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# **Paper**

**THE THEME: PRESIDENTS OF UNITED STATES**

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# President of the United States

*The President of the United States of America* is the head of state and head of government of the United States. The president leads the executive branch of the federal government and is the commander-in-chief of the United States Armed Forces.

*Article II of the U.S. Constitution* vests the executive power of the United States in the president and charges him with the execution of federal law, alongside the responsibility of appointing federal executive, diplomatic, regulatory, and judicial officers, and concluding treaties with foreign powers, with the advice and consent of the Senate. The president is further empowered to grant federal pardons and reprieves, and to convene and adjourn either or both houses of Congress under extraordinary circumstances. Since the founding of the United States, the power of the president and the federal government have grown substantially and each modern president, despite possessing no formal legislative powers beyond signing or vetoing congressionally passed bills, is largely responsible for dictating the legislative agenda of his party and the foreign and domestic policy of the United States. The president is frequently described as the most powerful person in the world.

*The president is indirectly elected by the people through the Electoral College* to a four-year term, and is one of only two nationally elected federal officers, the other being the Vice President of the United States. The Twenty-second Amendment, adopted in 1951, prohibits anyone from ever being elected to the presidency for a third full term. It also prohibits a person from being elected to the presidency more than once if that person previously had served as president, or acting president, for more than two years of another person's term as president. In all, 43 individuals have served 55 four-year terms. On January 20, 2009, Barack Obama became the 44th and current president. On November 6, 2012, he was re-elected and is scheduled to serve until January 20, 2017.

# Origin

*In 1776, the Thirteen Colonies*, acting through the Second Continental Congress, declared political independence from Great Britain during the American Revolution. The new states, though independent of each other as nation states, recognized the necessity of closely coordinating their efforts against the British. Desiring to avoid anything that remotely resembled a monarchy, Congress negotiated the Articles of Confederation to establish a weak alliance between the states. As a central authority, Congress under the Articles was without any legislative power; it could make its own resolutions, determinations, and regulations, but not any laws, nor any taxes or local commercial regulations enforceable upon citizens. This institutional design reflected the conception of how Americans believed the deposed British system of Crown and Parliament ought to have functioned with respect to the royal dominion: a superintending body for matters that concerned the entire empire. Out from under any monarchy, the states assigned some formerly royal prerogatives (e.g., making war, receiving ambassadors, etc.) to Congress, while severally lodging the rest within their own respective state governments. Only after all the states agreed to a resolution settling competing western land claims did the Articles take effect on March 1, 1781, when Maryland became the final state to ratify them.

*In 1783*, the Treaty of Paris secured independence for each of the former colonies. With peace at hand, the states each turned toward their own internal affairs. By 1786, Americans found their continental borders besieged and weak, their respective economies in crises as neighboring states agitated trade rivalries with one another, witnessed their hard currency pouring into foreign markets to pay for imports, their Mediterranean commerce preyed upon by North African pirates, and their foreign-financed Revolutionary War debts unpaid and accruing interest. Civil and political unrest loomed. Aiming toward a first step of resolving interstate commercial antagonisms, Virginia called for a trade conference in Annapolis, Maryland, set for September 1786. When the convention failed for lack of attendance due to suspicions among most of the other states, the Annapolis delegates called for a convention to offer revisions to the Articles, to be held the next spring in Philadelphia. Prospects for the next convention appeared bleak until James Madison

and Edmund Randolph succeeded in securing George Washington's attendance as a delegate to Philadelphia.

*When the Constitutional Convention convened in May 1787*, the 12 state delegations in attendance (Rhode Island did not send delegates) brought with them an accumulated experience over a diverse set of institutional arrangements between legislative and executive branches from within their respective state governments. Most states maintained a weak executive without veto or appointment powers, elected annually by the legislature to a single term only, sharing power with an executive council, and countered by a strong legislature. New York offered the greatest exception, having a strong, unitary governor with veto and appointment power elected to a three-year term, and eligible for reelection to an indefinite number of terms thereafter. It was through the closed-door negotiations at Philadelphia that the presidency framed in the U.S. Constitution emerged.

## **Powers and duties**

### **Article I legislative role:**

The first power the Constitution confers upon the president is the veto. The Presentment Clause requires any bill passed by Congress to be presented to the president before it can become law. Once the legislation has been presented, the president has three options:

Sign the legislation; the bill then becomes law.

Veto the legislation and return it to Congress, expressing any objections; the bill does not become law, unless each house of Congress votes to override the veto by a two-thirds vote.

Take no action. In this instance, the president neither signs nor vetoes the legislation. After 10 days, not counting Sundays, two possible outcomes emerge:

If Congress is still convened, the bill becomes law.

