

# ★ The U. S. Presidents ★

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this lesson is to teach students to identify the faces, names, sequence, and influence of the presidents of the U. S. Each president has had an impact on American history by the decisions they have made in national and foreign policy. Students participate in research and other activities using a set of president cards.

## **Objective**

The student will identify the U. S. Presidents and their qualities by reviewing the events that occurred during their presidencies.

## **Theme - Progress**

Progress occurs over time as people take actions to change events. The U. S. Presidents have had a tremendous impact on the progress of the nation as a result of the decisions they have made.

## **TEKS**

113.2.b.k.2, 3.b.11, 4.b.2.4, 5.b.3.1 History. The student understands how historical figures and ordinary people helped to shape the community, state, and nation.

113.3.b.1.12, 4.b.2.13, .5.b.3.10 Citizenship. The student understands characteristics of good citizenship as exemplified by historic figures and ordinary people.

113.2.b.k.9, 4.b.2.12 Government. The student understands the role of authority figures and public officials.

113.5.b.3.11 Citizenship. The student understands the impact of individual and group decisions on communities in a democratic society.

113.5.b.3.13 Culture. The student understands the role of real...heroes in shaping the cultures of communities, the state, and the nation.

113.6.b.4.18, 7.b.5.19 Citizenship. The student understands the importance of voluntary and individual participation in the democratic process.

113.6.b.4.19, 7.b.5.20 Citizenship. The student understands the importance of effective leadership in a democratic society.

## **Time**

45-60 minutes (varies by activity)

## **Materials**

- ★ President cards
- ★ Art supplies (as needed).
- ★ Research materials/Internet access
- ★ Website - [www.americanheritage.org](http://www.americanheritage.org)

## **Preparation**

- ★ Copy president cards (format may vary by activity).
- ★ Gather art supplies (as needed).
- ★ Gather resources for research activity.

## **Focus**

Prior to the lesson, ask students to talk about the U. S. Presidents with their parents. In class, ask students to name the presidents of the United States that they know. Make a list of the names on the board. Ask students why presidents are important to the history of our nation. Show the students the president cards and fast facts and ask them to review information about the presidents.

## Activity

### President Cards (with or without labels)

1. Give students some or all of the president cards. Have them shuffle the cards and then place them in chronological order.
2. Have the students create a timeline of the presidents by drawing the timeline on art paper and then placing the president cards on the timeline. You might have students add other historical people and events to their timelines.
3. Make two sets of some or all of the cards. Have students play a Memory matching game in groups. Cards are placed face down on the table. Each student takes a turn flipping two cards face up. If the pair matches, the student keeps the cards. If the pair does not match, the cards are turned face down again. When all the pairs have been found, the student with the most pairs wins.
4. Make finger puppets out of presidents' pictures. Draw and cut out the puppet pattern on cardboard and glue on pictures. Have a parade!
5. Have students research material about the presidents from their textbook or other resources. Have individual or groups of students draw from the president cards to see which president he/she will research. (See Links page on [www.americanheritage.org](http://www.americanheritage.org) for additional resources on U. S. Presidents.)

### Presidential Fast Facts

Read passages about the various presidents. Develop research questions for individual or group projects. Use as a History Fair stimulus.

### Presidential Puzzle

Find as many presidents as you can and list them as you go.

### A Real Challenge Puzzle

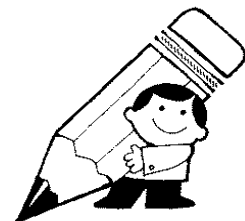
Locate if you can a list of the U. S. Vice-Presidents and then find them in the word puzzle. List them as you go.

## Closure

Repeat the listing activity in the Focus. Point out to students how many more presidents they can now identify.

### Assessment

Students will write a paragraph or essay describing what they think are personal qualities important for the president of the United States.





