

All In a Day's Work

Name: _____

The President's Rule Book

The President of the United States is the leader of our nation and the leader of the executive branch of government. The Constitution of the United States gives all the rules for being president. It tells who can become president, what powers the president has, and some of the roles and duties the president takes on.

Read it for yourself:



Donald Trump is the current president of the United States. He was elected in November 2016 and took office on January 20, 2017.

from Article II of the United States Constitution

Section 1

The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America. . . .

Before he enter on the Execution of his Office, he shall take the following Oath or Affirmation:--"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."

Section 2

The President shall be Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of the several States, when called into the actual Service of the United States; he may require the Opinion, in writing, of the principal Officer in each of the executive Departments, upon any Subject relating to the Duties of their respective Offices, and he shall have Power to grant Reprieves and Pardons for Offences against the United States, except in Cases of Impeachment.

He shall have Power, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, to make Treaties, provided two thirds of the Senators present concur; and he shall nominate, and by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, shall appoint Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls, Judges of the supreme Court, and all other Officers of the United States . . .

Section 3

He shall from time to time give to the Congress Information of the State of the Union, and recommend to their Consideration such Measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient; . . . he shall receive Ambassadors and other public Ministers; he shall take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed, and shall Commission all the Officers of the United States.

from Article 1, Section 7

Every Bill which shall have passed the House of Representatives and the Senate, shall, before it become a Law, be presented to the President of the United States: If he approve he shall sign it, but if not he shall return it. . .

Lawmaking and the Prez

One of the President's most important functions is not in Article II—it's in Article I, which talks about Congress! (The Constitution can be sneaky that way.)

Congress is the lawmaking branch of government, but the Constitution requires the president's approval before a bill can actually become a law. The president either signs the bill to approve it or rejects the bill with a **veto** and sends it back to Congress.

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Second In Command

The Constitution of the United States gives the president a helper: the vice president. However, the Constitution doesn't say much about what the vice president does, except that the VP is also the president of the Senate (one of the two lawmaking chambers in Congress). But the VP only presides over the Senate to cast a tiebreaking vote or when there is a ceremony. The rest of the time, the vice president advises the president, travels the world negotiating with other countries, helps carry out laws here at home, and is important to many functions in the executive branch of government.

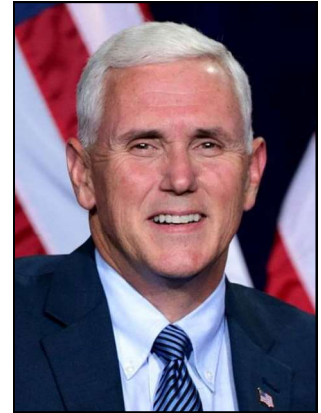
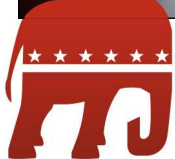


Photo credit: Gage Skidmore

Mike Pence is the current vice president of the United States.



Trump and Pence belong to the Republican Party.

Political Party Leaders

The president and vice president act as the leaders of their political party. This role is not part of the Constitution, but has evolved over time as part of the political process. A political party is an organized group of people who share similar views and work to influence the government in support of those views. As party leaders, the president and vice president work to accomplish the party's goals for how the government should address the issues facing our nation. The Republican and Democratic parties are the two major political parties in the U.S.

Becoming President

In the United States, presidential elections happen every four years. A president cannot serve more than two 4-year terms—a total of eight years. This rule is found in the 22nd Amendment to the Constitution, which was added in 1951. If a president has only served one term and wants to be re-elected, that president ends up spending a lot of time campaigning during the last year of the term. If the president has already served a second term, often the vice president will decide to become a presidential candidate. Many presidents started out as the vice president.



Before the 2-term limit, President Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected to four terms in a row! He took office in 1933 and died in 1945, a few months into his fourth term.

Presidential Line of Succession

1. Vice President of the U.S.
 2. Speaker of the House
 3. President pro tempore of the Senate
 4. Secretary of State
 5. Secretary of the Treasury
 6. Secretary of Defense
 7. Attorney General
- (list continues with 10 more members of the president's cabinet)

What If the President Dies?

There have been several times in the history of the United States where a president has died. When that happens, the Constitution provides that the vice president becomes president. It also gives Congress the power to make a law saying who becomes president if something happened to both the president and the vice president. Congress did this in the Presidential Succession Act, which puts the speaker of the House (the leader of the House of Representatives) next in line after the vice president and lists everyone who is in line after that.