

Our Democracy: Government

What Does the President Do?

Recommended books



- **Dream Big Dreams: Photographs from Barack Obama's Inspiring and Historic Presidency** by Pete Souza (ages 10 and up)
- **If I Were President** by Catherine Stier (ages 6-9)
- **Madame President** by Lane Smith (ages 3-6)
- **Our White House: Looking In, Looking Out** by the National Children's Book and Literacy Alliance (ages 9-12)
- **The Presidents Visual Encyclopedia** by DK and The Smithsonian (ages 9-12)
- **Rutherford B., Who Was He? Poems About Our Presidents** by Marilyn Singer (ages 6-9)
- **Smart About the Presidents** by John Buller (ages 6-9)
- **So You Want to Be President?** by Judith St. George (ages 6-9)
- **Truth or Lie: Presidents!** by Erica Perl (ages 6-9)
- **When Penny Met POTUS** by Rachel Ruiz (ages 6-9)
- **Where Do Presidents Come From?** by Michael Townsend (ages 9-12)

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Activity: President for a Day

Get kids thinking

In the United States, any native-born citizen over the age of 35 can be elected President. Your children or the kids you work with won't be that old for many years, but they can have fun in the meantime imagining what it would be like to take on the role and responsibility of the presidency.

Supplies

- A computer or device with an Internet connection
 - Paper and pencil (or computer and printer)
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Let's get started!

Read some of the recommended books together with the kids. Some of the books provided information on the duties and privileges of the presidency. Revisit those pages and further explore and discuss what the job of President entails. Find out what the kids know about the current or recent past presidents. What are some of the issues or problems facing the President? What kind of work does the President do every day to solve these problems?

Talk with kids about what they think the President does on a typical day. Then check online together to see what an [actual Presidential schedule](#) looks like (this example is from President Obama's time in office).

Ask the kids what problems or issues are important to them. If any of the kids were the President, what would he or she do to resolve issues and fix problems? What would his or her schedule as President look like?

Provide the kids with paper and pencil (or a computer and printer) to create their own agendas for their day as President of the United States. Encourage the kids to also

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create any speeches, Presidential Memoranda, Executive Orders, or Proclamations that they each plan to deliver on their day as President. Let them be as silly or serious as they like!

If children feel strongly about what they would do as President to deal with a specific issue, encourage them to share their ideas by [writing to the President](#).

Play:

- [Executive Command](#): Being the President is no easy task. Are you up to the challenge? (iCivics, free registration required)
- [Which U.S. President Matches Your Personality?](#) (National Geographic Kids)



The Many Hats of the U.S. President

Match the job descriptions on the next page with the roles below!

Chief
of State

Chief
Executive

Commander
in Chief

Chief
Diplomat

Chief of
Party

Chief
Legislator

Chief
Citizen



Cut out the job descriptions along the dotted lines and mix up the individual cards.

Then see if you can match them with the Presidential roles!

Ceremonial head of the government

Greets and entertains foreign officials.

Attends festivities of historic or national importance

Presents medals and other awards for national service

Head of the Executive Branch of the government

Carries out the nation's laws

Appoints cabinet members and federal judges

Issues federal policies called executive orders

Head of the nation's armed forces

Commander of the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines

Can order troops into battle (but only Congress can declare war)

Keeps the nation safe and defended at all times

Architect of American foreign policy

Decides foreign policy (how U.S. will act toward other countries)

Makes treaties with other nations

Appoints ambassadors to other countries

Leader of the political party that controls the Executive Branch

Plays major role in party's stand on big issues

Appear at fundraisers and other political functions

Campaigns for party members running for political office

Influencer on the legislative agenda

Only Congress has the actual power to make laws. But the Constitution gives the president power to influence Congress.

Proposes legislation during the State of the Union speech to Congress

Signs or vetoes bills

Representative of all the people

Makes sure the people's voice is heard

Sets an example of being a good citizen

Works for the public interest



Presidential Proclamation

The President of the United States

