

Impeachment Summary

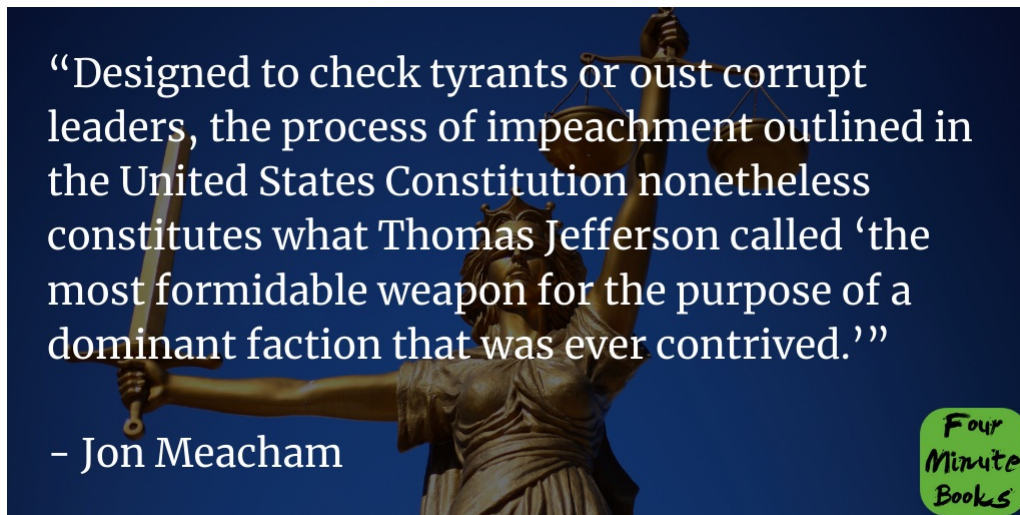


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1-Sentence-Summary: *Impeachment* is your guide to understanding how the US government has the power to remove a president and reviews the events surrounding past evictions of the commander-in-chief.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



Are you fed up with politics? If you're like me, avoiding the news and all mentions of Donald Trump has become the norm. It's a contentious atmosphere that's difficult to understand at times. Especially when it comes to removing the president.

But the recent impeachment of the 45th President of the United States isn't the first. There have been three other presidents who found themselves facing the chop: Andrew Johnson, Richard Nixon, and Bill Clinton. What happened in each of these cases? And where did the ability to oust a corrupt leader begin?

This is what you'll discover in Jon Meacham's *Impeachment: An American History*. Although hard, this process is necessary and its origins and history are interesting as you're about to find out.

Here are the 3 most helpful lessons about this power of the government:

1. When the framers of the US constitution wrote the articles of impeachment, they had to make them vague to a leader being ousted because of dislike alone.
2. A leader being unbearable does not justify their removal from office, they must commit a crime.

3. The process of removing a US president stems from a terribly partisan system, but bipartisanship can make it possible to get through it.

Lesson 1: Making laws regarding the ejection of a president was difficult, and the framers had to make them intentionally vague.

The founding fathers understood that having a president was necessary, but weren't going to allow any shenanigans with adverse effects. Would it be possible to write constitutional laws that could allow for the removal of corrupt leaders in the future?

This is part of what made the process so difficult. The wording had to be precise enough that Congresses in the future could throw out an unethical leader. But it also had to be adaptable with changing times. This is why the phrase "high crimes and misdemeanors" fits perfectly.

One of the most well-known parts of the constitution, this wording is perfect for the Framers' requirements. It's ambiguous and severe enough to allow impeachment but not on the grounds of mere stupidity. A president must show malicious intentions to be thrown out of office.

It's so vague, in fact, that today constitutional scholars still argue about its meaning. And although it may seem simple enough, the fact that a president need not commit a crime to be impeached might be confusing. **The successful ejection of a president also requires that articles of impeachment get through both the House and the Senate.**

All of this complication was intentional to ensure that tossing a corrupt president wouldn't be taken lightly. It's a serious matter when a leader who was elected by the voice of the people must be evicted.

Lesson 2: We can't throw out a commander-in-chief because people don't like them.

Let's look at just two of the cases of impeachment-Andrew Johnson and Richard Nixon. Each one clearly shows different sides of how this process can go well and how it can be a sham.

In the case of Johnson, the US government made the decision to try to oust him just because he was irritating, volatile, and racist, not for breaking the law. He vetoed multiple bills designed to help slaves, and even opposed the 14th Amendment. The House was so mad that they made three attempts to impeach him on questionable grounds.

The articles of impeachment for Johnson's case were rather petty in many ways. They make mention of mean jokes he made about Congress and accused him of involvement in the

assassination of Lincoln. **One congressman even said they should banish him to outer space.** In the end, he was acquitted when the Senate just couldn't take the claims seriously.

After that, government officials didn't have much faith in impeachment, until Richard Nixon came along. His obvious crimes involved breaking into Watergate, planting listening devices, ordering the CIA to lie to the FBI, firing White House investigators, and others.

When it came time to look into Nixon's case, even more than half of the people saw the gravity of his crimes and wanted him out. Before impeachment could happen, however, Nixon preemptively resigned.

It showed the government and the people how important these laws were. These events even helped with the creation of the House Judiciary Committee and other important ways to ensure checks and balances.

Lesson 3: Only government leaders who are bipartisan can lead us through the muck of impeachment that stems from an awfully partisan system.

Asking any 6-year-old how to solve a problem in a group and they'll tell you to work together. If only the leaders in Washington could figure this out. The sad truth is that the system is wildly polarized because of partisanship.

Winning in government these days requires setting your side up as righteous and the other as wrong and dangerous. This makes working together unappealing and is what has made each impeachment crisis so tough on democracy in the US.

Nixon's Watergate scandal, for example, permanently made the public more distrustful of the presidential office. Today, more than half of people say they don't trust their president to do the right thing, and it's been that way since Nixon's resignation.

Partisanship causes crises like these, but thankfully we've got the Senate and other measures to deliver democracy from peril. In past cases of impeachment, these leaders have put their own supporter's interests aside to prioritize the constitution. **In the case of Johnson's impeachment, for example, seven senators stood opposite of their parties line to safeguard the balance of powers.** This virtuous decision was fatal to their careers, however, as not one was elected to office again.

Impeachment is a scary, difficult, and confusing process that can threaten democracy. But with the bipartisan actions of the Senate, we can be certain that future impeachment cases will go smoothly.

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Impeachment Review

What an interesting and timely message! To be honest, I'm a little lost on politics and history, but *Impeachment* simplified at least this one small part of it all. This is a great book to help you improve your knowledge about this important political process!

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Who would I recommend the *Impeachment* summary to?

The 29-year-old who doesn't understand much about what impeachment is or how it works, the 45-year-old news reporter who feels like they know a lot about Trump and the events of his presidency, and anyone who wants to gain awareness about the events of 2020.