

School House
to
White House

The Education of the Presidents

Integrating the Museum Exhibit into the
Third-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

- Dwight Eisenhower read so much that his mother, Ida, finally had to lock away his books in a closet so that he would do his chores and homework.
- George H.W. Bush was a gifted athlete in school. He excelled at baseball, soccer, and basketball.
- Gerald Ford earned the rank of Eagle Scout in the Boy Scouts, earning many merit badges.

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 their lives have many things in common with the boys who would become Presidents of the United States.

MAIN IDEA—A comparison of the Presidents’ boyhood years reveals both similarities and differences among them. They grew up in different eras, with Hoover’s birth in 1874 and the current President Bush in 1946. In addition, they were raised in various regions of the United States. Finally, the social and economic backgrounds of the Presidents varied a great deal. Examining a wide variety of primary and secondary sources included in the exhibit, students will further compare aspects of their own lives as compared to at least one of the Presidents.

METHOD—As your students study the **SCHOOL HOUSE TO WHITE HOUSE: THE EDUCATION OF THE PRESIDENTS** exhibit, ask them to examine primary sources (photographs, documents, and objects) and secondary sources (captions) for clues and evidence. Next, have them write down several facts they discover about the Presidents’ formative years. As they record their findings, students should identify the type of primary or secondary source that contained the information. For example, *Richard Nixon played the violin, clarinet, saxophone, piano, and accordion.* (secondary source—caption). *Richard Nixon played the violin.* (primary source—photograph). To ensure that all of the Presidents in the exhibit are included, you may wish to assign students to investigate a particular President.



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. Consider searching the web sites of the presidential libraries for additional primary sources and secondary source information

Assist students in developing an original exhibit in their classroom, or in another appropriate place in your school, which features a comparative view of the Presidents’ boyhood years. It is not necessary to include all the Presidents, but rather a representative sample to demonstrate that, indeed, there are similarities and differences.

Divide the display space (bulletin board or wall space) into two categories: “Similar” and “Different.” Using the facts they gathered at the Eisenhower Library, students will select three to five topics to compare. Next, students will select primary sources to demonstrate their findings. Finally, students will write text to organize their comparative chart, to label the primary sources, and explain the theme (main idea).

Additional activities: Each student will write a letter to one of the Presidents, telling him what he or she learned about his childhood. In a second paragraph, the student will share information about his or her own life, pointing out similarities and differences.

Ask students to design and construct a timeline of the Presidents’ birth years or the dates that the Presidents took office. Share with students that a new President of the United States is sworn into office on January 20 following election to office, according to the 20th Amendment to the Constitution.

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.

Kim Barbieri
Education Specialist
Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential
Library and Museum
200 Southeast Fourth St.
Abilene, KS 67410

785-263-6700
877-RING IKE or 877-746-4453 (toll free)
kim.barbieri@nara.gov

