



US Presidents Lesson Plan

The objective of this deck and lesson plan is to introduce students to presidents they may or may not have heard of before. There is a focus on each president's achievements during their term as well as a greater context during the time period.

- Grade range recommended: 3rd through 8th grade (adapt lessons as needed)
- Materials: Recommended one pack per six children

Introduction:

- Ask your students to list what they know about the presidents. Use prompting questions if necessary.
 - Ex: What is the job of the president? Where does the president live?
 - Ex: Name as many presidents as they can and what those presidents are known for.
- Give students a brief introduction to the office of the presidency.

Suggested lesson procedure:

Lesson 1:

This lesson will familiarize the students with of all the US Presidents.

- Divide the class into groups of 3-6 students.
- Give each group a deck of Top Trumps **US Presidents**.
- Give them five to ten minutes to explore the deck, asking them to take note of any presidents they have heard of, would like to learn more about, or fun facts they learned from the cards.
- Ask the students to gather as a group and collect the packs to get their attention. Ask them to share their answers.

Lesson 2:

Play Top Trumps!

- Tell the children that they are going to use **US Presidents** cards to play TOP Trumps.
- Demonstrate how to play the game to the class by asking for three volunteers to come to the front.
- To start the game, shuffle and deal all the cards face down. Each player holds their cards so that they can see the **top** card only. The player to the dealer's left starts by reading out a category from the **top** card.
- The other players then read out the same category from their cards. The one with the



best or highest value wins, and that player collects all the top cards, including their own, and moves them to the bottom of their pile. It is then their turn again to choose a category from the next card.

- If two or more cards share the top value, and this will frequently occur with this set of cards, then all the cards are placed in the middle and the same player chooses again from the next card.
- Using a different category, the game is repeated until all the cards are used.
- The person with all the cards at the end is the winner!
- Divide the class into groups of 3-6 to play. Each group needs one pack to play.
- Note: To shorten the game, play with the discard rule where any losing card is simply removed from the game. The last person left with cards in their hand, wins. OR The person with the most cards at the end of the class wins.

Lesson 3:

Use the supplemental worksheet to get students engaged with the Top Trumps Fact File at the bottom of the cards.

Using the informational text on each TOP Trumps US Presidents card, have the students work in groups to find the answers to the questions listed on the attached worksheet. This will give them additional information as they gain an understanding of the historical context of each president.

Lesson 4:

The objective is to allow the students to select a president of interest in order to conduct more detailed research. There is a wide variety of project options.

- Either assign or randomly select students to research a given president. Ensure that there are no more than two students to a topic.
- The project to display their research can vary from a written report, an oral presentation from the perspective of the president, a timeline of their president (which can be combined from all the students in the class to make one long timeline), to another visual display (ex: poster board).
- Give students a grading rubric to frame their project as well as a list of required information. This is up to the educator's discretion, but recommended information includes:
 - Fast facts: Name of President, date of birth, date of presidency, presidential party
 - Background and childhood
 - What they are known for
 - Context in history
 - Post-presidency



- Give the students deadlines to complete research and stages of the project. Ensure that they include a list of their sources.
- Encourage them to use a wide range of sources from websites to books.
- Option: allow students time to meet with you to track their progress as well as give them opportunities to peer edit with other students.

Lesson 5:

Give the students an opportunity to share their work with the class in order to receive peer feedback while also teaching their classmates about the presidents.

- For written research papers, have students prepare a summary of their work to present to the class.
- For oral reports, give students the opportunity to present.
- For visual reports, allow students to walk around the classroom to view and interact with each other's projects.

Lesson 6:

This lesson is intended to provide some ideas for more creative or bonus projects that go beyond standard research projects.

- Have students create campaigns for a given president. Allow for creativity in dressing up in character, a range of visual or electronic displays, and an "Election Day" to present.
- The students must create a proposal to build a memorial for a given president. The memorial should be centered around a given theme or event from their presidency and can take the form of a painting, sculpture, etc. Ask the students to then create a model of their memorial.



US Presidents Worksheet

Name: _____

Directions: Use your Top Trumps US Presidents Pack to complete the worksheet. Note: You may need to use outside sources to solve some of the *Bonus* questions.

1. _____ was known for continuing the “Great Society” policies (upholding Civil Rights and the War on Poverty) of his predecessor but saw his popularity decline due to the War in Vietnam.
2. Why did Jimmy Carter win a Nobel Peace Prize?

3. _____ campaigned against Communism, Korea, and corruption and oversaw the end of the _____ War.
4. _____ is one of the most controversial presidents due to the Compromise of _____.
5. Who was the first President to have a bath with running water? _____
6. _____ is considered to be a champion of civil service reform as well as being president when France presented the US with the _____
Bonus: Why did France give the US this gift? _____
7. Who won the Nobel Peace Prize for helping to end the Russo-Japanese War?

