

# 1) Impeachment

When a new president is elected to office, he or she takes an oath that lists many heavy responsibilities. Abuse of power or failure to uphold these responsibilities cannot be tolerated. The Constitution gives the House of Representatives the right to impeach the president. Impeachment means that a charge of misconduct is filed against the president, it is an accusation. A majority of the members of the House must vote for these charges in order to impeach the president. Congress may impeach an official for treason (betraying our nation), bribery (accepting money in return for a political favor) or high crimes



and misdemeanors (breaking the oath they took when sworn in as president).

After the charges of misconduct are filed, the Senate has the power to try impeachment cases like a court. Two-thirds of the senators must vote for conviction. The president may be removed from office and never allowed to hold a government position again if he is found guilty.

Our 17th president, Andrew Johnson, was impeached while in office. Thirty-five senators found him guilty -- just one vote short of the two-thirds vote necessary to convict him.

President Richard Nixon resigned from office rather than face impeachment charges in the Watergate scandal in 1974. President Bill Clinton became the second president to be impeached by the House in 1998. Later, the Senate found him not guilty.

"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."

Presidential Oath of Office

**Answer the following questions in complete sentences.**

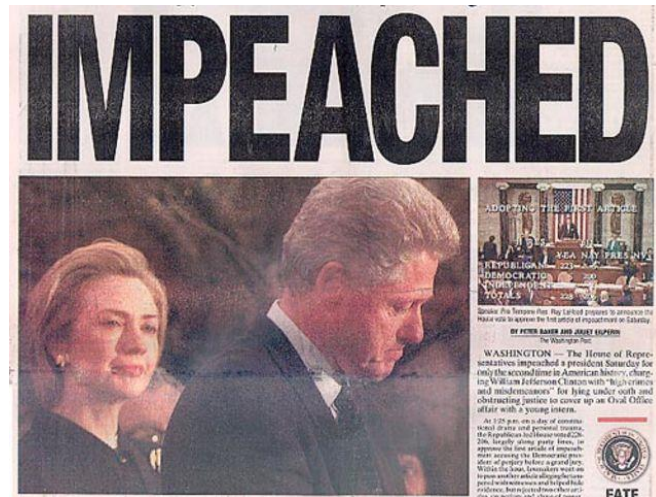
- 1) What is impeachment?
- 2) What are three different offences Congress may impeach a president for?
- 3) Explain how impeachment a check on executive powers.
- 4) What is the President swearing to do by taking the oath of office?
- 5) Explain how could impeachment could be miss used for political gain.

## 2) Who's actually been impeached?

Only two presidents Johnson and Clinton have been impeached in United States history, and neither was convicted of the charges filed against him.

Johnson, the 17th president of the United States, was accused of violating the Tenure of Office Act. The 1867 act required Senate approval before a president could remove any member of his cabinet who had been confirmed by the upper chamber of Congress. Johnson was Lincoln's vice president. After his assassination Johnson became president. The cabinet had been chosen by Lincoln however. The new president, the cabinet and Congress disagreed on how to Reconstruct the South after the Civil War. Congress had passed the Tenure of Office Act so that Johnson could not replace Lincoln's cabinet.

The House impeached Johnson on February 24, 1868, three days after he dumped his secretary of war, a radical Republican named Edwin M. Stanton, allegedly in violation of the Tenure of Office Act. The U.S.



Senate acquitted Johnson later that year by a narrow margin. Johnson was spared conviction and ouster from office by a single vote.

Clinton face charges of perjury and obstruction of justice in 1998. The impeachment stemmed from an affair he had as president with a young White House intern named Monica Lewinski. The media and the internet played a huge role in covering the scandal leading to Congressional hearings, where the president lied under oath regarding the relationship. That in turn led to his impeachment. Neither president however

were convicted and removed from office.

Richard Nixon faced impeachment as well, after five men hired by Nixon's reelection committee were caught burglarizing Democratic party headquarters at the Watergate building in June of 1972, President Nixon's subsequent behavior—his cover-up of the burglary and refusal to turn over evidence—led the House Judiciary Committee to issue three articles of impeachment in 1974. The document also indicted Nixon for illegal wiretapping, misuse of the CIA, perjury, bribery, obstruction of justice, and other abuses of executive power. Impeachment appeared inevitable, and Nixon resigned on Aug. 9, 1974

**Answer the following questions in complete sentences.**

- 1) Who are the only two presidents to be impeached?
- 2) Explain why Johnson was impeached?
- 3) Explain why Clinton was impeached?
- 4) Out of the two presidents explain which one you think committed the worst offence.
- 5) What do you think the outcome would have been if Nixon hadn't resigned? Explain your answer.

### 3) Approval Ratings

Presidential approval ratings were introduced by George Gallup in the late 1930s to gauge public support for the President of the United States during his term. The approval ratings of every president

*Approval Ratings of President Obama's Handling of the Economy and Foreign Affairs*



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change over time and are influenced by outside factors. These factors at times are often beyond the control of the President. Early on in a President's term ratings are usually high, this is called the honeymoon period. They have just won office and Congress usually is the most corporative in the first few months of a new presidential term. The president usually has an agenda and goals to accomplish in the first 100 days they are in office. The media and in turn the people often look to see what campaign promises are kept in this time frame and judge the success of the president accordingly.

