Public Programs,” then, “Materials, Resources, and Activities for Students”
Lyndon Johnson	www.lbjlib.utexas.edu	“What Do You Know,” on the “Education” page, under “LBJ for Kids!”



Richard Nixon	www.nixonlibrary.gov	“Moon Landing,” on the “For Kids” page, under “Speeches for Kids”
Gerald Ford	www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov	“My Photo Album,” on the “Education Program” page under “Fun Facts”
Jimmy Carter	www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov	“Take the Diplomacy Challenge” on the “Youth Space” page
Ronald Reagan	www.reagan.utexas.edu	“Early Ronald Reagan” on the “Photographs” page
George H.W. Bush	http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu	“My Own Room at the White House” on the “Education,” then, “Programs” page
William Clinton	www.clintonlibrary.gov	“Clinton White House Photographs” on the “Research,” then, “Audio Visual Research,” pages. Scroll down to “Photo Gallery”

ADDITIONAL PRESIDENTIAL WEB SITES TO VISIT

www.nps.gov Many of the Presidents’ homes are National Park Service historic sites. Additional information, including photographs, about their formative years can be found on these web sites.

www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/presidents/ Check the “Kids” category on the menu at the top of the page. The pull-down “Select a President” menu offers brief overviews of each President.

www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/ The White House web pages about the Presidents.

americanhistory.si.edu/presidency/home.html The Smithsonian Institution’s web pages about the Presidents. It includes portraits, objects, online activities, teacher materials, and resources.



www.americanpresidents.org/ This C-Span web site offers a survey of Presidential Leaders, which ranks each president. Under “Resources,” there are photos and videos. In addition, check out “American Presidents Archive” under “Resources,” for accessible video on each President.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEACHERS

“**Primarily Teaching**” is an exciting summer program that introduces educators to the holdings of the National Archives and Records Administration. Best of all, participants spend an entire week in the archives researching a topic of interest to them and developing an original lesson plan. More information is available at <http://www.archives.gov/education/primarily-teaching/>.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information about **SCHOOL HOUSE TO WHITE HOUSE: THE EDUCATION OF THE PRESIDENTS**, contact the education office at the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum.

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