

FAMOUS PRESIDENTS

There were 43 presidents of the USA before Barack Obama. Read about three of the most famous US presidents. They all had new ideas and they all had to make difficult decisions.

1st

George Washington 1789-97

George Washington owned land in Virginia. Britain governed America in those days.



Washington and other landowners wanted independence from Britain, and in 1775 they went to

war. The Americans won the war, and on 30th April, 1789, George Washington became the first President of the USA. He died in 1799. His picture is on the US\$1 banknote.

The American War of Independence:

Washington led the American army in the fight against the British government from 1775 – 1782.

The Constitution: Washington helped to write America's Constitution. This tells us the laws and rights of the American people. America still uses it today.

Washington, D.C.: Washington chose an area for the home of the US government – it was named after him and it is still the home of government today.

16th

Abraham Lincoln 1861-5

Abraham Lincoln's family was poor, but Abraham wanted to learn.



He became a lawyer and then a politician. He wanted to stop slavery in the Southern states and when he was President, he

fought the South in the American Civil War. A civil war is a war between two sides of the same country.

In 1865 a man from the South killed Lincoln. Lincoln's picture is on the US\$5 banknote.

The End of Slavery: Lincoln changed the law on slavery. Slavery ended in the United States in 1863.

The American Civil War: Lincoln led the North in the Civil War against the South. The South wanted to keep slaves and they wanted independence from the North. 600,000 people died in this war.

The 'Gettysburg Address': There was terrible fighting at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, during the Civil War. After the war, Lincoln made a famous speech there. The dead did not die for nothing, he said. They died for people to be free.



Fighting at Gettysburg

35th John F. Kennedy 1961-3



John F. Kennedy was the youngest president in US history. He was only 43 years old. He was young and full of new ideas, and people called him 'JFK'. They also loved his beautiful and clever wife, Jackie Kennedy. JFK wanted to make big changes to civil rights and to help the poor, but someone killed him in 1963.

Famous Speech: 'Don't ask what your country can do for you,' said JFK when he became President, 'ask what *you* can do for your country.'

The Vietnam War: The Vietnam War started before JFK became President. But he sent more money and men to the war to stop the Communists in North Vietnam. The war did not end until 1975, and millions of people died, including 60,000 Americans.

First Man on the Moon: JFK started the programme to send a man to the moon in 1961. Neil Armstrong landed on the moon in 1969, eight years later.

Who is or was the most famous leader of your country?
What are they famous for?

What do these words mean? You can use a dictionary.

decisions independence slavery rights Communists programme moon

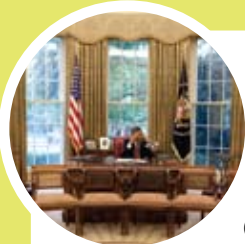


Inside the White House

The White House has been home to every US president since 1797. Today the White House is a museum, a very busy office, a private home and a symbol of America. Lots of different people – from Heads of State to schoolchildren – come here to visit the First Family. (The President's wife is the First Lady; their family is the First Family.)

The White House has 132 rooms on 6 floors. There are 35 bedrooms.

THE WEST WING: This is the centre of power – the President's offices are here.



The Oval Office: When you think of the President of the United States, you probably think of him sitting at a desk in this office. In 1909, the famous Oval Office opened. Barack Obama doesn't use it much – he has a smaller, more comfortable office next door.

The State Dining Room: The President can invite up to 140 guests to dinner in this large dining room.

The Tennis Court: Barack Obama is a great basketball player. White House staff have turned the tennis court into a basketball court, so the President can practise.

TOP TWO FLOORS: The home apartments are private. Barack, Michelle, their daughters and Bo the dog live here.

THE EAST WING: The First Lady usually runs her busy life from here.

The Family Cinema:

There are 40 comfortable red seats in the White House cinema. Sometimes presidents practise their speeches here. More often the First Family and their guests watch films here. Many new Hollywood films come to the White House before they open in cinemas.



Lincoln's Bedroom: If anyone invites you to stay at the White House, ask to stay in this room! Abraham Lincoln used it as his study, but he never slept in here. It has a very big bed in it and a copy of his Gettysburg speech (see p. 49). Today it's a guest bedroom.



The Vegetable Garden: Michelle Obama made this new garden. Fruit and vegetables from here go to the White House kitchens and they make food for people living on the streets.



Imagine you are Malia or Sasha. What is it like being a teenager in the White House? Where do you hang out? Do you bring your friends home?

What do these words mean? You can use a dictionary.
Heads of State slave private symbol court

A Day in the Life of President Obama

Barack Obama has the most famous job in the world – he’s President of the United States! But what does he do every day? Let’s look at a day in his life.

6.30

Barack and Michelle start their day with exercise in their gym, followed by a family breakfast. After Malia and Sasha leave for school, the President spends 45 minutes reading government papers and looking at the day’s newspapers.

9.00

In the Oval Office, the President makes phone calls to other leaders, like the German Chancellor or the Russian Prime Minister.

Barack receives thousands of letters and e-mails from ordinary Americans. Each day he answers ten letters. He wants to understand ordinary people’s hopes and worries.



9.30

Every day there are meetings about the country’s safety, the economy and the most important things happening in the world and in the United States.

11.00

There is a meeting in the East Room. It is about the safety of America’s computers. The President speaks to people at the meeting and answers questions.



12.00

The President is on his way to a meeting across town. But it’s lunchtime and he’s hungry. He stops his big black car at one of his favourite hamburger restaurants, Five Guys. There are some people sitting at a table outside. The President says hello on his way in – they can’t believe it!



13.00

The meeting across town is about the weather. In 2005, a terrible hurricane called Katrina killed more than 1800 people in the southern city of New Orleans. The President doesn’t want this to happen again. He wants to know if the south is ready for this year’s hurricanes.

14.00

The President makes more phone calls to leaders in other countries. Then he meets newspaper writers in the East Room. When he says something important, it appears online within minutes and on the TV and radio news that evening.

16.30

The President gets a haircut. Zariff has cut Barack’s hair since 1992, when Barack still lived in Chicago. Barack pays \$21, the same as he always has (and the price of a plane ticket from Chicago to Washington).

17.00

The President discusses new plans with his team.

**What do these words mean?
You can use a dictionary.**
gym Chancellor Prime Minister
hurricane economy

18.30

Barack takes a break. He goes upstairs to the Home Floor. The First Family eat dinner together and hang out. He helps the girls with their homework. But he still has his Blackberry in his pocket!

20.00

There are more government papers to read and more decisions to make.

21.30

The President takes Bo out for his evening walk across the White House garden.



22.00

Barack goes into his study on the Home Floor. This is his quiet time, when he can read and think.

Would you like to live the President’s life? Why? Why not?