The economy has a huge influence on presidential approval ratings. When the economy does well the president's approval rating are usually high and in contrast if the economy is struggling ratings reflect it. Media coverage of wars, and personal scandals also have influence over approval ratings as well.

*Congressional Job Approval*

Recent trend

% Approve



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Polls also track the public approval ratings of Congress as well. Like the president their rating is often based on the economy. They however are often blamed even more so that the president for the nation's troubles.

**Answer the following questions in complete sentences.**

- 1) What is an approval rating?
- 2) When is a president's approval rating usually the highest and why?
- 3) How does the first 100 day influence approval ratings?
- 4) How can the media influence approval ratings?
- 5) Comparing the approval ratings of Obama and Congress was their ever a time when Congress was more popular than the president? Explain.

## 4) The Cabinet

The Cabinet is a group of the President's top advisors. It is made up of the heads of the 15 main executive departments. Each of the department heads has the title Secretary, like Secretary of Defense or Secretary of Education, except for the head of the Justice Department who is called the Attorney General.

Cabinet members are chosen by the president and confirmed by the Senate. The president can also remove cabinet members at any time. The Cabinet members are some of the most powerful people in the United States and each of their departments is important in the running of our country.

The Cabinet has a long history all the way back to the first President, George Washington. President Washington appointed a Cabinet of four people to help and advise him. The first Cabinet included Thomas Jefferson (Secretary of State), Alexander Hamilton (Secretary of the Treasury), Henry Knox (Secretary of War), and Edmund Randolph (Attorney General).

### The President's Cabinet

Department	Role
Department of State (1789)	Plans and carries out the nation's foreign policy
Department of the Treasury (1789)	Collects, borrows, spends, and prints money
Department of Defense (1789 as War Department; renamed in 1949)	Manages the armed forces
Department of Justice (1870)	Responsible for all aspects of law enforcement
Department of the Interior (1849)	Manages and protects nation's public lands and natural resources
Department of Agriculture (1889)	Assists farmers and consumers of farm products
Department of Commerce (1903)	Supervises trade, promotes U.S. business, tourism
Department of Labor (1913)	Deals with working conditions, wages of U.S. workers
Department of Health and Human Services (1953)	Works for the well-being and health of all Americans
Department of Housing and Urban Development (1965)	Deals with the special needs and problems of cities
Department of Transportation (1966)	Manages nation's highways, railroads, airlines, and sea traffic
Department of Energy (1977)	Directs overall energy plan for the nation
Department of Education (1979)	Provides advice and funding for schools
Department of Veterans Affairs (1989)	Directs services for armed forces veterans
Department of Homeland Security (2002)	Oversees America's defenses against terrorist attacks

Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

- 1) What is the cabinet and why is it important?
- 2) Who chooses cabinet members? How do checks & balances influence those choices?
- 3) What cabinet departments are the oldest?
- 4) The cabinet has grown over time explain why do you think this has happened?
- 5) Which cabinet department do you think is the most important? Justify your opinion.

## 5. The Federal Bureaucracy

Even the experts can't agree on the total number of federal government agencies, commissions, and departments. Most estimates suggest there are probably more than 2,000 of these. They each have an area of specialization but their duties often overlap. To complicate things even more, many agencies have counterparts at the state and local level. Its size, complexity, and overlapping responsibilities leave the federal bureaucracy open to constant criticism and efforts to cut it back.

Congress has the power to create, organize, and disband all federal agencies. Most of them are under the control of the President, although few of them actually have direct contact with the White House. So, the bureaucracy has two masters — Congress and the President. The bureaucracy generally falls into four broad types: Cabinet departments, government corporations, independent agencies, and regulatory commissions

Government corporations do not belong to any department — they stand on their own. Probably the best-known government corporations are the United States Postal Service and Amtrak. They are different from other agencies in that they are businesses created by Congress, and they charge fees for their services.



Independent agencies closely resemble Cabinet departments, but they are smaller and less complex. Generally, they have narrower areas of responsibility than do Cabinet departments. The most well know example here is NASA.

Regulatory Agencies oversee important parts of the economy, making rules for large industries and businesses that affect the interests of the public. Because regulatory commissions are "watchdogs" that by their very nature need to operate independently, they are not part of a department, and the President does not directly control most of them. Examples of these commissions are the Securities and Exchange Commission, which regulates the stock market and the Environmental Protection Agency serves as a guardian over the nation's environment.

Almost every recent President has come into office determined to refashion and trim the bureaucracy. However, none has been able to make more than minor adjustments.

**Answer the following questions in complete sentences.**

1. Why would people complain that the federal bureaucracy is too big?
2. What are the 4 types of federal bureaucracy?
3. What two branches of government does the bureaucracy answer to? Would this make system more or less complex? Explain why.
4. Why do regulatory agencies not answer to the president?
5. Why would presidents try to reshape the bureaucracy? Why do you think they are unsuccessful?