

School House
to
White House

The Education of the Presidents

Integrating the Museum Exhibit into the
Kindergarten 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	State of Birth
Herbert Hoover	Iowa
Franklin Roosevelt	New York
Harry Truman	Missouri
Dwight Eisenhower	Texas
John Kennedy	Massachusetts
Lyndon Johnson	Texas
Richard Nixon	California
Gerald Ford	Nebraska
Jimmy Carter	Georgia
Ronald Reagan	Illinois
George Bush	Massachusetts
William Clinton	Arkansas
George W. Bush	Connecticut

*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

- John Kennedy was only four years old when he entered kindergarten. His 1922 attendance records show that he missed 65 of the term’s 88 days because he was often ill.
- Harry Truman began wearing glasses when he was six years old. He loved reading and, by the age of 14, he had read all the books in the local library in Grandview, Missouri.
- Dwight Eisenhower had a spotted terrier named Flip. She was very smart and learned tricks quickly. Most of all, she was a loyal companion and went nearly everywhere with young Dwight and his brothers.

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 focusing 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—Point out to students that, as they were growing up, the Presidents were “Just like you!”

1. They had families, friends, neighbors, teachers, and classmates.
2. Though there were many happy times, each of them experienced disappointment, unhappiness, and even tragedy.
3. They had hobbies, played instruments, participated in activities and sports, and loved their pets.

METHOD—As you move through the exhibit, select captions to share with your students that demonstrate what they have in common with the yet-to-be Presidents of the United States.

Point out photographs, documents, and objects that emphasize how the Presidents’ childhood years were much like theirs.

At various stops in the exhibit, ask one or two students at a time to share with their classmates something they see that is familiar to their own experience.



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 their own original exhibit of the Presidents featured in the **SCHOOL HOUSE TO WHITE HOUSE: THE EDUCATION OF THE PRESIDENTS** exhibit.

As a beginning activity, provide each student with an outline of an image of one of the Presidents to color, preferably the President of their choice. The coloring pages from the web site listed below include the name of the President and his term of office.

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

Consider searching the web sites of the presidential libraries for boyhood photographs of the Presidents to include in your class exhibit. As an additional classroom activity, you may wish to bookmark appropriate web site pages on your computer to share with the class as a whole.

To complete the students’ exhibit, students may color the state of the Presidents’ birth. Keep in mind that quite a few of these Presidents did not actually grow up in the same town or city where they were born. Below is an internet link for outline maps of the states.

50 States outline maps: www.50states.com/maps/montana.gif

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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