

Just For Fun: Presidential Trivia



George Washington, 1st President: 1789-1797

- Washington was the only American president to be unanimously elected.
- Washington never lived in the White House. The nation's capital was located in Philadelphia, as well as several other cities, prior to its move to Washington, D.C.
- George Washington was the only president who did not represent a political party.



John Adams, 2nd President: 1797-1801

- John Adams was the first president to reside in the White House, moving in November 1800 while the paint was still wet.
- When Adams and his family moved to Washington to live in the White House, they got lost in the woods north of the city for several hours.
- John Adams and Thomas Jefferson both died on the 50th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence in 1826. Not knowing that Thomas Jefferson has already passed John Adams was quoted as saying "Jefferson survives," when he whispered his last words.



Thomas Jefferson, 3rd President: 1801-1809

- Thomas Jefferson was the main author of the Declaration of Independence.
- Thomas Jefferson was the first president to be inaugurated in Washington, D.C.
- Thomas Jefferson wrote his own epitaph never mentioning that he served as president. His epitaph read, "Author of the Declaration of American Independence, Author of the Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom and the Father of the University of Virginia."



James Madison, 4th President: 1809-1817

- James Madison was one of two (George Washington was the other), American presidents to sign the Constitution. Madison's contributions towards the development of the Constitution earned him the title "Father of the Constitution."
- Madison was the first president to wear trousers rather than knee breeches.
- James Madison was the shortest and lightest president at 5 feet, 4 inches and about 100 pounds.



James Monroe, 5th President: 1817-1825

- James Monroe was the first president to ride a steamboat.
- Monroe's daughter was the first to be a bride in the White House.
- Monroe was wounded during the Revolutionary War.



John Quincy Adams, 6th President: 1825-1829

- John Quincy Adams dug the first spade of dirt near Little Falls to begin the construction of the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal on July 4, 1828.
- John Quincy Adams regularly swam nude in the Potomac River. The first American professional journalist, Anne Royall, knew of Adams' 5:00 a.m. swims. After being refused interviews with Adams many times, she went to the river, gathered his clothes and sat on them until she had her interview. Before this, no female had interviewed a president.
- John Quincy Adams was the son of a former president and the first to be photographed.



Andrew Jackson, 7th President: 1829-1837

- Andrew Jackson was the first president born in a log cabin (South Carolina).
- Andrew Jackson was the first president to ride in a train.
- Andrew Jackson was the first American president to experience and survive an assassination attempt. Jackson was at the Capitol when an unemployed house painter fired a pistol at him. The pistol misfired. The would-be assassin drew a second pistol, which also misfired.



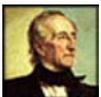
Martin Van Buren, 8th President: 1837-1841

- The term "O.K." is credited to Van Buren who was raised in Kinderhook, New York. After he went into politics, Van Buren became known as "Old Kinderhook." Soon people were using the term O.K. referring to Van Buren and the word "okay" was derived.
- Van Buren was the first U.S. president born in the United States. The presidents preceding Van Buren were born in colonies that later became states. Van Buren was the first to be born after the adoption of the U.S. Constitution.
- Martin Van Buren was the first president of Dutch ancestry. He and his wife spoke Dutch at home.



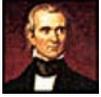
William Henry Harrison, 9th President: 1841-1841

- William Henry Harrison was the only president who studied to become a doctor.
- William Henry Harrison served the shortest presidency.
- Harrison delivered the longest inaugural address, and was the first president to die in office, about 32 days after elected. On March 4, he gave a 105 minute speech and did not wear an overcoat or hat. He developed pneumonia and died in the White House exactly one month after giving his speech, on April 4.



John Tyler, 10th President: 1841-1845

- John Tyler was the first vice president to ascend to the presidency upon the death of a president. He did not make an inaugural address, and he never ran for the office of the Presidency.
- Tyler was the president with the most children—he had 15.
- The tradition of playing "Hail to the Chief" whenever a president appeared at a state function was started by Tyler's second wife.