If Congress has adjourned, thus preventing the return of the legislation, the bill does not become law. This latter outcome is known as the pocket veto.

*In 1996*, Congress attempted to enhance the president's veto power with the Line Item Veto Act. The legislation empowered the president to sign any spending bill into law while simultaneously striking certain spending items within the bill, particularly any new spending, any

amount of discretionary spending, or any new limited tax benefit. Once a president had stricken the item, Congress could pass that particular item again. If the president then vetoed the new legislation, Congress could override the veto by its ordinary means, a two-thirds vote in both houses. In *Clinton v. City of New York*, 524 U.S. 417 (1998), the U.S. Supreme Court ruled such a legislative alteration of the veto power to be unconstitutional.

## **Article II executive powers:**

### **War and foreign affairs powers:**

Perhaps the most important of all presidential powers is command of the United States Armed Forces as commander-in-chief. While the power to declare war is constitutionally vested in Congress, the president commands and directs the military and is responsible for planning military strategy. The framers of the Constitution took care to limit the president's powers regarding the military; Alexander Hamilton explains this in *Federalist No. 69*:

The President is to be commander-in-chief of the army and navy of the United States. ... It would amount to nothing more than the supreme command and direction of the military and naval forces ... while that [the power] of the British king extends to the DECLARING of war and to the RAISING and REGULATING of fleets and armies, all of which ... would appertain to the legislature. [Emphasis in the original.]

*Congress*, pursuant to the War Powers Resolution, must authorize any troop deployments longer than 60 days, although that process relies on triggering mechanisms that have never been employed, rendering it ineffectual. Additionally, Congress provides a check to presidential military power through its control over military spending and regulation. While historically presidents initiated the process for going to war, critics have charged that there have been several conflicts in which presidents did not get official declarations, including Theodore Roosevelt's military move into Panama in 1903, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the invasions of Grenada in 1983 and Panama in 1990. Along with the armed forces, the president also directs U.S. foreign policy. Through the Department of State and the Department of Defense, the president is responsible for the protection of Americans abroad and of foreign nationals in the United States. The president decides whether to recognize new nations and new governments, and negotiates treaties

with other nations, which become binding on the United States when approved by two-thirds vote of the Senate.

Although not constitutionally provided, presidents also sometimes employ "executive agreements" in foreign relations. These agreements frequently regard administrative policy choices germane to executive power; for example, the extent to which either country presents an armed presence in a given area, how each country will enforce copyright treaties, or how each country will process foreign mail. However, the 20th century witnessed a vast expansion of the use of executive agreements, and critics have challenged the extent of that use as supplanting the treaty process and removing constitutionally prescribed checks and balances over the executive in foreign relations. Supporters counter that the agreements offer a pragmatic solution when the need for swift, secret, and/or concerted action arises.

### **Administrative powers:**

*The president is the head of the executive branch of the federal government* and is constitutionally obligated to "take care that the laws be faithfully executed. The executive branch has over four million employees, including members of the military.

*Presidents make numerous executive branch appointments:* an incoming president may make up to 6,000 before he takes office and 8,000 more during his term. Ambassadors, members of the Cabinet, and other federal officers, are all appointed by a president with the "advice and consent" of a majority of the Senate. Appointments made while the Senate is in recess are temporary and expire at the end of the next session of the Senate.

*The power of a president to fire executive officials* has long been a contentious political issue. Generally, a president may remove purely executive officials at his discretion. However, Congress can curtail and constrain a president's authority to fire commissioners of independent regulatory agencies and certain inferior executive officers by statute. The president possesses the ability to direct much of the executive branch through executive orders that are grounded in federal law or constitutionally granted executive power. Executive orders are reviewable by federal courts and can be repealed by federal legislation.

*To manage the growing federal bureaucracy,* Presidents have gradually surrounded themselves with many layers of staff, who were eventually organized into the Executive Office of the President of the United States.

Within the Executive Office, the President's innermost layer of aides and their assistants) are located in the White House Office.

### **Juridical powers:**

*The president also has the power to nominate federal judges*, including members of the United States courts of appeals and the Supreme Court of the United States. However, these nominations do require Senate confirmation. Securing Senate approval can provide a major obstacle for presidents who wish to orient the federal judiciary toward a particular ideological stance. When nominating judges to U.S. district courts, presidents often respect the long-standing tradition of Senatorial courtesy. Presidents may also grant pardons and reprieves, as is often done just before the end of a presidential term, not without controversy.

