

Name _____ Date _____

Presidents' Day

"We Salute You, Commanders in Chief"

Learn more about this topic! Each section gives more detail on one of the lyrics from the song. Read each section, and then respond by answering the question or taking notes on key ideas.

1. Presidents' Day is an annual federal holiday in the United States. Federal holidays are legal holidays. They are considered official by the government. Presidents' Day is celebrated nationally by the whole country. Many people get the day off from work and school. It's celebrated every year on the third Monday in February. It's always on a Monday so that people can enjoy a three-day weekend. Starting in 1885, the holiday celebrated the birthday of America's first president, George Washington. Later, the 16th president, Abraham Lincoln, was also celebrated because of his February birthday. Though the holiday is still called "Washington's Birthday" by the government, now Presidents' Day is seen as a day to celebrate all US presidents.

Notes

2. The job of the POTUS, or President of the United States, is a big responsibility. The president is the leader of the American government and military. He suggests laws that he thinks the country needs. He also appoints, or chooses, people to help run the government. These people include judges and leaders of government departments. The president is also commander in chief of the country's military. That means the president is in charge of all armed forces. So he's responsible for the actions of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and Coast Guard.

Notes

A president's term is four-years long. No president is allowed to serve more than two terms. And not just anyone can run for president. The president has to be a natural born US citizen. That means the president has to have been born in the United States. The president also has to be at least 35 years old and have lived in the US as a resident for at least 14 years.

3. George Washington was the very first president of the US. He was a hero during the Revolutionary War, when the American colonies fought for independence from Britain. As a Founding Father, Washington worked to build a new nation, free from English rule. He signed the US Constitution in 1787. This important document helped set up the laws of the brand new US government. Washington served as president from 1789 to 1797. His strong leadership makes him one of the most respected US presidents. Both Washington state and our nation's capital, Washington, DC, are named after him. And his image is on the quarter and one dollar bill.

Notes

4. Abraham Lincoln was the 16th president of the US. He's often called "Honest Abe" because he was known to be very truthful. He was president from 1861 to 1865. Lincoln led the country during one of the worst wars in America's history, the Civil War. During this war, the nation was split with the North and South fighting each other. Lincoln led the northern Union forces to win the war. Lincoln ordered the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, freeing slaves in the southern states and therefore helping to abolish slavery. Lincoln is considered one of America's greatest leaders. His image is on the penny and five dollar bill.

Notes

5. Theodore Roosevelt was the 26th president of the US. He served as vice president to President McKinley. Then, he became president and served from 1901 to 1909. He said, "Speak softly, and carry a big stick." He thought that, as president, he should be gentle and easy going, but still show strength and force when he had to. Roosevelt was known for helping workers and small business owners. He supported women in their fight for the right to vote. Roosevelt is also known as the first environmental president. He wanted to conserve and protect nature. So he made many national parks and monuments. In 1908, the Grand Canyon became an official national monument under Roosevelt. In total, he put about 230 million acres of land under government protection.

Notes

6. Barack Obama was the 44th president and the very first black president in the US. He was also the first president to be born outside of the continental US. He was born on the island of Oahu, Hawaii in Honolulu. Obama served as president from 2009-2017. During his presidency, he focused on climate change, health care and equal rights. He tried to help protect the planet from global warming. He wanted to make sure that all US citizens were able to get medical care. And he chose two women to serve in the Supreme Court. This is the highest court of the US government. Under Obama, more women served as justices than ever before.

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