James K. Polk, 11th President: 1845-1849

- The first president to have his inauguration reported by telegraph.
- The first annual White House Thanksgiving dinner was hosted by Polk's wife, Sarah.
- James Polk fulfilled all his campaign promises. During his administration Polk acquired California from Mexico, settled the Oregon dispute, lowered tariffs, established a sub-treasury, and retired from office after one term.



Zachary Taylor, 12th President: 1849-1850

- Zachary Taylor received his nomination for presidency late because he refused all postage due correspondences.
- Taylor did not vote until the age of 62. Until that time, he had not established an official place of residence because he had moved many times as a soldier.
- Zachary Taylor was the second president to die in office. Taylor spent July 4, 1850, at a ceremony at the Washington Monument. He became ill from the heat and died five days later of intestinal ailments. Recently, his body was exhumed because some believed he was poisoned, but this was proved to be false.



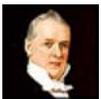
Millard Fillmore, 13th President: 1850-1853

- Millard Fillmore was the last president born in the 18th century.
- Fillmore and his cabinet helped fight the Library of Congress fire of 1851.
- Fillmore refused an honorary degree from Oxford University because he felt he had "neither literary nor scientific attainment."



Franklin Pierce, 14th President: 1853-1857

- Franklin Pierce gave his 3,319-word inaugural address from memory, without the aid of notes.
- Pierce was the only president to have no turnover in his cabinet.
- Pierce was the first president to have a Christmas tree in the White House.



James Buchanan, 15th President: 1857-1861

- The only president that never married. The White House hostess was his niece, Harriet Lane. In 1819, Buchanan became engaged to Ann Coleman. A misunderstanding took place and their engagement was broken. A short time later, Ann died. Buchanan vowed he would never marry.
- When England's Prince of Wales visited the White House in 1860, so many guests accompanied him that Buchanan had to sleep in the hall.
- Upon the election of his successor, Buchanan sent him a note saying, "My dear sir, if you are as happy on entering the White House as I on leaving, you are a happy man indeed."



Abraham Lincoln, 16th President: 1861-1865

- Abraham Lincoln was a man of perseverance. Before Lincoln's election as the 16th president of the United States he failed as: a business man - as a storekeeper, failed as a farmer - he despised this work, failed in his first attempt to obtain political office, he failed when he sought the office of speaker, he failed in his first attempt to go to Congress, he failed when he sought the appointment to the United States Land Office, he failed when he ran for the United States Senate and he failed when friends sought for him the nomination for the vice-presidency in 1856.
- Abraham Lincoln was the first president to wear a beard and the tallest president at 6' 4".
- Lincoln was the first president to die by assassination. On Good Friday, April 14, 1865, John Wilkes Booth shot Lincoln at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C.



Andrew Johnson, 17th President: 1865-1869

- Andrew Johnson had no formal education. His wife taught him reading, writing and math.
- Johnson was impeached for removing Secretary of War Edwin Stanton during the turbulent Reconstruction Period but was acquitted by one vote in the Senate.
- Johnson was buried beneath a willow tree that he planted. His head rests on a copy of the Constitution.



Ulysses S. Grant, 18th President: 1869-1877

- Ulysses S. Grant was the victorious Union commander of the Civil War. He received General Lee's sword at Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865.
- Grant finished his memoirs in 1885, a few weeks before his death from throat cancer. The book earned over \$450,000 for his family after his death.
- Ulysses S. Grant established Yellowstone as the nation's first national park on March 1, 1872.



Rutherford B. Hayes, 19th President: 1877-1881

- While Rutherford B. Hayes was still in the Union Army, Cincinnati Republicans ran him for the House of Representatives. He accepted the nomination, but would not campaign, explaining, "an officer fit for duty who at this crisis would abandon his post to electioneer... ought to be scalped."
- To set a good example for the country Rutherford B. Hayes banished liquor and wine from the White House.
- Hayes held the first Easter egg roll on the White House lawn.