*Historically*, two doctrines concerning executive power have developed that enable the president to exercise executive power with a degree of autonomy. The first is executive privilege, which allows the president to withhold from disclosure any communications made directly to the president in the performance of executive duties. George Washington first claimed privilege when Congress requested to see Chief Justice John Jay's notes from an unpopular treaty negotiation with Great Britain. While not enshrined in the Constitution, or any other law, Washington's action created the precedent for the privilege. When Richard Nixon tried to use executive privilege as a reason for not turning over subpoenaed evidence to Congress during the Watergate scandal, the Supreme Court ruled in *United States v. Nixon*, 418 U.S. 683 (1974), that executive privilege did not apply in cases where a president was attempting to avoid criminal prosecution. When President Bill Clinton attempted to use executive privilege regarding the Lewinsky scandal, the Supreme Court ruled in *Clinton v. Jones*, 520 U.S. 681 (1997), that the privilege also could not be used in civil suits. These cases established the legal precedent that executive privilege is valid, although the exact extent of the privilege has yet to be clearly defined. Additionally, federal courts have allowed this privilege to radiate outward and protect other executive branch employees, but have weakened that protection for those executive branch communications that do not involve the president.

## Ceremonial roles

*As head of state*, the president can fulfill traditions established by previous presidents. William Howard Taft started the tradition of throwing out the ceremonial first pitch in 1910 at Griffith Stadium, Washington, D.C., on the Washington Senators' Opening Day. Every president since Taft, except for Jimmy Carter, threw out at least one ceremonial first ball or pitch for Opening Day, the All-Star Game, or the World Series, usually with much fanfare.

*Other presidential traditions are associated with American holidays.* Rutherford B. Hayes began in 1878 the first White House egg rolling for local children. Beginning in 1947 during the Harry S. Truman administration, every Thanksgiving the president is presented with a live domestic turkey during the annual national thanksgiving turkey presentation held at the White House. Since 1989, when the custom of "pardoning" the turkey was formalized by George H. W. Bush, the turkey has been taken to a farm where it will live out the rest of its natural life.

*Presidential traditions also* involve the president's role as head of government. Many outgoing presidents since James Buchanan traditionally give advice to their successor during the presidential transition. Ronald Reagan and his successors have also left a private message on the desk of the Oval Office on Inauguration Day for the incoming president.

During a state visit by a foreign head of state, the president typically hosts a State Arrival Ceremony held on the South Lawn, a custom begun by John F. Kennedy in 1961. This is followed by a state dinner given by the president which is held in the State Dining Room later in the evening.

*The modern presidency holds* the president as one of the nation's premier celebrities. Some argue that images of the presidency have a tendency to be manipulated by administration public relations officials as well as by presidents themselves. One critic described the presidency as "propagandized leadership" which has a "mesmerizing power surrounding the office. Administration public relations managers staged carefully crafted photo-ops of smiling presidents with smiling crowds for television cameras. One critic wrote the image of John F. Kennedy was described as carefully framed "in rich detail" which "drew on the power of myth" regarding the incident of PT 109 and wrote that

Kennedy understood how to use images to further his presidential ambitions. As a result, some political commentators have opined that American voters have unrealistic expectations of presidents: voters expect a president to "drive the economy, vanquish enemies, lead the free world, comfort tornado victims, heal the national soul and protect borrowers from hidden credit-card fees."

## **Critics of presidency's evolution**

*Most of the nation's Founding Fathers* expected the Congress, which was the first branch of government described in the Constitution, to be the dominant branch of government; they did not expect a strong executive. However, presidential power has shifted over time, which has resulted in claims that the modern presidency has become too powerful, unchecked, unbalanced and "monarchist" in nature. Critic Dana D. Nelson believes presidents over the past thirty years have worked towards "undivided presidential control of the executive branch and its agencies." She criticizes proponents of the unitary executive for expanding "the many existing uncheckable executive powers – such as executive orders, decrees, memorandums, proclamations, national security directives and legislative signing statements – that already allow presidents to enact a good deal of foreign and domestic policy without aid, interference or consent from Congress." Activist Bill Wilson opined that the expanded presidency was "the greatest threat ever to individual freedom and democratic rule."

## **Post-presidency**

*Beginning in 1959*, all living former presidents were granted a pension, an office and a staff. The pension has increased numerous times with Congressional approval. Retired presidents now receive a pension based on the salary of the current administration's cabinet secretaries, which is \$191,300 each year as of 2008. Some former presidents have also collected congressional pensions. The Former Presidents Act, as amended, also provides former presidents with travel funds and franking privileges.

*Until 1997, all former presidents*, and their families, were protected by the Secret Service until the president's death. The last president to have lifetime Secret Service protection was Bill Clinton; all subsequent presidents are protected by the Secret Service for a maximum of ten years after leaving office.

