

All In a Day's Work

Name: _____

The President's Rule Book

The President of the United States is the leader of our nation and the leader of the executive branch of government. The Constitution of the United States gives all the rules for being president. It tells who can become president, what powers the president has, and some of the roles and duties the president takes on.

Read it for yourself:



Barack Obama is the current president of the United States. He was elected in November 2008 and took office on January 20, 2009. He was re-elected in 2012.

from Article II of the United States Constitution

Section 1

The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America. . . .

Before he enter on the Execution of his Office, he shall take the following Oath or Affirmation:--"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."

Section 2

The President shall be Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of the several States, when called into the actual Service of the United States; he may require the Opinion, in writing, of the principal Officer in each of the executive Departments, upon any Subject relating to the Duties of their respective Offices, and he shall have Power to grant Reprieves and Pardons for Offences against the United States, except in Cases of Impeachment.

He shall have Power, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, to make Treaties, provided two thirds of the Senators present concur; and he shall nominate, and by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, shall appoint Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls, Judges of the supreme Court, and all other Officers of the United States . . .

Section 3

He shall from time to time give to the Congress Information of the State of the Union, and recommend to their Consideration such Measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient; . . . he shall receive Ambassadors and other public Ministers; he shall take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed, and shall Commission all the Officers of the United States.

from Article 1, Section 7

Every Bill which shall have passed the House of Representatives and the Senate, shall, before it become a Law, be presented to the President of the United States: If he approve he shall sign it, but if not he shall return it. . .

Lawmaking and the Prez

One of the President's most important functions is not in Article II—it's in Article I, which talks about Congress! (The Constitution can be sneaky that way.)

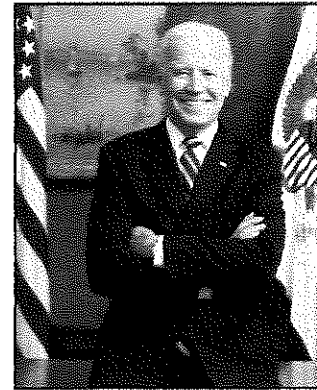
Congress is the lawmaking branch of government, but the Constitution requires the president's approval before a bill can actually become a law. The president either signs the bill to approve it or rejects the bill with a **veto** and sends it back to Congress.

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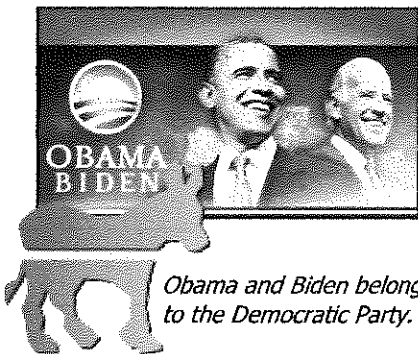
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Second In Command

The Constitution of the United States gives the president a helper: the vice president. However, the Constitution doesn't say much about what the vice president does, except that the VP is also the president of the Senate (one of the two lawmaking chambers in Congress). But the VP only presides over the Senate to cast a tiebreaking vote or when there is a ceremony. The rest of the time, the vice president advises the president, travels the world negotiating with other countries, helps carry out laws here at home, and is important to many functions in the executive branch of government.



Joseph Biden is the current vice president of the United States.



Obama and Biden belong to the Democratic Party.

Political Party Leaders

The president and vice president act as the leaders of their political party. This role is not part of the Constitution, but has evolved over time as part of the political process. A political party is an organized group of people who share similar views and work to influence the government in support of those views. As party leaders, the president and vice president work to accomplish the party's goals for how the government should address the issues facing our nation. The Republican and Democratic parties are the two major political parties in the U.S.

Becoming President

In the United States, presidential elections happen every four years. A president cannot serve more than two 4-year terms—a total of eight years. This rule is found in the 22nd Amendment to the Constitution, which was added in 1951. If a president has only served one term and wants to be re-elected, that president ends up spending a lot of time campaigning during the last year of the term. If the president has already served a second term, often the vice president will decide to become a presidential candidate. Many presidents started out as the vice president.



Before the 2-term limit, President Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected to four terms in a row! He took office in 1933 and died in 1945, a few months into his fourth term.

