



#10084 SO YOU WANT TO BE PRESIDENT?

WESTON WOODS STUDIOS, 2002
Grade Level: 2-6
27 mins.

DESCRIPTION

Which president was the tallest? Heaviest? Oldest? Which ones went to college? Played sports? Were in the military? Which were handsome? Homely? Dishonest? A look at the facts and foibles of the 43 Presidents of the United States. Based on the Caldecott Medal-winning book by Judith St. George. Narrated by Stockard Channing.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Subject Area: Civics—What are the Roles of the Citizen in American Democracy

- Standard: Understands the importance of political leadership, public service, and a knowledgeable citizenry in American constitutional democracy
 - ♦ Benchmark: Knows the major duties, powers, privileges, and limitations of a position of leadership (e.g., class president, mayor, state senator, tribal chairperson, president of the United States); and knows how to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of candidates in terms of the qualifications required for a particular leadership role (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 1 and 2.)

Subject Area: Life Skills—Thinking and Reasoning

- Standard: Effectively uses mental processes that are based on identifying similarities and differences
 - ♦ Benchmark: Compares people in terms of important ethnic, religious, and cultural characteristics (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 3.)

Subject Area: Language Arts—Reading

- Standard: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of literary texts
 - ♦ Benchmark: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand a variety of literary passages and texts (e.g., fairy tales, folktales, fiction, nonfiction,

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myths, poems, fables, fantasies, historical fiction, biographies, autobiographies, chapter books) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 4.)

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To provide information about presidents of the United States.
2. To identify what qualities are important for a U.S. president to have.
3. To illustrate many different ways to classify information.
4. To promote the reading of children's literature.

VOCABULARY

- | | | |
|----------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1. campaign | 7. honest | 13. President |
| 2. country | 8. inaugural ball | 14. ran (for office) |
| 3. Democrat | 9. impeached | 15. Republican |
| 4. election | 10. oath of office | 16. vice president |
| 5. family tree | 11. opponents | 17. vote |
| 6. hero | 12. penny-pinching | |

BEFORE SHOWING

1. Introduce the title of the program. Share reasons for wanting to be president or not wanting to be president.
2. Make a list of presidents, along with any details known about each president. Check the list during the video. Keep this list for an AFTER SHOWING activity.

DURING SHOWING

1. View the video more than once, with one showing uninterrupted.
2. Consider stopping to add information to the chart of presidents from BEFORE SHOWING.

AFTER SHOWING

Discussion Items and Questions

1. Name some of the good things about being president. Name the bad things.
2. What are the most common first names of presidents? How many were named James? How many named John or William?
3. How many presidents were born in a log cabin? Name one.
4. Who was the tallest president? The shortest president? The heaviest president? What did President Taft have specially made for him?
5. What was special about the menu that President Andrew Johnson once served?
6. How old does the constitution say you must be to become president? How old was the youngest president? The oldest president? Who were they?
7. Describe some of the different personalities the presidents have had. What proved that President Andrew Jackson wasn't shy?
8. What does the story say about presidential looks?



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9. How many children did President Harrison have? How many presidents were orphans?
10. Name the presidential pairs who were relatives. Name one more pair that was not in the video.
11. Give examples of a president who spent a lot of money and a president who was a penny-pincher.
12. Describe a funny presidential pet story.
13. List some musical instruments and the presidents who played them.
14. Name some of the presidents and their sports. Describe at least one funny sports story.
15. Describe President Thomas Jefferson's accomplishments.
16. Describe the military history of some of the presidents.
17. Explain different ways that vice presidents became presidents. Name some of them.
18. Name some of the occupations the presidents had.
19. Why is honesty important for a president?
20. What kind of people have not yet been president? (i.e., women, people of color, etc.)
21. Describe some of the presidents' reasons for taking the office.
22. Explain what the words of the oath of office mean.
23. Describe the qualities of the best presidents.
24. Explain what happened in the 2000 election.



Applications and Activities



1. Review the list made in the BEFORE SHOWING activity.
 - a. Add more presidential names, as well as new details about the presidents from the video.
 - b. Identify and discuss the personal qualities that helped people get elected or re-elected, as well as the qualities that distinguish the best presidents.
 - c. Refer to the book *So You Want To Be President?* by Judith St. George for additional support.
2. Create a presidential timeline.
 - a. Work in two groups; one group making the timeline and the other group filling in important events from American history.
 - b. Use the timeline to discuss the kinds of important decisions presidents must make.
3. Draw portraits of favorite presidents. Refer to the book or video for inspiration.
4. Research and report on a president. Present and display the reports or create a Web page for the reports.
5. Play a presidential map game.
 - a. Divide into teams.
 - b. Each team prepares questions about places associated with the presidents.
 - c. Teams take turns asking each other questions.
 - d. To answer the questions, students must find the locations on the map.

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- e. Use a stopwatch or timer to keep the game moving.
6. Write a poem, play, or song about a favorite president. Write from an unusual viewpoint, such as from the view of a presidential pet, a president's child, or a White House employee.
7. Investigate more about the Caldecott Medal. Read other Caldecott Medal books. Compare the illustration styles in various Caldecott medal books.

SUMMARY

What are the good things and bad things about being President of the United States, and what kind of person does the job need? This witty and sometimes irreverent book introduces the Presidency and the men who have filled that office, from George Washington to George W. Bush. The book is not organized chronologically. Instead the Presidents are grouped and compared in original and amusing ways. One page organizes the Presidents by first names, while other pages compare Presidents by physical size, spending habits, previous occupations, leisure pursuits, and marital status. The illustrations, which are in the style of political cartoons, capture both the personal quirks of the Presidents and the colorful style of American political life.



CMP RELATED RESOURCES

- [Five Creatures #10060](#)
- [A Pledge is a Promise #3397](#)
- [The Story of the National Anthem #3413](#)
- [The White House #9439](#)

World Wide Web



The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and "kid safe" sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

- **JUDITH ST. GEORGE**



<http://www.teachervision.fen.com/lesson-plans/lesson-6682.html>

Read a detailed biography of the author of *So You Want to be President?*.

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- **IT'S A DAVID SMALL WORLD—EDUCATOR GUIDE**

<http://www.multcolib.org/kids/exhibit/small/educatorguide.html>

Access biographical information, lesson ideas, related Web sites, quotes, and a list of books by David Small, the Caldecott medal-winning illustrator of *So You Want to be President?*

- **THE PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES**

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents>

Read biographical information about each of the presidents. On the left-hand menu bar under "Presidents & First Ladies," you can choose "Kid Bios" for information written by students.