



**Ideas for Integrating the Museum Exhibit  
into the Classroom**

# **TEACHER'S GUIDE**

## **GRADES K-5**

Originally created by the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum

## TO THE TEACHER

Welcome to the Richard Nixon 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 43 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	Vice President(s)	Location of Presidential Library
Herbert Hoover (R)**	1929 – 1933	Charles Curtis	West Branch, Iowa
Franklin Roosevelt (D)	1933 – 1945	John Garner, Henry Wallace, Harry Truman	Hyde Park, New York
Harry Truman (D)	1945 – 1953	Alben Barkley	Independence, Missouri
Dwight Eisenhower (R)	1953 – 1961	Richard Nixon	Abilene, Kansas
John Kennedy (D)	1961 – 1963	Lyndon Johnson	Boston, Massachusetts
Lyndon Johnson (D)	1963 – 1969	Hubert Humphrey	Austin, Texas
Richard Nixon (R)	1969 – 1974	Spiro Agnew, Gerald Ford	Yorba Linda, California
Gerald Ford (R)	1974 – 1977	Nelson Rockefeller	Ann Arbor and Grand Rapids, Michigan
Jimmy Carter (D)	1977 – 1981	Walter Mondale	Atlanta, Georgia
Ronald Reagan (R)	1981 – 1989	George Bush	Simi Valley, California
George Bush (R)	1989 – 1993	J. Danforth “Dan” Quayle	College Station, Texas
William Clinton (D)	1993 – 2001	Albert Gore	Little Rock, Arkansas
George W. Bush (R)	2001 – 2009	Richard Cheney	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).

\*\* (R) stands for the Republican Party and (D) stands for the Democrat Party.

\*\*\*The George W. Bush Presidential Library is in the planning stages.

## PRESIDENTIAL FACTS TO SHARE WITH YOUR STUDENTS

- John Kennedy was only four years old when he entered kindergarten. His 1922 attendance records show that he missed 65 of the term’s 88 days because he was often ill.
- Harry Truman began wearing glasses when he was six years old. He loved reading and, by the age of 14, he had read all the books in the local library in Grandview, Missouri.
- From a young age, Richard Nixon was a talented musician. He played the piano, clarinet, saxophone, violin, and the accordion.
- In elementary school, Dwight Eisenhower’s favorite subject was spelling. He liked the sense of competition and marveled that a single letter could change the entire meaning of a word.
- Lyndon Johnson’s mother, Rebekah, taught him the alphabet by the age of three and, by age four, he could read. Lyndon wanted to learn more, so he followed his older cousins to school and sat in on their classes.
- In the first grade, George W. Bush studied reading and writing and arithmetic, music, and art. He earned straight As in all five subjects.
- Young Herbert Hoover was raised in a strict Quaker family where he was encouraged to read the Bible, encyclopedias, and textbooks until one of his teachers introduced him to classic novels like *Ivanhoe* and *David Copperfield*.
- As a kid, Jimmy Carter worked on his family’s peanut farm.

## LESSON IDEA ONE

**MAIN IDEA**—Point out to students that, as they were growing up, the Presidents were “Just like you!”

1. They had families, friends, neighbors, teachers, and classmates.
2. Though there were many happy times, each of them experienced disappointment, unhappiness, and even tragedy.
3. They had hobbies, played instruments, participated in activities and sports, and loved their pets.

**METHOD**—As you move through the exhibit, select captions to share with your students that demonstrate what they have in common with the yet-to-be Presidents of the United States.

Point out photographs, documents, and objects that emphasize how the Presidents’ childhood years were much like theirs.

At various stops in the exhibit, ask one or two students at a time to share with their classmates something they see that is familiar to their own experience.

## BACK IN THE CLASSROOM

Following your visit to the Nixon Library, assist students in creating their own original exhibit of the Presidents featured in the **SCHOOL HOUSE TO WHITE HOUSE: THE EDUCATION OF THE PRESIDENTS** exhibit.

As a beginning activity, provide each student with an outline of an image of one of the Presidents to color, preferably the President of their choice. The coloring pages from the web site listed below include the name of the President and his term of office.

