

A Kid's Guide to *Becoming President*

Lesson One: The Presidency



Introduction

On behalf of the Rendell Center, welcome to our **2020 Kid's Guide to Becoming President**. The guide is divided into 4 parts:

The Presidency – with information on the powers of the President and the requirements to become President

Running for President – how one goes about running a campaign for President

The Vote – with information on the electoral college

The Inauguration – with information about swearing in the President and living in the White House

Each section has a **Sticky Situation**, which gets you thinking about the presidency, leadership and the voting process, and **Literacy links** to some books on the election. The guide also includes an electoral college chart and information on the electoral college.

Did you ever wonder how the United States decided to have a president as its leader instead of a king or queen? Let's go back to 1787, four years after the Revolutionary War ended. The American colonies had won their independence from England and needed to form a new government. As they had done before, delegates from each of the states met in Philadelphia. This time they gathered to further develop a plan for their government. This plan became known as the Constitution.



★ To be President

At first the delegates argued over what type of leadership they should have... should it be one, two or three leaders? It was from delegate James Madison's suggestion for one strong leader that the delegates developed the framework for the American presidency. The delegates wanted a leader who was chosen by the people to serve for a term of four years. After four years, there would be a new leader who would share the power with the other two branches of government, the states, and *We the People*.

Why do you think the delegates wanted the president to share the power?

The Constitution says to become president
there are only **three requirements**:



You have to be at least
35 years old



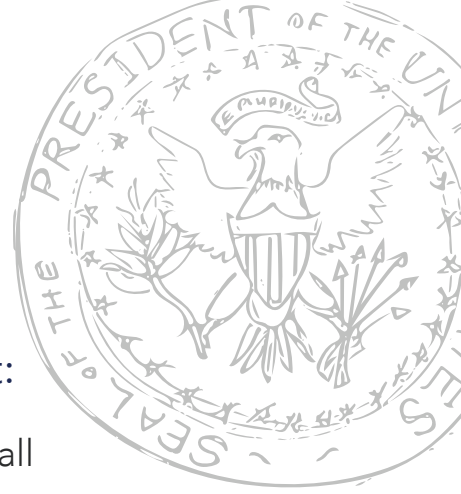
You have to be a **natural
born U.S. citizen**, which
means you have to be born
in a state or U.S. territory.



You have to have lived
in the U.S. for at least
14 years

- Do you know someone who would make a good president?
- What characteristics does that person have that would make him/her a good president?

★ Presidential Duties



The Constitution also lists the duties of the president:

He/she has a lot of responsibilities and a lot of power...but not all of the power and not all of the responsibilities.

1

As Chief Executive, the President of the United States...

- Enforces the laws while the Senate and House of Representatives, known as the Congress, make the laws.
 - Has the power to approve or veto the laws made by Congress.
 - Nominates judges, including Supreme Court Justices subject to confirmation of the Senate.
 - Grants pardons to people accused or convicted of a crime.
-

2

As the Commander in Chief, the President of the United States...

- Is in charge of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines;
 - Makes decisions about our national security in order to help keep all Americans safe.
-

3

As Head of State, the President of the United States...

- Represents the U.S. in meetings with foreign leaders.

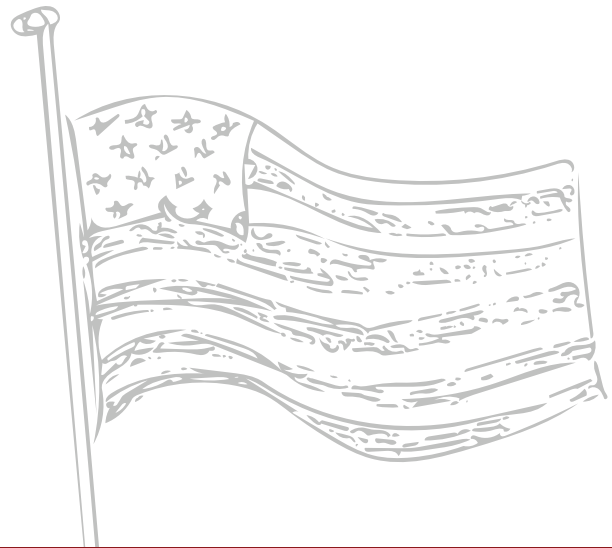
In 2020, Americans are getting ready to vote in the 59th presidential election! The great experiment of 1787 worked! The concept of a president elected by the people every four years, who shares power with other groups continues to make our government unique.



