



Benjamin Harrison | Lesson Plan

How did Benjamin Harrison shape the United States during his presidency, and what were his key contributions to American history?

Students will understand Benjamin Harrison's role as the 23rd President of the United States, his commitment to strengthening the nation, and his efforts to expand civil rights and protect American businesses.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify the key life events and achievements of Benjamin Harrison.
- Explain how Benjamin Harrison contributed to the growth of the U.S. Navy and the protection of American industries.
- Analyze Harrison's commitment to civil rights and how it shaped his presidency.
- Evaluate Harrison's legacy and how his presidency impacted the United States.

Key Vocabulary:

- **Tariff:** A tax on imported goods, aimed at protecting domestic industries from foreign competition.
- **Monopoly:** A situation where a single company dominates the market, limiting competition.
- **Pension:** A regular payment made during retirement to someone who has worked in a certain job or industry.
- **Electoral College:** The group of people that elect the President and Vice President of the United States according to the U.S. Constitution.
- **Civil Service Reform:** Government actions intended to reduce corruption and ensure that public officials are hired based on merit.

Educational Standards: CCRA.R.7, CCRA.W.2, CCRA.W.4, CCRA.W.9, CCRA.L.1, CCRA.L.2, CCRA.L.4, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.2

Academic Subject Areas: Biography, U.S. Presidents, Historical Figures

What You'll Need

- Video: *Guess or Mess: Benjamin Harrison* (Watch [Here](#))
- Worksheet: *Guess or Mess: Benjamin Harrison* (Click [Here](#))
- PragerU Kids biographical book: *Benjamin Harrison* (Download [Here](#))
- Large paper or poster board for each group, along with markers



Lesson Plan: Read and Discuss (60 minutes)

Introduction to Harrison: (5 minutes)

1. Begin with a brief discussion about U.S. presidents and what qualities make a great leader. Ask students if they know any presidents who helped America grow into a world power.
2. Display the *Benjamin Harrison* digital book using an electronic device. Briefly highlight Harrison's significance as the 23rd President, his role in strengthening the Navy, and his support for civil rights. Show images from the digital book to give a visual overview of his life and achievements.

Harrison History Huddle: (25 minutes)

1. Read the "Meet Benjamin Harrison" section on page 2 together as a class, with the teacher leading this page to model fluent reading and set the tone for the lesson.
2. After completing the teacher-led reading, explain that students will now explore other key aspects of Harrison's life in small groups.
3. Split the class into small groups and assign each group a different section of the digital book to explore:
 - Group 1: *Young Benjamin, Early Career* (pages 3-4)
 - Group 2: *The Civil War, Rise to Power* (pages 4-5)
 - Group 3: *1888 Presidential Election, President* (pages 5-6)
 - Group 4: *The Human Iceberg, Retirement* (pages 7-8)
 - Group 5: *Legacy, What's Up with the Electoral College* (pages 8-9)
4. Allow time for each group to read their assigned section, taking turns reading aloud. As students read, they should discuss the main ideas.
5. Provide each group with a large piece of paper or a poster board and markers to write down key points and any interesting facts or quotes they find.
6. Allow each group one to two minutes to present their findings to the class. After each presentation, provide time for classmates to ask questions and discuss the content.

Worksheet Workshop: (15 minutes)

1. Hand out individual copies of the worksheet to each student. Explain how to fill out each section of the worksheet with these instructions:
2. **Timeline:** Students should select key dates and events mentioned throughout the digital book. The following are recommendations, but the teacher and students can use many other dates mentioned in the book:
 - 1833 - Birth of Benjamin Harrison
 - 1864 - Service in the Civil War (Atlanta Campaign)
 - 1872, 1876 - Ran for Governor but lost both times
 - 1881 - Became a U.S. Senator for Indiana
 - 1889-1893 - Presidency of Benjamin Harrison
 - 1901 - Death of Harrison

3. **Interesting Quote:** Have students choose a meaningful quote from the book to fill in the quote section on their worksheet.
4. **Interesting Fact:** Ask students to select an interesting fact about Benjamin Harrison that stood out to them and write it in the space provided.
5. **Vocabulary Builder:** Instruct students to choose a word from the Glossary on page 10 that they find interesting and use it in a sentence that conveys its meaning.
6. **Multiple Choice:** Explain that students should complete the multiple-choice section of the worksheet individually. (Note: The multiple-choice section corresponds to the Guess or Mess episode about Benjamin Harrison and can also be used to play along while watching. See “Extension Activity” below.)

Reflection Round-Up: (10 minutes)

1. Briefly summarize the key points covered about Benjamin Harrison, focusing on his life, presidency, and legacy.
2. **Think-Pair-Share:** Ask students to recall one fact about Benjamin Harrison and share it with a partner. Encourage them to discuss why that fact was significant.
3. Give each student a sticky note or index card and ask them to answer one of these three sample reflection questions:
 - What did you find most interesting about Benjamin Harrison?
 - How do you think his presidency impacted the United States?
 - Can you think of a modern issue that relates to something Harrison dealt with?
4. **Bonus Activities:** If time allows, allow students to complete the puzzle on page 2 by finding hidden letters throughout the book. They can also explore and engage with the other interactive activities included in the book.

Extension Activity: (20 minutes)

Guess or Mess Trivia Show: After the lesson, students can participate in a trivia challenge based on the Benjamin Harrison episode—direct students to the multiple-choice section of the worksheet. Students can compete to see who can answer the trivia questions correctly.

PragerU 5-Minute Videos:

Did you know that PragerU has a comprehensive video catalog of U.S. Presidents in an easy-to-watch 5-minute format? Enhance this lesson plan with one of our insightful, engaging, and educational videos that provide students with a deep dive into the lives and legacies of America’s leaders. To view *Benjamin Harrison: One Term Wonder*, click [here](#).

Don’t have time for a full lesson? Quick Activity (30 minutes)

Read the *Benjamin Harrison* book together as a class, with students taking turns reading aloud. Then, watch the *Guess or Mess* video and play along with the trivia questions.