

School House
to
White House

The Education of the Presidents

Integrating the Museum Exhibit into the
Fourth-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	Term(s) of Office	First Lady	Location of Presidential Library
Herbert Hoover	1929 – 1933	Lou Henry	West Branch, Iowa
Franklin Roosevelt	1933 – 1945	Eleanor Roosevelt	Hyde Park, New York
Harry Truman	1945 – 1953	Elizabeth “Bess” Wallace	Independence, Missouri
Dwight Eisenhower	1953 – 1961	Mamie Doud	Abilene, Kansas
John Kennedy	1961 – 1963	Jacqueline “Jackie” Bouvier	Boston, Massachusetts
Lyndon Johnson	1963 – 1969	Claudia “Lady Bird” Taylor	Austin, Texas
Richard Nixon	1969 – 1974	Thelma “Pat” Ryan	Yorba Linda, California
Gerald Ford	1974 – 1977	Elizabeth “Betty” Bloomer	Ann Arbor and Grand Rapids, Michigan
Jimmy Carter	1977 – 1981	Rosalynn Smith	Atlanta, Georgia
Ronald Reagan	1981 – 1989	Nancy Davis	Simi Valley, California
George Bush	1989 – 1993	Barbara Pierce	College Station, Texas
William Clinton	1993 – 2001	Hillary Rodham	Little Rock, Arkansas
George W. Bush	2001 – 2009	Laura Welch	Dallas, Texas**

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

**The George W. Bush Presidential Library is in the planning stages.



PRESIDENTIAL FACTS TO SHARE WITH YOUR STUDENTS

- Richard Nixon played the clarinet, saxophone, piano, and accordion. At age 12, he went to live and study music with his mother’s sister in central California for six months. His love of music continued throughout his life.
- Young Herbert Hoover was raised in a strict Quaker family where he was encouraged to read the Bible, encyclopedias, and textbooks until one of his teachers introduced him to classic novels like *Ivanhoe* and *David Copperfield*.
- Dwight Eisenhower played both football and baseball in high school and loved them. He resurrected—and was elected president—of the Abilene High School Athletic Association, which raised funds for uniforms and travel expenses for out-of-town games.

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 enjoy a focus on the upper-elementary school years of the Presidents. Throughout the exhibit, they will view many types of primary sources, including documents, photographs, and objects, that, along with carefully written captions, tell the story of the educations of the Presidents featured in the exhibit.

MAIN IDEA—Explain to students that designing a museum exhibit is a complex endeavor. It involves many steps including (1) determining a theme (main idea), (2) choosing concepts that support the theme, (3) selecting primary source materials to tell the story, (4) writing effective text, and (5) making design decisions about how best to artistically and/or technically present the story. As students move through the exhibit, point out to them, examples of the above criteria to demonstrate the decisions exhibit designers made.

METHOD— As your students explore the exhibit, ask them to identify the different types of primary sources they see by circling the corresponding words below. In the blank following, write the last name of the President associated with the primary source and any other information you would like them to include.

Photograph _____

Letter _____

Speech _____

Book _____



Film _____

Audio _____

Poster _____

Other _____

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 use in your classroom. Please see “contact information” on the last page to order a copy.

Using images from the exhibit, and from a variety of other sources, including presidential library web sites, organize students into groups of three to five students each to create an original “Three-Panel Display.” Each group of students will randomly draw the name of one of the Presidents from the exhibit (Herbert Hoover to George W. Bush) to feature in the display. As a culminating activity, each group of students should present and explain their display to the rest of the class. Students in the audience should be prepared to ask questions of the group of students who created the display. For example, *Which primary source used in your display is your favorite? Why? What is the most surprising fact you learned about this President?*

The exhibit advice below comes directly from the experts at **National History Day (NHD)** and is located on their web site. Take some time to explore the site as there is much more information available about creating a three-panel display and other types of exhibits.

Creating Exhibit Entries (<http://www.nhd.org/Exhibit.htm>)

Exhibits are designed to display visual and written information on topics in an attractive and easily understood manner. They are similar to exhibits found in a museum. People walking by should be attracted to an exhibit's main idea and, therefore, stop to learn more about the topic. To be successful, an exhibit must create an effective balance between visual interest and historical explanation.

The most common form of exhibit entry is a three-panel display. This style is the least complicated to design and build and is a very effective way to present information.

1. Here are some tips for this style:
2. Be sure the title is the main focus of the center panel.
3. Use the center panel to present the main ideas.
4. The side panels are best used either to compare issues about the topic or to explain related detail.
5. Artifacts or other materials may also be placed on the Table between the side panels.



Labeling

Labels used for the title and main ideas are very important because they direct the viewer's eye around the exhibit. One way to make labels stand out is to have the writing on a light-colored piece of paper with a darker background behind it. This can be done with construction paper, tag board, or mat board. Dark black lettering makes labels easier to read. Photographs and written materials also stand out more if they are placed on backgrounds

Exhibit Design

A successful exhibit must be able to explain itself. It is important to design an exhibit so that the photographs, written materials and illustrations are easy to understand.

It is tempting to put as much on the panel boards as possible, but this makes for a cluttered and confusing display. Students should select only the most important items for their exhibit boards. Clarity and organization are the most important goals for an exhibit design.

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 special 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. The Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum in Abilene, Kansas, is one of these sites. 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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