*Presidents Coloring Pages:* <http://www.whitehouse.gov/kids/presidentsday/color/>

Consider searching the web sites of the presidential libraries for boyhood photographs of the Presidents to include in your class exhibit. As an additional classroom activity, you may wish to bookmark appropriate web site pages on your computer to share with the class as a whole.

To complete the students' exhibit, students may color the state of the Presidents' birth. Keep in mind that quite a few of these Presidents did not actually grow up in the same town or city where they were born. Below is an internet link for outline maps of the states.

*50 States outline maps:* [www.50states.com/maps/montana.gif](http://www.50states.com/maps/montana.gif)

## LESSON IDEA TWO

**MAIN IDEA**—Explain to students that designing a museum exhibit is a complex endeavor. It involves many steps including (1) determining a theme (main idea), (2) choosing concepts that support the theme, (3) selecting primary source materials to tell the story, (4) writing effective text, and (5) making design decisions about how best to artistically and/or technically present the story. As students move through the exhibit, point out to them, examples of the above criteria to demonstrate the decisions exhibit designers made.

**METHOD**— As your students explore the exhibit, ask them to identify the different types of primary sources they see by circling the corresponding words below. In the blank following, write the last name of the President associated with the primary source and any other information you would like them to include.

Photograph _____	Letter _____
Speech _____	Book _____
Film _____	Audio _____
Poster _____	Other _____

## BACK IN THE CLASSROOM

Using images from a variety of sources, including presidential library web sites, organize students into groups of three to five students each to create an original “Three-Panel Display.” Each group of students will randomly draw the name of one of the Presidents from the exhibit (Herbert Hoover to George W. Bush) to feature in the display. As a culminating activity, each group of students should present and explain their display to the rest of the class. Students in the audience should be prepared to ask questions of the group of students who created the display. For example, *Which primary source used in your display is your favorite? Why? What is the most surprising fact you learned about this President?*

The exhibit advice below comes directly from the experts at **National History Day (NHD)** and is located on their web site. Take some time to explore the site as there is much more information available about creating a three-panel display and other types of exhibits.

### Creating Exhibit Entries (<http://www.nhd.org/Exhibit.htm>)

Exhibits are designed to display visual and written information on topics in an attractive and easily understood manner. They are similar to exhibits found in a museum. People walking by should be attracted to an exhibit's main idea and, therefore, stop to learn more about the topic. To be successful, an exhibit must create an effective balance between visual interest and historical explanation.

The most common form of exhibit entry is a three-panel display. This style is the least complicated to design and build and is a very effective way to present information.

1. Here are some tips for this style:
2. Be sure the title is the main focus of the center panel.
3. Use the center panel to present the main ideas.
4. The side panels are best used either to compare issues about the topic or to explain related detail.
5. Artifacts or other materials may also be placed on the Table between the side panels.

### Labeling

Labels used for the title and main ideas are very important because they direct the viewer's eye around the exhibit. One way to make labels stand out is to have the writing on a light-colored piece of paper with a darker background behind it. This can be done with construction paper, tag board, or mat board. Dark black lettering makes labels easier to read. Photographs and written materials also stand out more if they are placed on backgrounds

### Exhibit Design

A successful exhibit must be able to explain itself. It is important to design an exhibit so that the photographs, written materials and illustrations are easy to understand.

It is tempting to put as much on the panel boards as possible, but this makes for a cluttered and confusing display. Students should select only the most important items for their exhibit boards. Clarity and organization are the most important goals for an exhibit design.

## LESSON IDEA THREE

**MAIN IDEA**— When the Presidents were children, they learned about the importance of good character, whether at home, at school, at church, or by way of the community at large.

**METHOD**— As you move through the exhibit, select captions that focus on character development and good citizenship to share with your students. They may include the “6 Pillars of Character,” and additional core character traits. For example, a young Harry Truman wrote that with “a great deal of *courage* . . . I think a man will get through the world.” Quite a number of presidential report cards have a category for citizenship. You may want to point out to students how a future President ranked with regard to this essential character trait.

### 6 Pillars of Character

1. Trustworthiness
2. Citizenship
3. Respect
4. Fairness
5. Responsibility
6. Caring

### BACK IN THE CLASSROOM

Assist students in creating an original exhibit in their classroom, or in another appropriate place in your school, which features the importance of good character and the Presidents of the United States.