**George Washington**

First President  
1789-1797



**John Adams**

Second President  
1797-1801



**Thomas Jefferson**

Third President  
1801-1809



**James Madison**

Fourth President  
1809-1817



**James Monroe**

Fifth President  
1817-1825



**John Quincy Adams**

Sixth President  
1825-1829



**Andrew Jackson**

Seventh President  
1829-1837



**Martin Van Buren**

Eighth President  
1837-1841



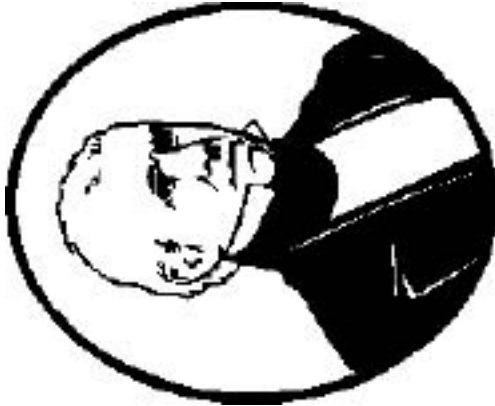
**William Henry Harrison**

Ninth President  
1841



**John Tyler**

Tenth President  
1841-1845



**James K. Polk**

Eleventh President  
1845-1849



**Zachary Taylor**

Twelfth President  
1849-1850



**Millard Fillmore**

Thirteenth President  
1850-1853



**Franklin Pierce**

Fourteenth President  
1853-1857



**James Buchanan**

Fifteenth President  
1857-1861



**Abraham Lincoln**

Sixteenth President  
1861-1865



**Andrew Johnson**

Seventeenth President  
1865-1869



**Ulysses S. Grant**

Eighteenth President  
1869-1877



**Rutherford B. Hayes**

Nineteenth President  
1877-1881



**James A. Garfield**

Twentieth President  
1881



**Chester A. Arthur**

Twenty-First President  
1881-1885



**Grover Cleveland**

Twenty-Second President  
1885-1889



**Benjamin Harrison**

Twenty-Third President  
1889-1893



**Grover Cleveland**

Twenty-Fourth President  
1885-1889



**William McKinley**

Twenty-Fifth President  
1897-1901



**Theodore Roosevelt**

Twenty-Sixth President  
1901-1909



**William Howard Taft**

Twenty-Seventh President  
1909-1913



**Woodrow Wilson**

Twenty-Eighth President  
1913-1921



**Warren G. Harding**

Twenty-Ninth President  
1921-1923



**Calvin Coolidge**

Thirtieth President  
1923-1929



**Herbert Hoover**

Thirty-First President  
1929-1933



**Franklin D. Roosevelt**

Thirty-Second President  
1933-1945



**Harry S. Truman**

Thirty-Third President  
1945-1953



**Dwight D. Eisenhower**

Thirty-Fourth President  
1953-1961



**John F. Kennedy**

Thirty-Fifth President  
1961-1963



**Lyndon B. Johnson**

Thirty-Sixth President  
1963-1969



**Richard M. Nixon**

Thirty-Seventh President  
1969-1974



**Gerald R. Ford**

Thirty-Eighth President  
1974-1977



**James Earl Carter**

Thirty-Ninth President  
1977-1981



**Ronald Reagan**

Fortieth President  
1981-1989



**George Bush**

Forty-First President  
1989-1993



**William Jefferson Clinton**

Forty-Second President  
1993-2001



**George W. Bush**

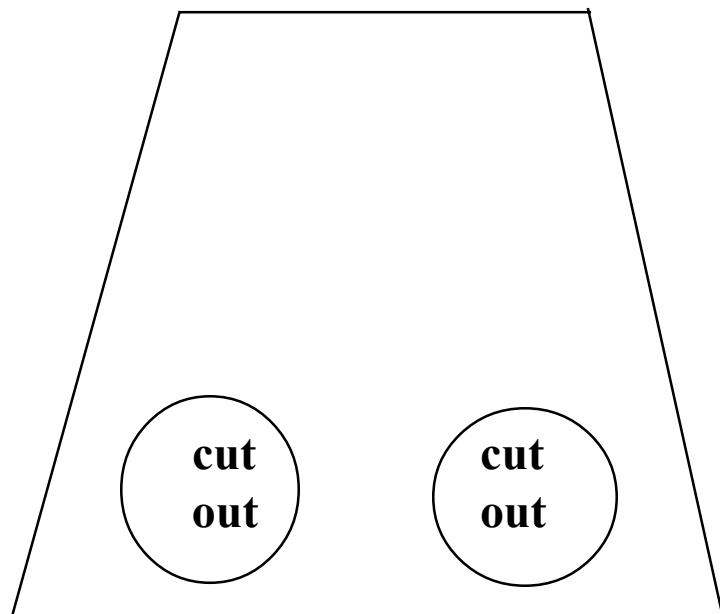
Forty-Third President  
2001-2009

# President Finger Puppets

**Example:**



**PATTERN:**  
Draw and cut out  
on stiff paper or  
cardboard. Glue  
president picture  
cut-out to the top.







# Presidential Fast Facts

*Suggestions for use of Fast Facts: Most of the facts were obtained on-line from the White House.gov database and give students some insights into the background of each President. The questions following the Fast Facts for each President are based on that Presidency and can be used for research projects, debate stimulus, etc.*