James A. Garfield, 20th President: 1881-1881

- James A. Garfield was the last of seven presidents to be born in a log cabin.
- President-elect Garfield campaigned for the American presidency from the front porch of his house.
- Garfield was the second president to die by assassination. Two months after being sworn into office, Garfield was shot in a Washington railroad station. Doctors repeatedly probed for the bullet with non-sterile instruments and unwashed fingers, the president died 80 days later.



Chester A. Arthur, 21st President: 1881-1885

- Chester A. Arthur was diagnosed with Bright's disease, a fatal kidney disease; a year after he succeeded to the presidency. Arthur ran for a second term in 1884 in order not to appear that he feared defeat, though he knew the more active he was the greater his chance was of succumbing to the disease. He did not gain his party's nomination and died in 1886.
- Nicknamed "Elegant Arthur" because of his fashion sense.
- Arthur is credited with saying, "I may be President of the United States, but my private life is nobody's damned business."



Grover Cleveland, 22nd President: 1885-1889

- Grover Cleveland personally answered the White House phone.
- Cleveland was the only president married in a ceremony at the White House, June 2, 1886.
- President Cleveland dedicated the Statue of Liberty on October 28, 1886.



Benjamin Harrison, 23rd President: 1889-1893

- Benjamin Harrison was the only president to be a grandson of a president (William Henry Harrison) and great-grandson to a signer of the Declaration of Independence (Benjamin Harrison).
- Harrison made 140 completely different speeches in 30 days.
- Benjamin Harrison was the first president to use electricity in the White House. After he got an electrical shock, his family often refused to touch the light switches and sometimes would go to bed with the lights on.



Grover Cleveland, 24th President: 1893-1897

- The only president to be elected two nonconsecutive terms. (22nd President)
- Grover Cleveland was the first president to have a child born in the White House; his daughter Esther in 1895.
- The public believed Cleveland went on a fishing trip in July 1893, but he was actually having surgery for a cancerous growth in his mouth. It was not until 1917 the truth was revealed.



William McKinley, 25th President: 1897-1901

- First president to ride in an automobile.
- First president to campaign by telephone.
- The third president to die from an assassin's wound. He was shot during the Pan American Exposition in Buffalo, NY. He died of his wounds about a week later.



Theodore Roosevelt, 26th President: 1901-1909

- Theodore Roosevelt was the first president to call his residence in Washington, D.C. the “White House”. Prior to his term, it had been called the Executive Mansion or the President’s House.
- Theodore Roosevelt was the first American to win the Nobel Peace Prize. He was awarded the prize in 1906 for his role as peacemaker in the Russo-Japanese War.
- The name “Teddy” bears for stuffed animals was coined in 1903 when a stuffed toy bear was given to the noted outdoorsman Roosevelt.



William H. Taft, 27th President: 1909-1913

- William Taft was the first president to own a car.
- Taft is the only president to also serve as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court (1921-1930).
- First of two presidents to be buried in Arlington National Cemetery. John F. Kennedy is the other.



Woodrow Wilson, 28th President: 1913-1921

- Woodrow Wilson was the first president to have earned a Ph.D. He received a degree in political science in 1886.
- During his presidency a flock of sheep was raised on the White House lawn. The wool was used to raise money for the Red Cross during World War I.
- The only president buried in Washington, D.C. Wilson is interred at the Washington National Cathedral.



Warren G. Harding, 29th President: 1921-1923

- Warren Harding was the first president to speak over the radio.
- Harding was the first newspaper publisher to be elected into the presidency.
- Harding had the largest feet of any president. He wore size 14 shoes.



Calvin Coolidge, 30th President: 1923-1929

- Coolidge lighted the first national Christmas tree in 1923 on the White House lawn.
- Coolidge refused to use the telephone while in office.
- A man of few words, a dinner guest made a bet that she could get him to say more than two words. When she told the president of her wager, he replied, “You lose.”