Presidential Line of Succession

1. Vice President of the U.S.
2. Speaker of the House
3. President pro tempore of the Senate
4. Secretary of State
5. Secretary of the Treasury
6. Secretary of Defense
7. Attorney General

(list continues with 10 more members of the president's cabinet)

What If the President Dies?

There have been several times in the history of the United States where a president has died. When that happens, the Constitution provides that the vice president becomes president. It also gives Congress the power to make a law saying who becomes president if something happened to both the president and the vice president. Congress did this in the Presidential Succession Act, which puts the speaker of the House (the leader of the House of Representatives) next in line after the vice president and lists everyone who is in line after that.

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A. I've Got the Power! Match each responsibility of the president and vice president with the correct power or duty found in the Constitution.



President's Responsibilities

- 1) _____ Lead weekly meetings where I ask the leaders of executive branch departments for advice on how to handle the country's most difficult problems.
- 2) _____ Go to Congress and give my yearly "State of the Union" speech on what's happening in America.
- 3) _____ Decide whether to approve or reject a bill that Congress has sent me.
- 4) _____ Follow the Constitution and the law even if I disagree with it.
- 5) _____ Decide whether to send more troops into war knowing that some will die, but it will keep the country safe.
- 6) _____ Make sure the Department of Homeland Security properly carries out new airport safety laws that will anger some travelers.
- 7) _____ Hold a press conference where I ask Congress to spend more money on space exploration.
- 8) _____ Decide whether to let someone out of prison based on the prisoner's good conduct and particular circumstances
- 9) _____ Negotiate an agreement with another country that would lower the taxes each one adds to the sale of items from the other country.
- 10) _____ Choose a new Supreme Court justice to replace one who is retiring.

Vice President's Responsibilities

- 11) _____ Take over as president if I'm needed.
- 12) _____ Act as leader of the Senate.
- 13) _____ Cast a tiebreaking vote in the Senate.
- 14) _____ Work with the president to run the executive branch.

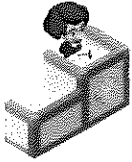
Powers & Duties Listed in the Constitution:

- A. Power to carry out the laws
- B. Must protect and defend the Constitution
- C. Commander in Chief of the military
- D. Elected with the president to hold office in the executive branch
- E. May ask advisors, who lead parts of the government, for their opinion on different issues
- F. Is the president of the Senate
- G. Pardon someone for a crime, canceling their punishment
- H. Make treaties with other countries (with Senate approval)
- I. Take office as president if the current president dies, resigns, or is unable to do the job
- J. Choose new Supreme Court justices (with Senate approval)
- K. Make recommendations to Congress about what laws are needed
- L. Update Congress on how things are going in the country
- M. Sign (approve) or veto (reject) bills from Congress
- N. Can vote in the Senate if the senators are equally divided on a vote

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B. So Many Laws, So Little Time! The executive branch is in charge of carrying out thousands of laws, but the President doesn't do this alone. Departments inside the executive branch are responsible for carrying out certain kinds of laws. Complete the table by matching each executive department to its function. Use the word/picture bank for help.



Justice



Education



Treasury



Defense



Health and Human Services



Homeland Security



Agriculture



Transportation

	EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT	FUNCTION
1		Works to protect the country against terrorism and make sure the borders are safe.
2		Makes coins and paper money, tries to help the economy, and collects taxes.
3		Keeps the United States safe using the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Coast Guard, and other military resources.
4		Enforces federal laws, prevents crime, and punishes those convicted of federal crimes.
5		Supports farmers, makes sure our food is safe, and gives recommendations about good nutrition.
6		Works to protect the health of all Americans and offers medical and other basic services to people in need.
7		Builds and maintains federal highways and railroads, makes rules for air travel, and promotes transportation safety.
8		Provides funding to public schools and helps students pay for college.

C. Crossword! Complete the puzzle using information from the lesson.

Down

2. Political party of the current president and vice president
3. Length of a presidential term, in years
5. Name of the current president

Across

1. Name of the current vice president
4. Word that refers to the sequence of who will become president if something happens
6. Number of times a president can be elected