## **George Washington**

### **First President**

**1789-1797**

**Fast Facts:** born in Virginia; fought in French and Indian War; was member of Second Continental Congress; Commander in Chief of the Continental Army; prime mover of Constitutional Convention; elected by Electoral College as first President; set pattern for all other Presidents to follow; died of a throat infection.

**Why/how did he set a pattern for all other Presidents?**

## **John Adams**

### **Second President**

**1797-1801**

**Fast Facts:** born in Massachusetts Bay Colony; lawyer; delegate to First and Second Continental Congresses; helped negotiate peace treaty after Revolutionary War; Washington's Vice-President; first to take up residence in the White House; famous quote: "...I pray Heaven to bestow the best of Blessings on the House and all that shall hereafter inhabit it. May none but honest and wise Men ever rule under this roof."

**What House is he Blessing and why?**

## **Thomas Jefferson**

### **Third President**

**1801-1809**

**Fast Facts:** born in Virginia; lawyer but no public speaker; a writer who drafted the Declaration of Independence; believed in states rights over a strong centralized federal government; Vice-President under John Adams; acquired the Louisiana Territory from Napoleon; and died on July 4, 1826.

**Jefferson was multi-talented. What other careers did he pursue?**

## **James Madison**

### **Fourth President**

**1809-1817**

**Fast Facts:** born in Virginia; co-authored Federalist essays; considered "Father of the Constitution;" helped frame the Bill of Rights; asked Congress to declare war on

England (War of 1812); British captured the city of Washington and burnt the White House.

**For what reasons did he ask Congress to declare war on England, which led to the War of 1812?**

**James Monroe**  
**Fifth President**  
**1817-1825**

**Fast Facts:** born in Virginia; fought in Continental Army; lawyer; helped negotiate the Louisiana Purchase; Missouri Compromise; Monroe Doctrine.

- 1. The Monroe Doctrine is about encroachment on the American continents. What does encroachment mean and who specifically was not to be encroached upon?**
- 2. The Missouri Compromise basically determined which states could and could not allow slavery. about slavery. Where was slavery barred and where was it okay?**

**John Quincy Adams**  
**Sixth President**  
**1825-1826**

**Fast Facts:** born in Massachusetts; accomplished linguist and diarist; lawyer; Secretary of State for President Monroe; pushed for a network of highways and canals (our first infrastructures); after Presidency elected to House of Representatives; collapsed on the floor of the House and died two days later.