Gather age-appropriate presidential biographies. Include the presidential libraries’ web sites, check out the “Kids” or “Education” pages.

Read aloud to students portions of biographies that illustrate how and what the Presidents learned about good character while growing up. Ask students to link at least one character trait with each President.

Mount images of the Presidents (student created, commercially produced, or outlines of the Presidents colored by students) to the bulletin board. Add captions of appropriate character traits associated with each President featured in the classroom exhibit. For example, with Dwight D. Eisenhower, it is appropriate to choose “trustworthiness” as a trait often associated with his character.

Presidents Coloring Pages: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/kids/presidentsday/color/>

Locate presidential quotations that address the attributes of good character to complement the exhibit. Some sources available online are listed below.

Character Above All: An Exploration of Presidential Leadership: <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/character/>

Ethics Resource Center: <http://www.ethics.org/erc-publications/presidential-quote-list.asp>

Additional Activities: (1) On a map of the United States, locate birthplaces of the Presidents and mark with a star or some other meaningful indicator. (2) Create a timeline of the Presidents' birthdates, beginning with Herbert Hoover and ending with George W. Bush. Match up presidential birthdates with students' own birthdays.

## LESSON IDEA FOUR

**MAIN IDEA**—Explain to students that designing a museum exhibit is a complex endeavor. It involves many steps including (1) determining a theme (main idea), (2) choosing concepts that support the theme, (3) selecting primary source materials to tell the story, (4) writing effective text, and (5) making design decisions about how best to artistically and/or technically present the story. As students move through the exhibit, point out to them, examples of the above criteria to demonstrate the decisions exhibit designers made.

**METHOD**— As your students explore the exhibit, they will have an unprecedented opportunity to explore a rare collection of primary sources associated with Presidents of the United States. Even more importantly, they will gain insights into how primary sources have the power to intrigue us, to relate a rich and detailed story to us, and to enhance our understanding and appreciation of history.

Directly below is a list of primary sources with which most students will be familiar. They may be divided into three broad categories: (1) documents (2) audio-visual, and (3) artifacts or objects. Before coming to the Nixon Library to view **SCHOOL HOUSE TO WHITE HOUSE: THE EDUCATION OF THE PRESIDENTS**, encourage students to become familiar with the primary sources listed below.

### PRIMARY SOURCES

photograph	personal letter	official letter	report card
exam or test	class notes	transcript of grades	attendance records
certificate	yearbook	diploma	souvenir program
sheet music	artifact	old newspaper	manuscript (draft of article or book)

birthday card	speech	old textbook	film or video
audio recording	essay	diary or journal entry	cartoon
advertisement	artwork	reminiscence	oral history transcript
map	reading book	workbook	poster

Once at the library, as they move through the exhibit, ask each student to select at least four primary sources for further examination and comment. Using a worksheet similar to the one on page 5, students will record the type of primary source selected, the President associated with it, and at least one fact or observation gleaned from it.

### WORKSHEET EXAMPLE

Primary Source Selected	President's Name	I Learned . . . .
Transcript of Grades	Dwight Eisenhower	Dwight Eisenhower took English all four years of high school.

### BACK IN THE CLASSROOM

Following your visit to the Nixon Library to view the exhibit, organize students into working groups of three to five students each. Using a variety of traditional and online sources, including presidential library web sites, each group of students will create a power point-type presentation, based on the boyhood years of one or any of the presidents.

Each student group will first determine a theme for the presentation, for example, “activities and sports” of the Presidents as boys. Next, each group will decide how best to organize the information to present the theme. Students will need to make decisions about design, headings, content, transitions, and any

special effects. Storyboards are a good way to sketch out ideas to try out and organize their projects. As a culminating activity, each student group will make a presentation to the rest of the class.

Helpful information about creating storyboards maybe found at the **National History Day (NHD)** web site. The advice in the shaded area below comes directly from the **NHD** experts and is located on their web site, [www.nhd.org](http://www.nhd.org) . Take some time to explore the site.

