

The President's Cabinet

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Who Composes the Cabinet?

George Washington's Cabinet was composed of four individuals. Today the Cabinet is composed of Vice President Joseph Biden and the heads of 15 executive departments. Article II, Section 2 of the Constitution gives the Senate responsibility for considering and confirming the president's executive nominations which include the Cabinet members. The confirmed officials remain in office until they resign or the president's term of office ends.

1. Name the individual who currently holds each position. If the person who held the post in the first Obama administration has resigned, who replaces that office holder?

Secretary of Agriculture
Secretary of Commerce
Secretary of Defense
Secretary of Education
Secretary of Energy
Secretary of Health and Human Services
Secretary of Homeland Security
Secretary of Housing and Urban Development
Secretary of the Interior
Secretary of Labor
Secretary of State
Secretary of Transportation
Secretary of the Treasury
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
Attorney General

2. Which Cabinet posts have existed since the George Washington administration?
3. Who follows the vice president in order of succession to the presidency?
4. Seven additional offices hold Cabinet-rank status. Name one of them and tell what that person does.
5. If you could create another Cabinet position and department, what would it be? Explain why this would be a beneficial addition.

Meet the Cabinet

Cabinet members advise the president and take the lead in areas covered by their respective departments. Reliable sites for information about each include <http://www.whitehouse.gov> and each department's website.

If the secretary of the department has resigned, after Senate confirmation place the picture and name of the individual in the correct frame.

Homeland Security
Janet Napolitano



State
John Kerry



Veteran Affairs
Eric Shinseki



Treasury
Timothy Geithner



President
Barack Obama



Vice President
Joe Biden



Education
Arne Duncan



Defense
Leon Panetta



Energy
Steven Chu



Attorney General
Eric H. Holder, Jr.



Transportation
Ray LaHood



Interior
Kenneth Salazar



Housing and Urban Development
Shaun Donovan



Agriculture
Thomas Vilsack



Health and Human Services
Kathleen Sebelius



Labor
Hilda Solis



Commerce
Rebecca Blank, acting secretary



I'm President. What's Happening?

In Article II, Section 2, the United States Constitution established the role of a Cabinet in the Executive Branch. Each member of the President's Cabinet is expected to give reports about the areas of responsibility under his or her supervision.

You are one of the 15 heads of executive departments in the President's Cabinet:

Attorney General
Secretary of Agriculture
Secretary of Commerce
Secretary of Defense
Secretary of Education
Secretary of Energy

Secretary of Health
and Human Services
Secretary of Homeland Security
Secretary of Housing
and Urban Development
Secretary of the Interior

Secretary of Labor
Secretary of State
Secretary of Transportation
Secretary of the Treasury
Secretary of Veterans Affairs

 You are to give a report to the president of recent events held, meetings attended and actions taken by you and your department. Use e-Replica editions of *The Washington Post* to compile a list of what has been done in the last week.

TIP: When using the e-Replica search, you have to put a phrase like "Energy Department" or "John Kerry" in parentheses, and then select for "This Week" under Search.



A Word About Culture

Picture a bucolic scene. As the sun rises, a farmer and his horse move across a field. A plow is pulled, tilling the earth, turning the rich soil. **Imagine** light escaping from the doors of an opera house as well-dressed patrons stream into the sedate night.

Although these two activities appear to be unrelated, they share the same concept and etymology. They both illustrate culture and cultivation.

The earliest definition of “culture” was to till the land. Its root is the Latin word *cultura*, meaning “cultivated land,” “till” and “place tilled.” This kind of society is based on agriculture. In an agrarian society, turning the soil, tending the land and preparing to plant another crop is essential to life.

Even “bucolic” shares these ideas and a root word — the Greek word *boukolikos* was formed by combining the Greek word for cow, *bous*, with the word for tending, *kолос*, which is related to the Latin *coloere* which means to “till” the ground, “cultivate” or “dwell.”



If you are planting, tending and harvesting, you no longer live a nomadic life. This lifestyle

eventually leads to forming a community with shared lifestyle.

Shared experience and education form a culture. In what ways are farm town inhabitants likely to differ from city residents? Do they reflect different perspectives, political values and behaviour?



Today when we talk about being “cultured,” we usually think of art, music and dance. People who are cultured enjoy the arts, hone their manners and pursue scholarship.

Just as soil and plant life are carefully tended, the mind, tastes and manners are carefully trained. A cultivated person results. This definition of “culture” was first used in the early 1800s. By 1867, this idea was expanded to mean the “collective customs and achievements of a people.”



Scientists prepare cultures in petri dishes with agar and nutrients.

Likewise, areas of a country, groups and institutions incubate or develop their own culture. Inhabitants share attitudes or mindsets, traits and goals.

Culture covers different ways of life, politics and religions. It is composed of languages, beliefs and attitudes, rituals and ceremonies, and values.