*Some presidents have had significant careers after leaving office.* Prominent examples include William Howard Taft's tenure as Chief Justice of the United States and Herbert Hoover's work on government reorganization after World War II. Grover Cleveland, whose bid for reelection failed in 1888, was elected president again four years later in 1892. Two former presidents served in Congress after leaving the White House: John Quincy Adams was elected to the House of Representatives, serving there for seventeen years, and Andrew Johnson returned to the Senate in 1875. John Tyler served in the provisional Congress of the Confederate States during the Civil War and was elected to the Confederate House of Representatives.

*Presidents may use their predecessors* as emissaries to deliver private messages to other nations or as official representatives of the United States to state funerals and other important foreign events. Richard Nixon made multiple foreign trips to countries including China and Russia, and was lauded as an elder statesman. Jimmy Carter has become a global human rights campaigner, international arbiter and election monitor, and a recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. Bill Clinton has also worked as an informal ambassador, most recently in the negotiations that led to the release of two American journalists, Laura Ling and Euna Lee from North Korea. Clinton has also been active politically since his presidential term ended, working with his wife Hillary on her presidential bid.

## Presidential libraries

*Each president since Herbert Hoover* has created a repository known as a presidential library for preserving and making available his papers, records and other documents and materials. Completed libraries are deeded to and maintained by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); the initial funding for building and equipping each library must come from private, non-federal sources.[citation needed] There are currently thirteen presidential libraries in the NARA system. There are also a number of presidential libraries maintained by state governments and private foundations, such as the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, which is run by the State of Illinois. *As many presidents live for many years after leaving office*, several of them have personally overseen the building and opening of their own presidential libraries, some even making arrangements for their own burial at the site. Several presidential libraries therefore contain the graves of the president they document, such as the Richard Nixon Presidential Library in Yorba Linda, California and the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, California. The graves are viewable by the general public visiting these libraries.

## List of Presidents of the United State

*Under the United States Constitution, the President of the United States* is the head of state and head of government of the United States. As chief of the executive branch and head of the federal government as a whole, the presidency is the highest political office in the United States by influence and recognition. The president is also the commander-in-chief of the United States Armed Forces. The president is indirectly elected to a four-year term by an Electoral College (or by the House of Representatives should the Electoral College fail to award an absolute majority of votes to any person). Since the ratification of the Twenty-second Amendment to the United States Constitution in 1951, no person may be elected President more than twice, and no one who has served more than two years of a term to which someone else was elected may be elected more than once. Upon the death, resignation, or removal from office of an incumbent President, the Vice President assumes the office.

The President must be at least 35 years of age and a "natural born" citizen of the United States.

This list includes only those persons who were sworn into office as president following the ratification of the United States Constitution, which took effect on March 4, 1789. For American leaders before this ratification, see President of the Continental Congress.[2] The list does not include any Acting Presidents under the Twenty-fifth Amendment to the United States Constitution.

*There have been 43 people sworn into office* and

*44 presidencies*, as Grover Cleveland served two non-consecutive terms and is counted chronologically as both the 22nd and 24th president. Of the individuals elected as president, four died in office of natural causes (*William Henry Harrison, Zachary Taylor, Warren G. Harding, and Franklin D. Roosevelt*), four were assassinated (*Abraham Lincoln, James A. Garfield, William McKinley and John F. Kennedy*) and one resigned (*Richard Nixon*).

*George Washington, the first president*, was inaugurated in 1789 after a unanimous vote of the Electoral College.

*William Henry Harrison* spent the shortest time in office with 32 days in 1841; and Franklin D.

*Roosevelt spent the longest with over twelve years*, but died shortly into his fourth term in 1945. He is the only president to serve more than two terms and a constitutional amendment was passed to prevent that from reoccurring.

*Andrew Jackson, the seventh president*, was the first to be elected by men of all classes in 1828 after most laws barring non-land-owners from voting were repealed.

*Warren Harding was the first elected* after women gained voting rights in 1920. History records three presidents –

*Rutherford B. Hayes, Benjamin Harrison and George W Bush* – who lost the popular vote but won in the electoral college and assumed office.

*John F. Kennedy has been the only president of Roman Catholic faith*, and the current president, Barack Obama, is the only non white president.