**Adams was touted as one of the best Secretaries of State ever. What programs was he involved in that helped in the United States?**

**Andrew Jackson**  
**Seventh President**  
**1829-1837**

**Fast Facts:** born in the Carolinas; sporadic education; lawyer; during War of 1812 he was the commander who defeated the British at the Battle of New Orleans; nicknamed “Old Hickory;” also called King Andrew I.

**Why was he called “Old Hickory?”**

**Martin Van Buren**  
**Eighth President**  
**1837-1841**

**Fast Facts:** born in New York; lawyer; Secretary of State under Andrew Jackson; nicknamed “Little Magician.”

**Why was he called “Little Magician?”**

## **William Henry Harrison**

### **Ninth President**

**1841**

**Fast Facts:** born in Virginia; studied classics, history and medicine; joined the Regular Army; frontier Indian fighter; Governor of the Indian Territory; won laurels in War of 1812; caught a cold one month after taking office and died; first President to die in office.

**William Henry Harrison’s job as a Governor in the Indian Territory was to obtain Indian lands for pioneer settlement. In the light of today’s situations on various Indian Reservations was this the right thing to do? Why or why not?**

## **John Tyler**

### **Tenth President**

**1841-1845**

**Fast Facts:** born in Virginia; lawyer; nicknamed by his detractors “His Accidency;” first Vice-President to be elevated to the office of President; had first impeachment resolution introduced in U. S. House of Representatives because he was accused of misusing veto power; “Log Cabin” bill, Texas annexed; helped create the Confederacy and was a Confederate Representative when he died.

**Was John Tyler impeached and removed from the United States Presidency? Why or why not?**

## **James K. Polk**

### **Eleventh President**

**1845-1849**

**Fast Facts:** born in North Carolina; lawyer; extended Canadian boundary along 49<sup>th</sup> parallel; Mexico ceded New Mexico and California for \$15,000,000; considered the first “dark horse” Presidential candidate; died as a result of too much hard work immediately after leaving office.

**What is meant by a “dark horse” Presidential candidate?**

## **Zachary Taylor**

### **Twelfth President**

**1849-1850**

**Fast Facts:** born in Virginia; first career soldier to attain the Presidency; a strong nationalist even though he had a home in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and a plantation in Mississippi; nicknamed “Old Rough and Ready;” told Southerners that if they tried to secede from the Union he would personally lead the Army against them; got sick during a ceremony at the Washington Monument and died five days later; second President to die in office; his only son Richard served as a general in the Confederate Army.

**Zachary Taylor had strong national feelings. What are national feelings?**

**Millard Fillmore**  
**Thirteenth President**  
**1850-1853**

**Fast Facts:** born in New York; worked on father's farm and at 15 was apprenticed to a cloth dresser; attended a one-room school; married one of his teachers; lawyer; was Vice- President but when President Taylor died, became President; his legislative compromises postponed the Civil War; never supported President Lincoln during the war but did support President Johnson during Reconstruction.

**The Fugitive Slave Act was part of Fillmore's Compromises which were pro-South. What provisions did that act contain?**

**Franklin Pierce**  
**Fourteenth President**  
**1853-1857**

**Fast Facts:** born in New Hampshire; lawyer; served in Mexican War; his 11-year-old son was killed in a train wreck two months after he took office; Kansas-Nebraska Act repealed Missouri Compromise which caused "bleeding Kansas" and Pierce to not be elected again; purchased southern Arizona and part of southern New Mexico for \$10,000,000.

**How could a President use \$10,000,000 of our tax money and purchase land on behalf of the United States?**

**James Buchanan**  
**Fifteenth President**  
**1857-1861**

**Fast Facts:** born in Pennsylvania; lawyer; hoped for a compromise between the North and the South but developed a policy of inactivity because of earlier conflicts.

**During his Presidency the Dred Scott decision was made in the Supreme Court which led directly to the Civil War. What was that decision?**

**Abraham Lincoln**  
**Sixteenth President**  
**1861-1865**

**Fast Facts:** born in Kentucky to frontier folks; self-taught; store keeper in Illinois; captain in the Black Hawk War; lawyer; had four sons, only one of which lived to maturity; great debator which won him the chance to run for Presidency; Emancipation Proclamation; he is the most often quoted President; Civil War; assassinated at Ford's Theatre in Washington on Good Friday.

