



# The Office of President | Lesson Plan

What are the responsibilities of the President of the United States?

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Students explore the reasoning behind the Founding Fathers' decision to create the role of the president, delve into the specific duties and responsibilities of the office, and trace how the position has transformed and adapted throughout the nation's history.

## Learning Objectives:

- Investigate the historical reasons that led the Founding Fathers to choose a president rather than a king to lead the United States.
- Identify and outline the specific duties and responsibilities of the president within the framework of the executive branch of government.
- Examine and contrast the roles and responsibilities of past presidents with those of the current President, highlighting the evolution and changes over time.

## Key Vocabulary:

- **President:** The leader of the United States, often the most powerful person in the world
- **Executive Order:** An order issued by the president intended to clarify or further explain laws and regulations passed by Congress
- **Commander-in-Chief:** The title held by the president due to his role in defending the nation from threats and carrying out military policy

**Educational Standards:** CCRA.L.1, CCRA.L.2, CCRA.L.4, CCRA.L.5, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.2, CCRA.R.4, CCRA.R.6, CCRA.W.2, CCRA.W.4

**Academic Subject Areas:** History, Civics, Government, Western Civilization, American Values

## What You'll Need

- Video: *Street Smarts: The Office of President* (Watch [Here](#))
- Worksheet: *Street Smarts: The Office of President* (Click [Here](#))

## Lesson Plan (45 minutes)

Warm Up: (15 minutes)

1. Initiate a discussion by asking students about their understanding of the president's role. Discuss the differences between a president and a monarch, referencing historical reasons for America's choice. For instance, discuss the following:
  - The president is elected for a maximum of two terms (four years each).
  - A monarch usually holds the position for life and is often born into the role.
  - The president has defined powers and duties outlined by the Constitution.
  - A monarch may have significant or total control over the government.



- The succession of a president is determined by elections and constitutional rules.
  - The succession of a monarch is usually determined by birthright.
2. Divide the class into small groups and ask them to list the qualities they believe a president should possess. Share and discuss the responses, highlighting the Founding Fathers' intentions and expectations. For instance:
    - Separation of Powers: Highlight how the Founding Fathers intended to prevent tyranny by distributing power among three branches of government.
    - Checks and Balances: Discuss how the presidency was designed with checks and balances in mind to ensure no single branch of government becomes too powerful.
    - Representation of the People: Emphasize that the Founding Fathers wanted the president to represent the will of the people.
    - Foreign Policy: Point out that the main job of the president is to represent the United States in international matters and to ensure national security.
    - Enforcement of Laws: The Founding Fathers tasked the president with the enforcement of federal laws throughout the nation.
  3. Give each student a copy of the Street Smarts: Office of President worksheet and display it on a screen.

Watch and Complete: (20 minutes)

1. Watch the *Street Smarts: The Office of President* video as a class. Pause after each key point to fill in answers on the worksheet and to discuss relevant questions and comments.
2. Encourage students to note down any questions or surprising facts as the video progresses. Use these for a brief discussion after the video ends.

Wrap-Up: (10 minutes)

1. Review the worksheet answers with the entire class, ensuring concepts are understood and clarifying any misconceptions.
2. Open the floor for any final questions students might have regarding the president's duties, history, or role in the world.
3. Collect the worksheets to assess understanding and participation.

**Don't have time for the full lesson? Quick Activity (15 minutes)**

Distribute the worksheet and allow students to complete it while they follow along with the video.