

School House
to
White House

The Education of the Presidents

Integrating the Museum Exhibit into the
Second-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	Birthplace	Date of Birth
Herbert Hoover	1929 – 1933	West Branch, Iowa	August 10, 1874
Franklin Roosevelt	1933 – 1945	Hyde Park, New York	January 30, 1882
Harry Truman	1945 – 1953	Lamar, Missouri	May 8, 1884
Dwight Eisenhower	1953 – 1961	Denison, Texas	October 14, 1890
John Kennedy	1961 – 1963	Brookline, Massachusetts	May 29, 1917
Lyndon Johnson	1963 – 1969	Near Johnson City, Texas	August 27, 1908
Richard Nixon	1969 – 1974	Yorba Linda, California	January 9, 1913
Gerald Ford	1974 – 1977	Omaha, Nebraska	July 14, 1913
Jimmy Carter	1977 – 1981	Plains, Georgia	October 1, 1924
Ronald Reagan	1981 – 1989	Tampico, Illinois	February 6, 1911
George Bush	1989 – 1993	Milton, Massachusetts	June 12, 1924
William Clinton	1993 – 2001	Hope, Arkansas	August 19, 1946
George W. Bush	2001 – 2009	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

- Franklin Roosevelt’s mother, Sara, read regularly to him. She arranged for tutors and educational trips abroad and encouraged his collecting hobbies.
- When he was not in school, Jimmy Carter enjoyed riding his pony, Lady, which he received as a Christmas present. A photograph of one of her foals, Lady Lee, is included in the exhibit.
- When Dwight Eisenhower was a student at Lincoln School in Abilene, Kansas, the beat of a drum, rather than the ring of a bell, signaled that it was time to return to class from recess.

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 middle-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—For someone who knew one of the Presidents as a child, most likely he or she would *not* have recognized a future President of the United States in the making. Yet, even as very ordinary boys, many demonstrated early leadership tendencies, such as striving to be a good person, treating others well, thinking about the future, caring about the well-being of the community at large, and learning about individual responsibility.

METHOD—As you and your class move through the exhibit, point out captions, objects, and documents to share that evidence the development of leadership abilities and skills. For example, Franklin Roosevelt wrote home to his parents from his boarding school that, “I have not had any blackmarks or latenesses yet . . .” Examples chosen from the exhibit may include, but need not be limited, to the following traits of leadership.

1. Striving for a “personal best,” which includes good character, a pleasant personality, and a desire to learn.
2. Treating others with respect, fairness, empathy, and kindness.
3. Preparing for a future role in society that is not yet apparent.



4. Learning how to behave appropriately in a given situation.
5. Thinking beyond what is best for oneself.
6. Accepting individual responsibility.

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.

Assist students in creating an original exhibit in their classroom, or in another appropriate place in your school, which features one of the Presidents and the importance of developing leadership skills and abilities as a young person.

Using examples gleaned from **SCHOOL HOUSE TO WHITE HOUSE: THE EDUCATION OF THE PRESIDENTS**, age-appropriate presidential biographies, presidential library web sites, and additional sources, students will choose a President and his childhood leadership “story” as a focus for the exhibit. As you examine presidential libraries’ web sites, be sure to check the “Kids” or “Education” pages for additional information and for documents and photos students might include in their exhibit.

Read aloud portions of biographies to students that illustrate how and what the Presidents learned about the various aspects of leadership while growing up.

In order to select a President for their exhibit, ask students to first “nominate” four or five “candidates.” Prepare a simple “secret” ballot for students to vote for the President that they would like to feature in their exhibit.

Additional Activities: Divide a map of the continental United States into four quadrants, north and south along the Mason-Dixon Line, then, east and west along the Mississippi River. Have students locate and mark the birthplaces of the Presidents featured in the exhibit. How many were born in each region? Northeast Quadrant? Southeast Quadrant? Northwest Quadrant? Southwest Quadrant?

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. Also, 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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