**Lincoln was a self-taught man, yet quotes by him such as "...and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth" are often being used on monuments and in political speeches today in the United States and foreign countries. Why?**

**Andrew Johnson**  
**Seventeenth President**  
**1865-1869**

**Fast Facts:** born in North Carolina, apprenticed to a tailor as a boy but ran away; opened his own tailor shop in Tennessee; Lincoln's Vice-President; led Reconstruction efforts; impeached for supposedly violating the Tenure of Office Act by firing his Secretary of War; acquitted on terms of impeachment by one vote; after leaving office, Tennessee returned him to U.S. Senate but he died only a few months later.

**What were some of the procedures President Johnson put into effect to reconstruct the South after its surrender?**

**Ulysses S. Grant**  
**Eighteenth President**  
**1869-1877**

**Fast Facts:** born in Ohio; educated at the Military Academy at West Point; fought in Mexican War; was working in his father's leather store when Civil War began; appointed by Governor of Illinois to command an army of volunteers; very successful with volunteer army; his winning came to the attention of Lincoln who made him General-in-Chief of the Union Army; oversaw the South's Reconstruction with military force; bankrupt when he died of throat cancer.

**As General-in-Chief of the Union Army, Grant wrote out the terms of surrender. He did not allow for treason trials. What could have happened if he had allowed treason trials?**

**Rutherford B. Hayes**  
**Nineteenth President**  
**1877-1881**

**Fast Facts:** born in Ohio; lawyer; fought and wounded in Civil War; Mark Twain campaigned for him; his election decided by Electoral Commission; won election by one vote; announced in advance he would only serve one term; retired and died 12 years later.

**Why do we have the Electoral College election right after the popular vote election for our Presidency?**

**James A. Garfield**  
**Twentieth President**  
**1881**

**Fast Facts:** born in Ohio; last of log cabin Presidents; drove canal boat teams to earn education money; classics professor; University President; Civil War soldier; shot by embittered lawyer who had tried for a job with Garfield's administration; lay in White House for many weeks dying from infection and internal hemorrhage.

**How did Alexander Graham Bell get involved in the President's shooting?**

**Chester A. Arthur**  
**Twenty-First President**  
**1881-1885**

**Fast Facts:** born in Vermont to a Baptist preacher father; Union College; taught school; lawyer; Vice-President; enacted first general Federal immigration law.

**Whom did this immigration law exclude from coming to the United States? Why?**

**Grover Cleveland**  
**Twenty-Second President**  
**1885-1889**

**Twenty-Fourth President**  
**1893-1897**

**Fast Facts:** born in New Jersey; lawyer; only President married in the White House; first to have a child born in the White House; Interstate Commerce Act which regulated railroads.

**When railroad workers in Chicago carried out a strike, Cleveland sent in Federal troops. Why would a President interfere with private businesses and their workers?**

**Benjamin Harrison**  
**Twenty-Third President**  
**1889-1893**

**Fast Facts:** born in Ohio; lawyer; soldier; first Pan American Congress; tried to annex Hawaii; first time Congress appropriated a billion dollars for internal improvements, not war; Sherman Anti-Trust Act; was grandson of a President.

**He probably was the only President to be in office when a surplus of money existed in the National Treasury. He had to get rid of it. Today, we could find many ways to reduce a surplus. How did he reduce the surplus?**

**William McKinley**  
**Twenty-Fifth President**  
**1897-1901**

**Fast Facts:** born in Ohio, taught in a country school; soldier in Civil War; in Spanish American War gained United States' first overseas possessions (Philippines, Guam, and Puerto Rico); shot by an anarchist and died 8 days later.