1. Think about these terms. What traits, customs, vocabulary and values define its culture?

- Brazilian culture
- Corporate culture
- Football culture
- French culture
- Popular culture
- Southern culture

2. Describe a culture of which you are a part.

American Cultural Ambassadors

Culture is an “umbrella” word that covers many areas. Culture can be art, music and dance. Culture can be customs, attitudes and manners. Culture can include motorcycles, computers and baseballs. Culture can be learned and trained or be acquired by living in a community. Culture applies to a small group, profession or a country.

Each of the U.S. departments has educational or cultural duties and programs. Members of the president’s Cabinet and their staffs share aspects of their areas of responsibility and American culture with citizens of the U.S. and other countries.

Traditionally American cultural ambassadors have been musicians and dance companies traveling to perform [<http://exchanges.state.gov/us/program/arts-envoy>] and talk about America. In Fall 2010, the Obama administration expanded cultural diplomacy to include

visual artists through programs such as smARTpower [<http://exchanges.state.gov/us/program/smarterpower>], Center Stage [<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/09/198036.htm>] and Museums Connect [<http://exchanges.state.gov/us/program/museums-connect>].

Secretaries of the different departments in the president’s Cabinet oversee a number of different cultural and educational programs. Examples of some of these are: The U.S. Department of Education and President’s Committee’s Turnaround Arts Initiative [<http://www.pcah.gov/turnaround-arts-creating-success-schools-0>] which includes art in D.C. schools [http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2012-12-09/local/35721906_1_arts-integration-program-arts-in-public-education-yo-yo-ma]; Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs [<http://exchanges.state.gov/>] at the Department of State; and Trade and Scientific Exchange Programs at the U.S. Department of Agriculture [<http://www.fas.usda.gov/icd/rsed/res-scient-exchanges.asp>].

Policies govern the exchanges, such as those of the Department of the Interior [<http://www.doi.gov/intl/Legal-Authorities.cfm>].

Some formal meetings influence diverse aspects of culture. An example of this type of department duty is the 22nd U.S.-China Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade [<http://www.commerce.gov/news/fact-sheets/2011/11/21/22nd-us-china-joint-commission-commerce-and-trade-fact-sheet>]. Notice that the U.S. Commerce Secretary, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture and U.S. Trade Representative as well as representatives from

the Departments of State and Treasury and the U.S. Ambassador to China attended.

The first lady is the honorary chair of the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities [<http://www.pcah.gov/>]. Its projects include international cultural exchange and cooperation activities. The Smithsonian Institution and the PCAH are collaborating to train Haitians to conserve cultural works damaged in the earthquake, for example.

There are also independent programs that are registered with the U.S. Department of State. You could go to New Zealand for horticultural training [<http://www.caep.org/international-training-program/new-zealand-training-programs/horticulture-training-programs-new-zealand/>], teach in a global classroom [<http://www.irex.org/project/teachers-global-classrooms-program-tcg>], or play sports diplomacy [<http://exchanges.state.gov/non-us/program/sports-visitor-program>].



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Plan a Cultural Exchange

For decades teachers and students have gone on exchanges. A teacher will trade classrooms for a year with a teacher in another country. A student will live with an Italian family for six to nine months while the Italian student lives with her family. Other examples of immersion in another culture are visits by world languages students and their teacher for a short period, followed by a visit of their host school's students and teacher. They live with students' families, practice the language studied, and visit places in a community as well as some tourist destinations.

We want you to design a cultural exchange.

What aspect of American culture do you think should be shared with students in another country or part of the world?

Would you want to share a part of American history? Or would you prefer to showcase contemporary America? Is there a concept from settlement to now, that covers several aspects of culture, you would want to present? Below are some ideas to consider.

- Are there aspects of American lifestyle that are misunderstood?
- Are you involved in an after-school club, sport or activity that has its own culture that you think would be fun to share?
- People talk about Southern culture or New England ways. Does the part of the United States in which you live have a culture?
- What aspects of our cultural history are still practiced? For example, what aspects of Native American culture are maintained? Are you a child of Irish, German or Italian immigrants? Do you still observe customs of that culture?



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Sports Envoys are athletes and coaches who travel overseas to lead programs that were developed by U.S. embassies and consulates.

When you have decided on the theme or main idea of your display of culture, you are ready for the next step.

What format will best present your ideas?

Think about these possibilities:

- Will your proposal include performers, photographs or poetry?
- Do you consider music, art and dance to be the best ambassadors of culture?
- Do you prefer foods, dress, customs associated with special observances or holidays?
- If you think an aspect of your culture is misunderstood, how will you explain it?
- Will you include important documents or the words of everyday citizens?
- Will your display travel from city to city or be a permanent installation?
- Will your project be interactive? What role will technology play?
- Is your cultural display meant for a particular country or part of the world?

What do you think would be a super cultural project?