



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

# **TEACHER'S GUIDE**

## **MIDDLE SCHOOL**

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.

**EXHIBIT FOCUS**—Your students will likely enjoy focusing on the high school and college years of the Presidents. In so many ways, the ups and downs of daily life and the hopes, dreams, and aspirations of the young men who would, one day, become President of the United States are not that different from what your students experience today.

**MAIN IDEA**—A visit to a museum exhibit is a unique opportunity for your students to view primary sources, the building blocks of history, within an engaging and meaningful context. They will explore the formative years of future Presidents and consider how a carefully designed exhibition of related primary sources communicates specific knowledge and a deeper understanding of our history. **SCHOOL HOUSE TO WHITE HOUSE: THE EDUCATION OF THE PRESIDENTS** is a first step for students in developing their own insights and interpretations of history through both primary and secondary sources. For the first time, perhaps, it is “they,” who examine the evidence and “they,” who are the historians!

**METHOD**—Explain to students that one simple approach to primary sources uses the standard interrogatives of *what, who, when, where, and why*. Consider assigning each student to “uncover

a little history” by answering questions about one primary source in the exhibit. Students may consult captions associated with a particular primary source, as well. On page 4, is a sample worksheet, which you are welcome to use.

**TEACHING TIP!**—The National Archives education page contains a collection of useful analysis sheets, that may be found at <http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/>. In addition, this web page contains ready-to-use “Teaching with Documents” lesson plans. A listing of education programs at the Presidential Libraries is located at <http://www.archives.gov/presidential-libraries/programs/education.html>. Finally, a web site project called “Our Documents,” which explores the 100 milestone documents in United States history, is located at <http://www.ourdocuments.gov>. These web sites contain quality lesson plans, useful and practical teacher tools, and exceptional educational programs.

## ANALYZE A PRIMARY SOURCE: An Exercise in Historical Thinking

### WHAT?

1. What type of primary source is it? (document, photograph, or artifact/object)
2. What unique qualities, unusual markings or special notations can you find?

### WHO?

1. Who created it? What do you know about this person(s)?
2. For whom was this primary source created? Do you have any evidence that this person received and/or acted upon it?
3. How might you learn more about these persons?

### WHEN?

1. When was this primary source created?
2. Does it contain a specific date?
3. If not, is there anything in the text or notations that suggest a date or timeframe?
4. If not, what might be a logical first step in attempting to date the primary source?

### WHERE?

1. Where was the primary source created? How did you determine that?
2. Where was its final destination?
3. Did it arrive? How do you know?

### WHY?

1. What do you know about the creator? What do you believe was his/her primary purpose for creating this primary source?
2. What do you know (or what might you investigate) about the issue, event, era that would allow you to make some reasonable *inferences* (educated guesses) about why it was created?
3. Keep in mind that interacting with a primary source often generates more questions for the researcher than it actually answers.

**CONCLUSIONS:**

- What historical facts have you gathered from this primary source?
- What passage or sentences would make good quotations? (Place quotation marks around your quote. Be sure to add the title and the page number.)
- What is the single most important conclusion that you formed as a result of examining this primary source?
- What new questions has this primary source generated for you?

**BACK IN THE CLASSROOM**

The next few pages contain a simple research exercise using primary sources in a cooperative group setting, which allows students to work together to build a new understanding of history. Within one 50-minute class period, students will examine and analyze primary sources as individuals, collaborate as group members to create a synthesis, and, finally, present their findings to the class as a whole.

**Instructions: Primary Source Exercise**

1. Select several primary documents. Group the documents into enough categories to equal the number of student groups. Each group of students will work with related primary sources. If time allows, the teacher will write a brief introductory paragraph for each category of primary sources.
2. Organize students into groups of four to five students each. This may be accomplished with a random drawing or by asking students to count off 1-5, A-E, etc. If there are fewer than five students in a group, the duties listed below may be adjusted.
3. In order to make the activity as interactive as possible, each student in the group should have a specific duty to complete. Once again, this may be accomplished with a random drawing or by counting off students. The duties may be delineated as follows:
  - a. Call the group to order. Hand out the introductory paragraph and the worksheet entitled “Individual Conclusions from Primary Source Exercise” to each group member.
  - b. Distribute all documents as fairly as possible to group members. This student will assist the group presentation by displaying selected group documents during the group report, also.
  - c. Manage group discussion of primary sources when the individual analysis portion has been completed.
  - d. Record group’s conclusions on “Reporting Group Findings” worksheet.
  - e. Report group findings to the class as a whole from the front of the classroom.

Selected documents may be displayed with an overhead projector or document-imaging camera.

4. Allow approximately 15 – 20 minutes for individuals to examine the primary source and complete the worksheet.
5. Next, students in each group will work together to share individual findings and incorporate them into a single interpretation. Allow 15 minutes for students to accomplish this. One student should be responsible for completing the “Reporting Group Findings” worksheet, but all students will have a copy for reference during the discussion.
6. Lastly, one student from each group will “report out” to the class as a whole, using the completed “Reporting Group Findings” worksheet. Another student from the group may wish to illustrate the group’s findings with selected primary sources. Depending on the number of groups, each will have approximately 3-5 minutes for the presentation.

### **Individual Conclusions: Primary Source Exercise**

1. What kind of primary source did you examine? Make an “X” in the correct blank.
  - letter (personal or official) Circle one.
  - memorandum (memo)
  - official record (birth certificates, driver’s license, marriage license, grade card, diploma, other \_\_\_\_\_) Circle one.
  - telegram
  - minutes of a meeting
  - diary or journal entry
  - oral history or reminiscence
  - photograph
  - map
  - drawing or artwork
  - book
  - pamphlet or booklet
  - other? (describe \_\_\_\_\_)
  
2. What is one new fact you learned from reading and/or examining your primary source? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
3. What did you find most interesting about your primary source? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Now that you have finished examining and thinking about your primary source, what is one new question that you have about this topic? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Reporting Group Findings: Primary Source Exercise**

1. The topic our group researched is \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Some historical facts we learned about this topic from our primary sources are (include at least one fact per student in your group): \_\_\_\_\_

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3. The most important conclusion (the overall idea that sums up what you learned) we have about our topic after examining and discussing our primary sources is this: \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Three new questions we now have about our topic as a result of our research are:

a. \_\_\_\_\_

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b. \_\_\_\_\_

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c. \_\_\_\_\_

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## 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 Online Digital Archives” on the “Students” 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>	“Select Photographs” and “Selected Documents” may be accessed by clicking on the “Research” heading on the menu
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”



**School House to White House:  
The Education of the Presidents**

## 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)