Herbert Hoover, 31st President: 1929-1933

- Herbert Hoover was the first president born west of the Mississippi River.
- Hoover approved “The Star-Spangled Banner” as the national anthem.
- Donated his salary to charity.



Franklin D. Roosevelt, 32nd President: 1933-1945

- Franklin D. Roosevelt is the only American president to be elected four times. After FDR, the 22nd Amendment ratified in 1951, limited the presidential office to two terms. [No person shall be elected to the office of the President more than twice, and no person who has held the office of President, or acted as President, for more than two years of a term to which some other person was elected President shall be elected to the office of the President more than once.]
- FDR was the first president whose mother was eligible to vote for him.
- Roosevelt was paralyzed from the disease polio; he served his entire presidency without the use of legs.



Harry S. Truman, 33rd President: 1945-1953

- Harry S. Truman was the first president to travel underwater in a submarine.
- Truman was the first president to give a speech on television.
- Harry Truman use to get up at 5 o'clock in the morning to practice the piano for two hours.



Dwight D. Eisenhower, 34th President: 1953-1961

- Dwight Eisenhower was in charge of the D-Day invasion during World War II.
- Eisenhower played football at West Point and was injured trying to tackle Olympic and NFL star Jim Thorpe.
- Eisenhower was the only president to serve in both World War I & World War II.



John F. Kennedy, 35th President: 1961-1963

- John F. Kennedy was the first Roman Catholic president and the first president born in the 20th century.
- JFK was the first president to hold a press conference on television.
- JFK was the youngest American elected president and the youngest to die in office.



Lyndon B. Johnson, 36th President: 1963-1969

- Vice President Johnson was riding two cars behind President Kennedy's car when he was assassinated in Dallas, Texas on November 22, 1963. Johnson was administered the presidential oath aboard Air Force One.
- Before becoming a politician, Lyndon Johnson taught school in Texas.
- Johnson was the first American president to name an African American to his cabinet.



Richard Nixon – 37th President: 1969-1974

- Nixon was the first president to visit all 50 states and the first president to visit China.
- Richard Nixon talked to astronauts on the moon from the White House by radio-telephone on July 21, 1969.
- Nixon is the only U.S. president to resign.
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Gerald R. Ford, 38th President: 1974-1977

- Gerald Ford became vice president and president without being elected to either office.
- Ford once worked as a fashion model.
- Ford is the only president who was employed by the National Park Service. He served as a Yellowstone park ranger in 1936.



Jimmy Carter, 39th President: 1977-1981

- Jimmy Carter was the first president born in a hospital.
- Carter studied nuclear physics at Annapolis.
- Carter was a speed reader, having been recorded reading 2,000 words per minute.



Ronald W. Reagan, 40th President: 1981-1989

- At age 69, Ronald Reagan became the oldest person ever elected U.S. president.
- Reagan was twice named TIME magazine's "Man of the Year."
- Ronald Reagan was the first actor elected president. He acted in 53 films before becoming president.



George H.W. Bush, 41st President: 1989-1993

- George Bush was the first vice president elected president since Martin Van Buren and also the first vice president to lose re-election since Van Buren.
- Bush is distantly related to Presidents Pierce, Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, Ford, and Winston Churchill.
- George Bush was one of the youngest U.S. naval carrier pilots in the WWII Pacific Theatre.



William J. Clinton, 42nd President: 1993-2001

- As a delegate to Boys Nation while in high school, Clinton met President Kennedy in the White House Rose Garden in 1962. The encounter led him to enter a life of public service.
- Bill Clinton was the first president to be a Rhodes Scholar.
- Clinton was the first U.S. Democratic president to win reelection since Franklin D. Roosevelt.



George W. Bush, 43rd President: 2001- Present

- First son of a president to become president since John Quincy Adams, son of John Adams.
- Pilot in the Texas Air National Guard from 1968 until 1973.
- First managing general partner of a Major League baseball team (Texas Rangers) to become president.