8. What is the name of the 1803 acquisition of land that doubled the size of the US? Under which presidency did it occur? _____
9. This businessman, TV star, and author was the winner of one of the most fiercely contested election campaigns. _____
10. Who was the first Vice President to become president after the death of their predecessor? _____
11. _____ is one of the most well-known presidents due to his efforts to abolish slavery in DC as well as passing the Emancipation Proclamation.
Bonus: What was the Emancipation Proclamation?
12. Who is the only president to have served in office as well as later becoming Chief Justice of the Supreme Court? _____



13. Which presidency is marked by the Era of Good Feelings as well as a major Economic Depression? _____
14. Under which president was the Spanish-American War started?

15. Who was president when the Wall Street crash of 1929 occurred? *Bonus:* This crash marked the beginning of what period?

16. What was the Gadsden Purchase of 1853 and who passed it?

17. This president saw his popularity increase and decrease as he ended the Vietnam War but was then impeached and forced to resign over the Watergate Scandal.

18. Who was the first African American President who started an economic stimulus program following the economic crash of 2008? _____
19. What was the nickname of the 30th president and why? _____

20. _____ was president during Reconstruction after the _____ War in the late 1860s.
21. _____ is the only president to serve two terms that weren't back to back and is also considered to be an icon for American conservatives.
22. What is the name of the Treaty that ended the 1812 War with Great Britain, under the Madison presidency? *Bonus:* What was the cause of this war?

23. Which Tennessee born president was nicknamed Old Hickory and why?

24. Who was president during WWII and why did the US enter the war?

25. Who was the last president in the leadup to the Civil War, whose skills of persuasion and negotiation were essential during this turbulent time?

26. Who was president during World War I? *Bonus:* Why did the US enter the war?



27. John Adams is known for helping to write which key document in US history?

28. _____ founded the UN and NATO. *Bonus:* What do these organizations stand for and what is their role?

29. Who was the first president to be elected without winning the majority of the popular vote? He was then elected by the House of Representatives.

30. This charismatic president resolved the Cuban Missile Crisis.

31. Which president's first language was Dutch, not English? _____
32. This former actor and Governor of California helped end the recession causing him to win re-election by a landslide. _____
33. _____ is known for his economic legislation, such as the McKinley Tariff which _____.
34. What was the Compromise of 1850 and who was it passed by? _____

35. The Civil Rights Act was passed under which president and what did this Act entail?

36. Following 9/11, _____ announced a "War on _____" and sent US forces to invade _____ and _____.
37. Who has the second shortest term after being assassinated several months into his presidency? _____
38. After which president is our nation's capital named? _____
39. _____ campaigned for world naval disarmament and criticized racial injustice. *Bonus:* Why would this president run on naval disarmament?

40. George H.W. Bush started the _____ in 1991 in order to _____.
41. _____ is known for his economic expansion which ended the US deficit and his wife was US Secretary of State for Barack Obama.



42. Gerald Ford helped to end the cold war but lost popularity when he pardoned _____.

43. This great general and president gave the longest inauguration address in history.

44. _____ is recognized as one of the greatest US Presidents as his New Deal plan helped the nation through the Great Depressions. He served _____ terms in office.

45. Whose presidency is characterized by US expansion into the West? What was this period of expansion known as? _____



Answers:

1. Lyndon B. Johnson
2. Helped get Egypt and Israel to sign a peace agreement.
3. Dwight D Eisenhower
4. Rutherford B. Hayes
5. Millard Fillmore
6. Chester A. Arthur, Statue of Liberty | Bonus: To commemorate the alliance of the US and France during the American Revolution and to celebrate the victory of freedom during the Civil War.
7. Theodore Roosevelt
8. Louisiana Purchase, Thomas Jefferson
9. Donald J. Trump
10. John Tyler
11. Abraham Lincoln | Bonus: The EP freed all the slaves in the rebellious Southern states.
12. William Howard Taft
13. James Monroe
14. William McKinley
15. Herbert Hoover | Bonus: Great Depression
16. Franklin Pierce
17. Richard Nixon
18. Barack Obama
19. Silent Cal, he didn't talk very much but was still able to restore the public's confidence in the White House.
20. Andrew Johnson, Civil
21. Grover Cleveland
22. Treaty of Ghent | Bonus: Caused by British attempts to restrict US trade and US desire to expand.
23. Andrew Jackson
24. FDR, Pearl Harbour
25. James Buchanan
26. Woodrow Wilson | Bonus: Germany started sinking merchant ships.
27. Constitution
28. Harry S Truman
 - a. Bonus: UN = United Nations: intergovernmental organization to maintain peace and security
 - b. Bonus: NATO = North Atlantic Treaty Organization: international alliance.
29. John Quincy Adams
30. John F. Kennedy
31. Martin Van Buren
32. Ronald Regan
33. Benjamin Harrison, expanded Presidential power over foreign trade.
34. Reduced tensions between the North and the South over slavery, Zachary Taylor.
35. Ulysses S. Grant
36. George W. Bush, Terrorism, Afghanistan and Iraq
37. James A. Garfield
38. George Washington



39. Warren G. Harding | Bonus: During the post-World War period, the people had shifted to wanting smaller naval forces and armed forces in general.
40. Gulf War, protect Kuwait against an Iraqi invasion.
41. Bill Clinton
42. Richard Nixon
43. William Henry Harrison
44. Franklin D. Roosevelt, four
45. James K. Polk, Manifest Destiny