

# Some influential US Presidents

The United States is the world's most powerful country, and its decisions have a deep impact on the world. This is why the US Election Day has such a wide international echo and its results are eagerly awaited everywhere. Over the centuries 45 presidents have served in 47 presidencies. Here are one some of the best-known presidents.



**George Washington (1732-1799)** > One of the four presidents whose face is sculpted on Mount Rushmore (the others being Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Jefferson, and Theodore Roosevelt), George Washington is known as the “Father of the Nation” because of his

leadership in winning independence from Great Britain. He became the first president of the newly-founded country and served his mandate first in New York and then in Philadelphia. Even though he was the one who wanted the White House built, he is also the only president to have never resided in Washington D.C., the capital named after him.



**Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865)** > The 16<sup>th</sup> US president is regarded as a national hero for his efforts to preserve the Union during the four years of the Civil War (1861-1865). He managed to hold the country together by defeating the Southern secessionist States

and, while in office, he paved the way for the emancipation of slaves finally ratified in the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the American Constitution. Lincoln was shot by a Confederate sympathiser while watching a theatre performance in Washington. His face still appears on the \$5 banknote and on the penny.

## Theodore Roosevelt

**(1858-1919)** > The 26<sup>th</sup> president of the USA was the first American to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his role in negotiating an end to a war between Japan and Russia. Roosevelt is also remembered for his contribution to the building of the Panama Canal, a waterway connecting the Pacific and Atlantic Ocean. And did you know? The Teddy Bear owes him its name: rumour has it that the President refused to kill a bear cub during a hunting expedition. The toy maker took advantage of the episode for a costless marketing campaign.



## Franklyn Delano Roosevelt

**(1882-1945)** > Roosevelt is regarded as the most influential president since he was the longest-serving US president: he exceptionally served three mandates from 1933 to 1945. Re-elected for the fourth time in 1945, he could not complete his term because he died of a heart attack. Roosevelt brought the US out of the Great Depression thanks to his “New Deal” policies and he is also remembered, alongside Churchill, for his contribution to promote democracy in Europe after fascism.



## glossary

**cub:** cucciolo

**fluffy:** soffice

**eagerly:** con impazienza


**John Fitzgerald Kennedy (1917-1963)**

➤ JFK was the 35<sup>th</sup> president of the United States, remembered for his charm and energy. He was the youngest man elected President and the youngest to be murdered while in office. Key achievements of

his mandate include resolving the Cuban Missile Crisis and initiating the Apollo project for the Moon landing. JFK was also a convinced supporter of civil rights.



**Ronald Reagan** ➤ Ronald Reagan was a Hollywood actor who became the 40<sup>th</sup> president of the US. He is especially known for his foreign policy which contributed to the fall of the Berlin Wall (9<sup>th</sup> November

1989) and the collapse of the Soviet Union.



**Barack Obama** ➤ On November 4, 2008 Barack Obama became the first African-American president, and after only one year of presidency, in 2009, he received the Nobel Peace Prize for his work in international diplomacy and cooperation. Obama served for two mandates during

which he focused on nuclear disarmament, dialogue with the Muslim world, and climate change. He also implemented measures that made healthcare in the USA more affordable for a larger number of citizens.

**1 READING** Read the text and choose who...

- 1 may be remembered whenever people buy something using cash. ....
- 2 had his nickname chosen for a fluffy plaything. ....
- 3 was not preceded by anyone in the same position. ....
- 4 was the first to be honoured with a prestigious recognition. ....
- 5 was assassinated at a young age. ....
- 6 played a crucial role in setting the country free from British rule. ....
- 7 was the longest running president for an unusually long time. ....
- 8 contributed to the disintegration of a powerful communist country. ....
- 9 is credited for having reunited the country. ....
- 10 introduced legislation addressing health needs of American citizens. ....

**2 READING WRITING** Answer the questions.

- 1 Which president is regarded as the one who put an end to slavery in the USA?
- 2 What significant international role is Theodore Roosevelt known for?
- 3 What economic reform is Franklin D. Roosevelt associated with?
- 4 Which were some of John F. Kennedy's notable achievements during his presidency?
- 5 What did the Obama administration particularly revolve around?

**3 READING SPEAKING** Go online and look for some presidential scandals. Share your findings with your class.