**We have owned Puerto Rico since 1898, but it has never become a state although its citizens have all the rights of Americans. What should be done about this situation? What do the majority of Puerto Rican citizens want?**

**Theodore Roosevelt**  
**Twenty-Sixth President**

## **1901-1909**

**Fast Facts:** born in New York City; when McKinley died became youngest President in the nation's history; his first wife and mother died on the same day; soldier in Spanish American War; began construction of the Panama Canal; established huge amounts of public use forests and lands; shot in the chest but recovered.

**The stuffed “teddy bear” was named after Theodore Roosevelt. What in his character or history made that recognition appropriate?**

### **William Howard Taft**

**Twenty-Seventh President**

**1909-1913**

**Fast Facts:** born in Ohio; lawyer who became a Federal circuit judge; gave first cars to White House stables; weighed over 300 lbs.; Federal income tax amendment sent to the states; postal system established; Interstate Commerce Commission; only President to become Chief Justice of the United States.

**What are the qualifications for Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court? Who has to approve the nominee?**

### **Woodrow Wilson**

**Twenty-Eighth President**

**1913-1921**

**Fast Facts:** born in Virginia; lawyer; Professor of Political Science; University President; WWI (against Germany); graduated Federal income tax; Federal Reserve Act; kept sheep on White House lawn to raise money for Red Cross during the war; tried in vain for League of Nations (United Nations Org.).

**Wilson thought that international leadership by a League of Nations would keep peace in the world. What is the job of the United Nations today?**

### **Warren G. Harding**

**Twenty-Ninth President**

**1921-1923**

**Fast Facts:** born in Ohio; publisher of a newspaper; first to carry 60% of the **popular** vote; his friends caused scandals from enriching their pockets; died in office of a heart attack.

**President Harding once said, “My...friends...they’re the ones that keep me walking the floors nights!” He had appointed some of his friends to high government offices. Now, those friends were lining their pockets with riches while in office. How could he have stopped these events?**

### **Calvin Coolidge**

**Thirtieth President**

**1923-1929**

**Fast Facts:** born in Vermont; lawyer; a man of very few words; his father administered oath of office by kerosene lamp in Vermont; believed in frugality in government; very inactive President; Great Depression hit at the end of his term.

**What is frugality?**

**Herbert Hoover**

**Thirty-First President**

**1929-1933**

**Fast Facts:** born in Iowa; son of a Quaker blacksmith; mining engineer; humanitarian; worked in China; vigorously worked to stop the Great Depression but was thought of as callous and cruel; Truman and Eisenhower used his economic knowledge in their administration.

**Hoover said that caring for hungry and homeless people during the Depression was a local and voluntary responsibility. Is that callous and cruel? Why or why not?**

**Franklin D. Roosevelt**

**Thirty-Second President**

**1933-1945**

**Fast Facts:** born in New York; lawyer; crippled with polio; fifth cousin to Theodore Roosevelt; led the nation through the Great Depression and World War II; his program was called the “New Deal” which included Social Security, heavier taxes on the wealthy, new controls over banks and public utilities and relief programs; spent four terms in office; died of cerebral hemorrhage near the close of the war.

**Why could FDR stay President for 12 years?**

**Harry S. Truman**

**Thirty-Third President**

**1945-1953**

**Fast Facts:** born in Missouri; Army Captain WWI; owned and ran a haberdashery; had very little knowledge of our war plans, but when FDR died suddenly Truman had to make crucial decisions; United Nations chartered; Fair Deal programs; Truman Doctrine; Marshall Plan; NATO; Korean Conflict.

**What decisions did Truman make to end the war with Japan? Did he have any choices?**

**Dwight D. Eisenhower**

**Thirty-Fourth President**

**1953-1961**

**Fast Facts:** born in Texas; graduated from West Point; career Army officer; Supreme Allied Commander in Europe; Commander of NATO; persuaded to run for President; slogan “I like Ike.”; signed truce with Korea; Cold War with Russia; sent troops to

Little Rock for desegregation compliance.

