

Presidents of the United States: A Chronological Reference Guide

George Washington (1789–1797)

- Born in Pope’s Creek, Virginia.
- He and his wife, Martha Washington, had no children together.
- Supported the simple title “Mr. President,” helping establish republican humility over more grandiose titles like “His Excellency” or “His Highness.”
- The only president to be elected unanimously—twice.
- Enjoyed ice cream and spent significantly on it when hosting guests.

John Adams (1797–1801)

- A leading voice for American independence from Great Britain.
- Served as the first vice president of the United States.
- Died on July 4, 1826—the same day as Thomas Jefferson.
- First president to live in the White House.

Thomas Jefferson (1801–1809)

- Principal author of the Declaration of Independence.
- His face has appeared on the U.S. nickel since 1938.
- Founded the University of Virginia.
- Sent Lewis and Clark on their famous expedition.

James Madison (1809–1817)

- Known as the “Father of the Constitution.”
- The shortest president, standing 5 feet 4 inches tall.
- Note: Some sources credit the full shift to his successor, but Madison helped popularise the change.

James Monroe (1817–1825)

- Namesake of Monrovia, Liberia.
- Issued the Monroe Doctrine in 1823.
- Last president of the Founding Fathers generation.

John Quincy Adams (1825–1829)

- Son of John Adams.
- Served in Congress after his presidency—one of the few presidents to do so.
- Fought passionately against slavery in his later years.
- First president inaugurated while wearing long trousers (pants) instead of knee breeches.

Andrew Jackson (1829–1837)

- Survived multiple duels and killed a man in one of them.
- First president targeted in an assassination attempt—both pistols misfired.
- Helped found the modern Democratic Party.

Martin Van Buren (1837–1841)

- First president born a U.S. citizen.
- Only president whose first language was Dutch.
- Nicknamed “Old Kinderhook,” which helped popularise the term “OK.”

William Henry Harrison (1841)

- Served only 32 days—the shortest presidency in U.S. history.
- Delivered the longest inaugural address in history.

John Tyler (1841–1845)

- Expelled from his own political party while in office.
- Had a grandson (Harrison Ruffin Tyler) who lived until 2025, thanks to the family’s pattern of late-in-life fatherhood.

James K. Polk (1845–1849)

- Achieved all the major goals he set for his presidency.
- Oversaw the Mexican American War and major territorial expansion.
- First presidential inauguration reported by telegraph.

Zachary Taylor (1849–1850)

- National hero of the Mexican American War.
- Never voted in a presidential election before becoming president.

Millard Fillmore (1850–1853)

- Installed the first library in the White House.
- Last president from the Whig Party.

Franklin Pierce (1853–1857)

- Memorised his entire inaugural address.
- The only president to keep the same cabinet throughout a full term.

James Buchanan (1857–1861)

- The only lifelong bachelor president.
- His niece, Harriet Lane, served as First Lady.

Abraham Lincoln (1861–1865)

- Led the nation through the Civil War.
- Known for his wrestling skill and later inducted into the National Wrestling Hall of Fame.
- First president to be assassinated.
- Assassinated at Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C. by actor John Wilkes Booth.
- Tallest president at 1.93 m (6' 4")

Andrew Johnson (1865–1869)

- First president to be impeached.
- Never attended school and taught himself to read.

Ulysses S. Grant (1869–1877)

- Union general who accepted Robert E. Lee's surrender.
- Once arrested for speeding on horseback.

Rutherford B. Hayes (1877–1881)

- Oversaw the end of Reconstruction.
- First president to use a telephone in the White House.

James A. Garfield (1881)

- Could write Greek with one hand and Latin with the other at the same time.
- Assassinated after only about 200 days in office.

Chester A. Arthur (1881–1885)

- Known for his impeccable fashion and large wardrobe.
- Modernised the U.S. Navy.

Grover Cleveland (1885–1889)

- The only president to serve two non-consecutive terms.
- Personally, answered the White House telephone.

Benjamin Harrison (1889–1893)

- First president to have electricity in the White House.
- Grandson of William Henry Harrison.

Grover Cleveland (1893–1897)

- Second-heaviest president after William Howard Taft.
- Secretly underwent cancer surgery on a yacht to avoid public panic.

William McKinley (1897–1901)

- Led the nation during the Spanish-American War.
- Assassinated in 1901 during a public appearance in Buffalo, New York.

Theodore Roosevelt (1901–1909)

- Youngest president to assume office, at age 42.
- Won the Nobel Peace Prize.
- Inspired the creation of the teddy bear.
- Survived an assassination attempt and finished his speech with a bullet lodged in his chest.

William Howard Taft (1909–1913)

- The heaviest president, weighing up to 340 pounds.
- Later became Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

Woodrow Wilson (1913–1921)

- Led the United States through World War I.
- Helped create the League of Nations.

Warren G. Harding (1921–1923)

- Died suddenly while traveling.
- His administration later became associated with several scandals.

Calvin Coolidge (1923–1929)

- Nicknamed “Silent Cal.”
- Slept up to 11 hours a day, plus naps.

Herbert Hoover (1929–1933)

- Engineer and humanitarian before entering politics.
- Spoke Mandarin Chinese with his wife.

Franklin D. Roosevelt (1933–1945)

- The only president elected four times.
- Led the United States through the Great Depression and most of World War II.
- Delivered his famous “Fireside Chats.”

Harry S. Truman (1945–1953)

- Authorised the atomic bombings of Japan.
- His middle initial, “S,” did not stand for a full name.

Dwight D. Eisenhower (1953–1961)

- Served as Supreme Allied Commander during World War II.
- Started the Interstate Highway System.

John F. Kennedy (1961–1963)

- Youngest elected president.
- First Catholic president.
- Assassinated in Dallas.

Lyndon B. Johnson (1963–1969)

- Sworn in aboard Air Force One.
- Signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Richard Nixon (1969–1974)

- Opened diplomatic relations with China.
- The only president to resign from office.

Gerald Ford (1974–1977)

- The only president never elected as either president or vice president.
- Former college football star.

Jimmy Carter (1977–1981)

- Won the 2002 Nobel Peace Prize.
- Lived to age 100, the longest lifespan of any U.S. president.

Ronald Reagan (1981–1989)

- Former Hollywood actor.
- Survived an assassination attempt by John Hinckley Jr. in Washington, D.C.

George H. W. Bush (1989–1993)

- Youngest Navy pilot during World War II.
- Oversaw the Gulf War.

Bill Clinton (1993–2001)

- Played the saxophone on national television.
- Presided over the longest peacetime economic expansion in U.S. history.

George W. Bush (2001–2009)

- President during the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.
- Owned part of a Major League Baseball team before entering politics.

Barack Obama (2009–2017)

- First African American president.
- Won the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize.

Donald Trump (2017–2021)

- First president to be impeached twice.
- Hosted The Apprentice before entering politics.

Joe Biden (2021–2025)

- Oldest person ever inaugurated as president.
- Served 36 years in the Senate before becoming vice president.

Donald Trump (2025–present)

- Returned to office after a non-consecutive term, like Grover Cleveland.
- First president since the 19th century to serve non-consecutive terms.