

## Presidential Performance Report Card

**Introduction:** The President is often one of the most criticized or praised positions in American government. Part of this arises from his responsibility to fulfill many different roles, thus meeting many different expectations. These roles include:

1. **Chief Legislator:** Famous legislation? Strength of relations with Congress?
2. **Commander-in-Chief:** Any military events? Defense policy?
3. **Chief Executive:** How did the government function? Any noted appointees? Was the President flexible or highly organized?
4. **Head of State:** How did the President present himself? Famous appearances? Speeches?
5. **Chief of Party:** Did the party win the midterm elections? Any famous campaigning? Did the party work together with the President and Congress?
6. **Guardian of the Economy:** How was the economy? Any policy initiatives?
7. **Chief Diplomat:** Foreign policy? Any special dignitaries hosted?

These roles become clearer as they are seen in execution. The presidency is the part of government best understood by studying it through history.

**Assignment:** You will gather research and present the information in a jig-saw group about the president you have signed up to learn about.

*Step 1:* Initiate research with your partner. You should begin examining this President outside of class. Understanding these roles, research instances from each presidency. Make sure you log in where you took each piece of information. You should use three (3) or more different sources, and not more than fifteen (15).

*Step 2:* Type or handwrite your researched material onto the sheet provided for you (see next page).

*Step 3:* If you wish to present in a PPT format for extra credit, it should be formatted as follows:

1. Dedicate at least a slide to each role; these slides should have a grade as well as the evidence and analysis supporting that grade
2. One slide should be dedicated to the background of the President before entering office
3. One slide should give the President an overall, or final, grade with a justification for that grade
4. Do not forget title slide, contents slide, and questions slide

*Step 4:* Present your critique of the assigned president to your peers.

*Step 5:* Submit a report card for the presidents presented by your peers critiquing them in their seven roles (grading criteria to be created by student).

*Step 6:* Participate in a class wide deliberation discussing the central question and topic-specific question as well as deciding which modern president is deserving of being placed on Mount Rushmore.

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## Rubric for Grading Presidential Performance in the 7 Roles of a President

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Chief Legislator</b></p> <p>What does this mean?</p>	Grade	<p>Your evidence (research): (the shouldn't-have-done-that stuff)</p>	
<p>Your evidence (research): (the good stuff)</p>			
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Chief Executive</b></p> <p>What does this mean?</p>	Grade	<p>Your evidence (research): (the shouldn't-have-done-that stuff)</p>	
<p>Your evidence (research): (the good stuff)</p>			
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Commander-in-Chief</b></p> <p>What does this mean?</p>	Grade	<p>Your evidence (research): (the shouldn't-have-done-that stuff)</p>	
<p>Your evidence (research): (the good stuff)</p>			
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Guardian of the Economy</b></p> <p>What does this mean?</p>	Grade	<p>Your evidence (research): (the shouldn't-have-done-that stuff)</p>	
<p>Your evidence (research): (the good stuff)</p>			
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Head of the Party</b></p> <p>What does this mean?</p>	Grade	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Head of State</b></p> <p>What does this mean?</p>	Grade
<p>Your evidence (research): (good and not-so-good)</p>		<p>Your evidence (research): (good and not-so-good)</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Chief Diplomat</b></p> <p>What does this mean?</p>	Grade	<p><b>Other criteria:</b> _____</p> <p>What does this mean?</p>	Grade
<p>Your evidence (research): (good and not-so-good)</p>		<p>Your evidence (research): (good and not-so-good)</p>	

# Questions to Consider and Answer When Evaluating Your President

## Chief Legislator

- What was the perceived image of the President in the eyes of Congress? Vice versa?
- What was the President's legislative agenda? How did he present this or pursue its achievement?
- Did the President serve during a period of divided government? How much gridlock was encountered during his term(s)?
  - If there was divided government, how well did the President pursue a sense of bipartisanship?
- What major pieces of legislation were signed during his term(s)?
- How much did the President wield his veto power?

## Guardian of the Economy

- What were the economic indicators like during his presidency? (trade, unemployment, inflation, etc.)
- What type of economic policy did the President subscribe to? (Keynesian, Reaganomics, etc.)
  - Fiscal, monetary, tax policies?
- Was any major economic reform legislation passed during his term(s)?
- Any recessions or depressions? Sustained growth?
- Did the President sustain the social contract and expand the economic opportunities available to all Americans?
- Did the President improve the economic infrastructure of the country?
- Did the President improve the performance of the economy during his time in office?

## Chief Diplomat

- Did the President make any famous trips abroad or did he welcome any famous visitors?
- Did the President lead or participate in any major negotiations?
- How was the United States perceived abroad?
- Any major treaties signed? Did Congress sign these?
- Did the President create a doctrine regarding foreign affairs?
- What were the foreign policy goals of the president?
  - What was the foreign policy ideology of the President?

## Commander-in-Chief

- Did the President initiate or end the use of force anywhere?
  - Why did the President use force? Were the circumstances justified?
  - How successful was the use of force if it was used?
- Did the President lead a major reorganization of the military? Budget priorities?
- Did the President work well with the military?
- Did the President have a military doctrine?

## Head of State

- What was the President's speaking style?
- How well did the President meet the needs of the people (especially in times of crisis)?
- What image did the public hold of the President?
- How well did the President maintain his public opinion numbers?
- Did the President deliver any famous speeches? What made these famous? What was their context?
- How much did the President speak to the public or the press? Was it too little or too often?

## Chief of Party

- How many appearances did the President make on behalf of his party?
- How well did the party perform during elections? Did the party lose or gain congressional seats?

- Did the President reflect the ideology and positions of the party?
- Did the President ignore the policy positions of the party? What was the Party's response if so?
- Did the President lead an ideological restructuring of the party?
- Did the President build a larger coalition, or voting base, for the party? Was his election part of an electoral realignment?

### **Chief Executive**

- What type of leadership style did the President run in the White House?
- Did the President seek to expand or decrease the size of government? Were these changes good ideas or simply political moves?
- What was the overall impression of the President's Cabinet? Were the appointments good choices?
- How well did the President work with the Senate in moving his appointees through the nomination process?
- How often did the President have to replace members of his staff or Cabinet?

### **Other Questions to Consider**

- Was the President qualified to take office? What were his qualifications? Prior resume?
- What influenced the President?
- Did the President continue to lead and seek a positive impact after the Presidency?
- Did the President display exemplary personal character? Did the President have any embarrassing scandals?
- Was the President able to articulate a vision for the country? Or, did the President seek to simply maintain the status quo?
- How did the President embody the characteristics of a "modern president?"
- Did the President fail to utilize the power of the office? Or, did the President abuse the power of the office?