

# Modern Presidents: President Nixon

**Richard Nixon's** presidency was one of great successes and criminal scandals. **Nixon's visit to China** in 1971 was one of the successes. He visited to seek scientific, cultural, and trade agreements and to take advantage of a 10-year standoff between China and the Soviet Union. Nixon hoped to have the Chinese on his side in case he had future negotiations with the Soviets. Later, Nixon was part of the **Watergate scandal**, which centered on his administration's attempt to cover up a burglary of the offices of the Democratic Party in the Watergate apartment and office complex in Washington, D.C. The crime was committed by Nixon's reelection campaign team, who sought political information. Nixon won reelection in 1972, but his efforts to cover up the crime soon unraveled and, facing impeachment, he resigned in 1974. The scandal left Americans dismayed by Nixon's actions and cynical about politics in general. It also led to changes in campaign financing and to laws requiring high-level government officials to disclose their finances. Because Nixon and many of the people involved in Watergate were lawyers, the reputation of the legal profession suffered too.

Nixon was succeeded by his vice president, **Gerald Ford**, whose two-year presidency was damaged by his connection to Nixon. It was further damaged when he pardoned Nixon for any crimes he may have committed. One bright spot is that the Vietnam War ended during the Ford administration because it followed a path established by Nixon, but Ford's domestic policies failed to stop growing inflation and unemployment, and America experienced its worst economic recession since the Great Depression.

1. Why did President Nixon go to China?
2. What was the Watergate Scandal?
3. Who committed the crime at the Watergate Hotel?
4. Why did Nixon resign in 1974?
5. What were the results of the scandal on the American public? (3 things)
6. Who was Gerald Ford?
7. Why was his presidency tainted?
8. What did Ford do in regard to Nixon?



9. What happened to the US as a result of Ford's Presidency?

## Modern Presidents: President Carter

**Jimmy Carter's** presidency was strongly influenced by international issues. He tried to bring peace to the Middle East and, in the **Camp David Accords**, negotiated a peace agreement between the Egyptian president and the Israeli prime minister at Camp David (a presidential retreat in Maryland) in 1978. This was the first time there had been a signed peace agreement between Middle Eastern nations. Although the agreement left many differences unresolved, it did solve urgent problems facing the two nations. In 1978, the **Iranian Revolution** replaced a shah (king) friendly to America with a Muslim religious leader unfriendly to America. When Carter let the shah enter the United States for medical treatment, angry Iranian revolutionaries invaded the U.S. embassy in Iran and took 52 Americans captive. The **Iranian hostage crisis** lasted 444 days, until the captives were released after the election of Ronald Reagan as president, and it nurtured anti- Americanism among Muslims around the world.

1. What was Jimmy Carter's Presidency strongly influenced by?

2. What was the Camp David Accords?



3. What was the Iranian Revolution?

4. What happened in the Iranian Hostage crisis?



# Modern Presidents:

## President Clinton & President Bush

### Clinton Administration

**Bill Clinton's** presidency included ratification of the **North American Free Trade Agreement**. NAFTA brought Mexico into a free-trade (tariff-free) zone already existing between the United States and Canada. Opponents believed NAFTA would send U.S. jobs to Mexico and harm the environment, while supporters believed it would open up the growing Mexican market to U.S. companies; these pros and cons are still argued today.

Clinton also became the second president in U.S. history to suffer **impeachment**. The House of Representatives charged him with perjury and obstruction of justice. The charges were based on accusations of improper use of money from a real estate deal and allegations he had lied under oath about an improper relationship with a White House intern. Clinton denied the charges and the Senate acquitted him, allowing Clinton to remain in office and finish his second term.

### 2000 Presidential Election

The presidential election of 2000 saw Clinton's vice president, Al Gore, facing the Republican governor of Texas, George W. Bush, as well as consumer advocate Ralph Nader, who ran as a third-party candidate. Polls showed the race would be close, and it turned out to be one of the closest elections in American history. Gore won the national popular vote by over 500,000 of the 105 million votes cast, but when American voters cast ballots for president, the national popular vote has no legal significance. Rather,

Americans are voting for members of the **Electoral College** representing each candidate.

Each state is assigned "electors" in equal number to its total number of U.S. representatives and senators. (For example, Georgia had thirteen electors in 2000: eleven representatives and two senators.) In the 2000 election, Bush won by receiving 271 votes in the Electoral College to Gore's 266.

### Bush Administration

**George W. Bush's** presidency will always be remembered for al-Qaeda's attacks on September 11, 2001 (9/11). In response, and with overwhelming support of both Congress and the American people, Bush signed a law the next month to allow the U.S. government to hold foreign citizens suspected of being terrorists for up to seven days without charging them with a crime. This law also increased the ability of American law-enforcement agencies to search private communications and personal records. Then he created the Department of Homeland Security and charged it with protecting the United States from terrorist attacks and with responding to natural disasters.

In October 2001, another of Bush's responses to the 9/11 terrorist attacks was his authorizing **Operation Enduring Freedom**, the invasion of Afghanistan by the U.S. military and allied forces. That country's Taliban government was harboring the al-Qaeda leadership. The allied forces quickly defeated the Taliban government and destroyed the al-Qaeda network in Afghanistan; however, al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden escaped. The invasion of Afghanistan was part of Bush's larger **war on terrorism**, for which he built an international coalition to fight the al-Qaeda network and other terrorist groups. In March 2003, American and British troops invaded Iraq in **Operation Iraqi Freedom**. Iraq's president, Saddam Hussein, went into hiding while U.S. forces searched for the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) that Bush feared Hussein had and could supply to terrorists for use against the United States. No WMD were found before Hussein was captured. He was convicted of crimes against humanity and executed in 2006.

1. What did Bill Clinton's presidency include that is still important?

2. What does NAFTA stand for?

3. What is NAFTA?

4. Why was Clinton impeached?

5. What was the outcome of Clinton's impeachment trial?

6. What two candidates were involved in the 2000 Presidential Election?

7. Even though Gore won the popular vote in the election, why did Bush win?

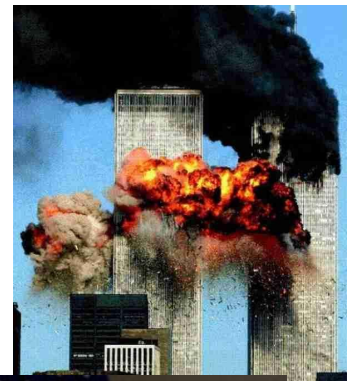
8. Why is September 11, 2001 important?

9. What laws did Bush sign in as a result of the 9/11 attacks?

10. What was Operation Enduring Freedom?

11. What was Bush's "War on Terrorism"; what did it include?

12. What was Operation Iraqi Freedom?



Write a 1 page essay about one of the Modern Presidents. Describe the challenges and successes of his administration.

Attach your essay to your guided reading activities. You will be assessed on the content of your essay, be descriptive.