★ Sticky Situation

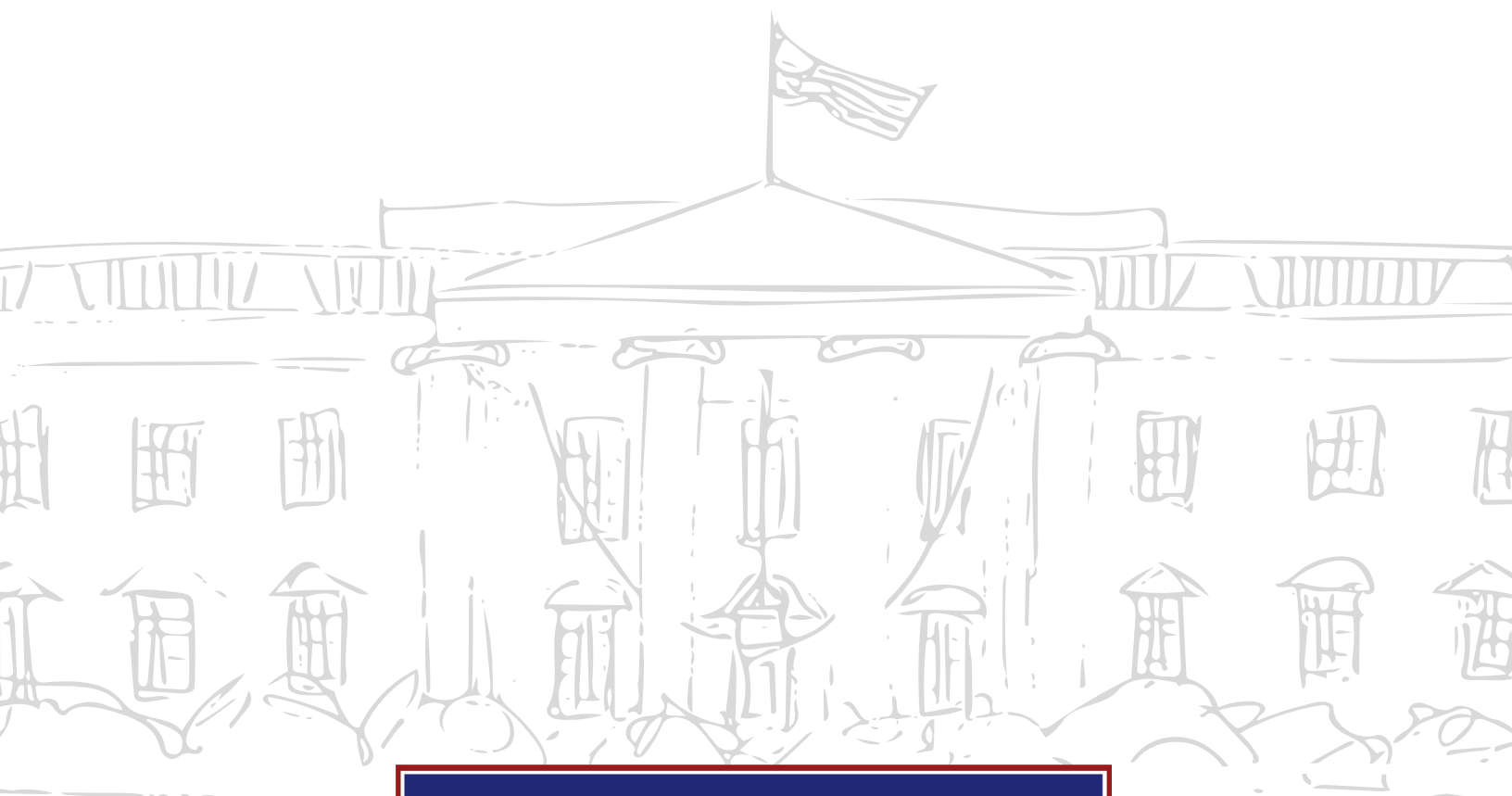
Your principal decided that your school should have a student council, a group of student leaders who meet regularly to discuss school issues such as fundraising ideas, special events, environmental issues, dress codes for students, and more. The principal suggested that the student council should have representatives from each classroom as well as officers including a president, vice president, and secretary. Although there will be student council representatives from all of the classes including kindergarten first and second grades, your friends feel that only third graders on up should be able to vote for the officers of your student council.

Would you support this idea?



Literacy Links

- *Grace for President* by Kelly S. DiPucchio
- *So You want to be President* by Judith St. Georg and David Small
- *School House Rock – No More Kings* (On YouTube.com, search “School House Rock No More Kings”)
- National Constitution Center – Constitution Hall Pass – The Presidency



The Rendell Center

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More civics education resources are available at

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