



Democracy for Girl Scout Seniors

Troop Leader Guide

Welcome to the Richard Nixon Presidential Library! To earn your “Democracy for Girl Scout Seniors” badge today, you must complete the five activities listed on this worksheet and have an adult witness sign it. Good luck and have fun!

1. Find out about local government.
2. Find out about state government.
3. Find out about our country’s legislative branch.
4. Find out about our country’s executive branch.
5. Find out about our country’s judicial branch.

When you earn this badge, you will have expanded your knowledge about how your local, state, and national government works.

Exhibits of interest for this badge: *America's Government (front of Theater 37), 1960 Campaign, and 1970 Campaign.*

- 1) What is a filibuster?

Filibusters are strategic actions lawmakers can use to advocate for issues to be passed or to keep them from being passed. An activity such as a prolonged speech or endless debate is a delaying tactic that obstructs progress in a legislative assembly while not technically breaking the rules of debate.

- 2) What is Rule 22 and cloture?

Cloture is defined as a procedure for ending a debate and taking a vote. Senate Rule 22 allows a two-thirds majority to end a filibuster, a procedure known as "cloture." In 1975 the Senate reduced the number of votes required for cloture from two-thirds of senators voting to three-fifths of all senators duly chosen and sworn, or 60 of the 100-member Senate.



3) What is the executive branch, and who does it include?

The executive branch of the United States government includes the president, vice president, and cabinet members. The President is responsible for implementing and enforcing the laws written by Congress and appointing the leaders of the federal agencies, including the Cabinet. The Vice President is also part of the Executive Branch, ready to assume the Presidency should the need arise.

4) Rethink an election. Choose a historic presidential election and find out everything you can about it. Now, imagine you are the campaign manager for the losing candidate. What could you have done differently to bring your candidate to victory?

ELECTION (1960)

The 1960 presidential election was one of the closest vote margins in history. Vice President Richard Nixon faced Democrat candidate John F. Kennedy. John F. Kennedy won with a 303 to 219 Electoral College victory and a popular vote margin of 112,827 out of 69 million cast, only 0.17%. It marked the closest election (at that time) in US history.

The 1960 presidential election was the first time an incumbent President was ineligible to run for re-election a 3rd time due to the 22nd Amendment.

With the addition of Alaska and Hawaii as States, it was the first time 50 States participated in an election.

Richard Nixon was the first sitting Vice President to run for President in 100 years (John C. Breckinridge was the previous one in 1860).

Presidential Debates (1960)

During the campaign, there were four debates between Richard Nixon and John F. Kennedy. These were the first Presidential debates on TV between 2 major party candidates. Richard Nixon underestimated the power of TV. He had been ill, was just released from a 2-week hospitalization, was perspiring, pale, and refused to wear makeup. John F. Kennedy looked tan and well-rested. People who watched the debate on TV said John F. Kennedy won, while people who listened on the radio said Richard Nixon won. It has been argued that the televised first televised debate contributed to Richard Nixon's election loss.

Which presidential campaign produced the 1st nationally televised debate? The typical answer to that question is Kennedy v. Nixon in 1960. The first televised debate occurred four years earlier when Democrat candidate Adlai Stevenson challenged incumbent GOP President Dwight Eisenhower. Still, those two men did not appear in the debate. Instead, on November 4, 1956, two surrogates debated the issues on network television: for the Democrats, former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt; for the Republicans, the senior Senator from Maine, Margaret Chase Smith. That's right—the first televised presidential debate featured two women!



5) How many justices did Nixon appoint during his Presidency?

Supreme Court Appointees: 4 justices

Supreme Court justices are appointed, not elected, and serve lifelong terms. They keep the job until they resign or pass away, though Congress does have the power to impeach justices in extreme cases.

One of the most critical presidential responsibilities is the filling of seats on the Supreme Court. Rarely do presidents get to appoint four Justices during an administration as Richard Nixon did. His appointments were Chief Justice Warren Burger (1969), Harry Blackmun (1970), Lewis Powell (1971), and William Rehnquist (1971), who President Ronald Reagan would later elevate to Chief Justice. Richard Nixon did attempt to nominate the first woman, Mildred Lillie, but the American Bar Association rejected that choice.

Reflection

Some people believe this system needs to be changed. Team up with a friend and find out the arguments for and against putting term limits in place for Supreme Court justices. Debate one side, then switch places and take the other. Which side do you agree with?