**Ike said we needed to maintain an adequate military strength, and if we didn't, we would be in danger for our way of life. What does this statement mean? Is it true?**

### **John F. Kennedy**

#### **Thirty-Fifth President**

**1961-1963**

**Fast Facts:** born in Massachusetts; lawyer; ensign on PT Boat in WWII; won Pulitzer Prize in history; youngest man elected President; Peace Corps; Cuban Missile Crisis; shot and killed 1000 days into his administration.

**“Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country.” This is often quoted from Kennedy’s Inaugural Address. What do you think it means to you as a citizen of the United States?**

### **Lyndon B. Johnson**

#### **Thirty-Sixth President**

**1963-1969**

**Fast Facts:** born in Texas; teacher; youngest Minority Leader in Senate history; also Majority Leader; Vice-President under Kennedy; when he became President, obtained passage of the most extensive legislative programs in the nation’s history – civil rights bill, Medicare, urban renewal beautification, and removal of obstacles to the right to vote; champion of the space race; fighting in Vietnam increased.

**Johnson told the astronauts that orbited the moon, “You’ve taken...all of us, all over the world, into a new era...” What is contained in this “new era?”**

### **Richard M. Nixon**

#### **Thirty-Seventh President**

**1969-1974**

**Fast Facts:** born in California; lawyer; in the Navy during WWII; Vice-President under Eisenhower; ended Americans fighting in Vietnam; improved relations with Russia and China; ended the draft; American astronauts landed on the moon; Watergate scandal led to his resignation instead of being impeached; appointed his successor as a result of his resignation.

**What was the military draft?**

### **Gerald R. Ford**

#### **Thirty-Eighth President**

**1974-1977**

**Fast Facts:** born in Nebraska; lawyer; male model; football coach; served in Navy in WWII; first Vice-President chosen to become President under the terms of the 25<sup>th</sup> Amendment; pardoned Nixon; appointed his Vice-President.

**What does the 25<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution allow a President to do?**

**Jimmy Carter**

**Thirty-Ninth President**

**1977-1981**

**Fast Facts:** born in Georgia, real name is James Earl Carter, Jr.; Naval officer designing submarines; conservationist; created Department of Education; Camp David agreement between Egypt and Israel; SALT II nuclear limitation treaty with Russia. **President Carter was not re-elected due to several national issues. What were three of them?**

**Ronald Reagan**

**Fortieth President**

**1981-1989**

**Fast Facts:** born in Illinois; radio sports announcer; Hollywood movie actor; President of Screen Actors Guild; Governor of California; 69 days after taking office was shot by a lunatic, but he recovered; very popular due to his curbing of inflation and overhauling of income tax; strong defense influential in the ending of the Cold War **His motto was “peace through strength.” How does one increase our strength?**

**George H. W. Bush**

**Forty-First President**

**1989-1993**

**Fast Facts:** born in Massachusetts; youngest pilot in the Navy in WWII; shot down several times in the Pacific; after war graduated from Yale; oil business in West Texas; Vice-President under Reagan; end of Cold War; Berlin Wall fell; Soviet Union fell; overthrew government of Panama; Desert Storm.

**Bush called for American citizens to develop “a thousand points of light” to recognize charitable efforts/contributions of individuals and organizations. Why?**

**William J. Clinton**

**Forty-Second President**

**1993-2001**

**Fast Facts:** born in Arkansas; lawyer; signed the Brady Bill; Family and Medical Leave Act; revitalized the economy; impeached on influence peddling by the House of Representatives but not supported by the Senate; intern scandal; military involvement in many NATO actions

**What is the name he was given at birth and why was it changed?**

**George W. Bush**

**Forty-Third President**

## **2001-2009**

**Fast Facts:** born in Texas; son of former President George H. W. Bush; oil business; support of faith-based and community groups; believes that government should be involved but not overbearing; 9/11; terrorist attacks; sent out forces to fight terrorism; war in Iraq; revitalized the economy

**How have international issues changed?**