### **Creating a Storyboard** (<http://www.nhd.org/Storyboard.htm>)

A storyboard is a visual display of a script divided into segments, where each segment is represented by an appropriate image (slides, video clips, etc.) for that segment. This technique is used by people involved in media production to help them decide which pictures will best suit the script. It is important because it allows you to see which visuals fit best, which still need to be made, what songs need to be recorded, etc. You should create a storyboard after you have completed your research and written a script.

You can create a storyboard by using index cards or by drawing boxes on a piece of paper. Each card or box represents one image and the text or narration that goes with that image. You may also include background music or sounds that need to be recorded. You should rough sketch visual ideas on the upper portion of the card or box and place the part of the script that goes with that image on the lower part. Each segment should be numbered to make certain that it remains in proper sequence. You can attach the cards to a board or piece of paper to look at the entire flow of the presentation and determine what changes need to be made.

### **Creating Documentary Entries**

Constantly changing technology offers students limitless possibilities in developing media-based presentations for the documentary category. Students may create documentaries using slides, film, videos and computers. Whatever presentation format is chosen, students must be able to operate all equipment, both during production and at each level of competition.

The most important aspect of any entry is its historical quality. Students should not get so caught up in the production of a documentary that they lose sight of the importance of the historical quality. Judges are not looking for glitzy productions; rather, they are looking for solid research and a thorough analysis of the chosen topic.

### **Slide Presentations**

Although the use of video and computer-based presentations in the documentary category is growing, slide presentations are still popular and effective. Slides can be either purchased or produced by students. The key to an effective entry is a good combination of visual images and recorded narrative. Here are some things to keep in mind:

Make a storyboard of the types of images that explain the theme.

Photograph pictures from books to build a slide collection and avoid too much repetition.

Music is an important addition to the recorded narrative.

Make sure the narrative fits with the image on the screen.

## LESSON IDEA FIVE

**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

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 20<sup>th</sup> 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	<a href="http://www.hoover.archives.gov">www.hoover.archives.gov</a>	“Hoover Wore Many Hats” on the “Kids” page
Franklin Roosevelt	<a href="http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/">www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/</a>	“Roosevelt Rap” on the “Education” page
Harry Truman	<a href="http://www.trumanlibrary.org">www.trumanlibrary.org</a>	“Kids” under the Main Menu, for a great variety of online activities
Dwight Eisenhower	<a href="http://www.eisenhower.archives.gov">www.eisenhower.archives.gov</a>	“Dreams of a Barefoot Boy: 1890 – 1911,” on the “Education page”
John Kennedy	<a href="http://www.jfklibrary.org">www.jfklibrary.org</a>	“A President’s Day,” “Education and Public Programs,” then, “Materials, Resources, and Activities for Students”

Lyndon Johnson	<a href="http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu">www.lbjlib.utexas.edu</a>	“What Do You Know,” on the “Education” page, under “LBJ for Kids!”
Richard Nixon	<a href="http://www.nixonlibrary.gov">www.nixonlibrary.gov</a>	“Moon Landing,” on the “For Kids” page, under “Speeches for Kids”
Gerald Ford	<a href="http://www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov">www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov</a>	“My Photo Album,” on the “Education Program” page under “Fun Facts”
Jimmy Carter	<a href="http://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov">www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov</a>	“Take the Diplomacy Challenge” on the “Youth Space” page
Ronald Reagan	<a href="http://www.reagan.utexas.edu">www.reagan.utexas.edu</a>	“Early Ronald Reagan” on the “Photographs” page
George H.W. Bush	<a href="http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu">http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu</a>	“My Own Room at the White House” on the “Education,” then, “Programs” page
William Clinton	<a href="http://www.clintonlibrary.gov">www.clintonlibrary.gov</a>	“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](http://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/](http://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/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/) The White House web pages about the Presidents.

[americanhistory.si.edu/presidency/home.html](http://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/](http://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.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information about **SCHOOL HOUSE TO WHITE HOUSE: THE EDUCATION OF THE PRESIDENTS**, contact the education office at the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum.

Mindy Farmer  
Education Specialist  
Richard Nixon Presidential  
Library and Museum  
18001 Yorba Linda Blvd.  
Yorba Linda, CA 92806

Phone: 714-983-9120

Email: [NixonEducation@nara.gov](mailto:NixonEducation@nara.gov)