## List of presidents

1. ***George Washington***  
(1732–1799) April 30, 1789 March 4, 1797 Independent
2. ***John Adams***  
(1735–1826) March 4, 1797 March 4, 1801 Federalist
3. ***Thomas Jefferson***  
(1743–1826) March 4, 1801 March 4, 1809 Democratic-  
Republican
4. ***James Madison***  
(1751–1836) March 4, 1809 March 4, 1817 Democratic-  
Republican
5. ***James Monroe***  
(1758–1831) March 4, 1817 March 4, 1825 Democratic-  
Republican
6. ***John Quincy Adams***  
(1767–1848) March 4, 1825 March 4, 1829 Democratic-  
Republican
7. ***Andrew Jackson***  
(1767–1845) March 4, 1829 March 4, 1837 Democratic
8. ***Martin Van Buren***  
(1782–1862) March 4, 1837 March 4, 1841 Democratic
9. ***William Henry Harrison***  
(1773–1841) March 4, 1841 April 4, 1841
10. ***John Tyler***  
(1790–1862) April 4, 1841 March 4, 1845
11. ***James K. Polk***  
(1795–1849) March 4, 1845 March 4, 1849 Democratic
12. ***Zachary Taylor***  
(1784–1850) March 4, 1849 July 9, 1850
13. ***Millard Fillmore***  
(1800–1874) July 9, 1850 March 4, Vice President
14. ***Franklin Pierce***  
(1804–1869) March 4, 1853 March 4, 1857 Democratic
15. ***James Buchanan***  
(1791–1868) March 4, 1857 March 4, 1861 Democratic
16. ***Abraham Lincoln***  
(1809–1865) March 4, 1861 April 15, 1865

- 17 Andrew Johnson**  
(1808–1875) April 15, 1865 March 4, 1869 Democratic
- 18 Ulysses S. Grant**  
(1822–1885) March 4, 1869 March 4, 1877 Republican
- 19 Rutherford B. Hayes**  
(1822–1893) March 4, 1877 March 4, 1881 Republican
- 20 James A. Garfield (1831–1881)** March 4, 1881 September 19, 1881
- 21 Chester A. Arthur**  
(1829–1886) September 19, 1881 March 4, 1885 Republican
- 22. Grover Cleveland**  
(1837–1908) March 4, 1885 March 4, 1889 Democratic
- 23 Benjamin Harrison**  
(1833–1901) March 4, 1889 March 4, 1893 Republican
- 24 Grover Cleveland**  
(1837–1908) March 4, 1893 March 4, 1897 Democratic
- 25 William McKinley**  
(1843–1901) March 4, 1897 September 14, 1901 Republican
- 26 Theodore Roosevelt**  
(1858–1919) September 14, 1901 March 4, 1909 Republican
- 27 William Howard Taft**  
(1857–1930)  
March 4, 1909 March 4, 1913 Republican
- 28 Woodrow Wilson**  
(1856–1924) March 4, 1913 March 4, 1921 Democratic
- 29 Warren G. Harding**  
(1865–1923) March 4, 1921 August 2, 1923
- 30 Calvin Coolidge**  
(1872–1933) August 2, 1923 March 4, 1929 Republican
- 31 Herbert Hoover**  
(1874–1964) March 4, 1929 March 4, 1933
- 32 Franklin D. Roosevelt**  
(1882–1945) March 4, 1933 April 12, 1945
- 33 Harry S. Truman**  
(1884–1972) April 12, 1945 January 20, 1953 Democratic
- 34 Dwight D. Eisenhower**  
(1890–1969) January 20, 1953 January 20, 1961
- 35 John F. Kennedy**  
(1917–1963) January 20, 1966 November 22, 1963
- 36 Lyndon B. Johnson**

- (1908–1973) November 22, 1963 January 20, 1969 Democratic  
**37 Richard Nixon**  
 (1913–1994) January 20, 1969 August 9, 1974  
**38 Gerald Ford**  
 (1913–2006) August 9, 1974 January 20, 19  
**39 Jimmy Carter**  
**40 Ronald Reagan**  
 (1911–2004)  
**41 George H. W. Bush**  
 (b.1924) January 20, 1989 January 20, 1993 Republican  
**42 Bill Clinton**  
 (b.1946) January 20, 1993 January 20, 2001 Democratic  
**43 George W. Bush**  
 (b.1946) January 20, 2001 January 20, 2009 Republican  
**44 Barack Obama**  
 (b.1961) January 20, 2009 Incumbent Democratic

## Living former presidents

As of November 2012, there are four living former presidents:  
 President Term of office Date of birth

*Jimmy Carter* 1977–1981 *October 1, 1924 (age 88)*

*George H. W. Bush* 1989–1993 *June 12, 1924 (age 88)*

*Bill Clinton* 1993–2001 *August 19, 1946 (age 66)*

*George W. Bush* 2001–2009 *July 6, 1946 (age 66)*