

So You Want To Be President?

by Judith St. George

Classroom Favorites



Teacher's Guide by Erin Lindemann

A Perma-Bound Production

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SYNOPSIS

Have you ever dreamed about becoming president of the United States of America? Judith St. George examines this question in her book *So You Want to Be President?* She lightens the tone of the presidency so that children realize that the present and past United States presidents were all different, but essentially, all human. She uses light humor as her venue of choice as she provides short and funny anecdotes about presidents to show that there is more than one route to the office of the president.

The story begins with an opening statement about the good things and bad things about being the president that would be important to a child. For example, some good things about being the president are not having to eat vegetables and having a bowling alley, swimming pool, and movie theater in the White House. The negative aspects are having to be dressed up all the time, having to be nice to everyone, and having lots of homework. The book moves on to talk about the popular names of the past presidents. James is the most popular, with six presidents sharing the name. The illustration of our heaviest president, William Howard Taft, being lifted into his bathtub (big enough to hold four men) with a crane covers the two-page spread discussing the size of some of our past presidents.

The illustrations throughout the book capture the attention of the reader, as they are filled with the same humor as the words. The Constitution is mentioned as we are told that a person has to be 35 years old before he can become president, and St. George goes into detail about our oldest and youngest presidents. As a part of the theme that presidents had different personalities, St. George examines the shy and not-so-shy presidents of our past. (Andrew Jackson was involved in 14 brawls, duels, fights, and shootings.) Children are allowed to think about their own lives as the book then moves into talking about presidential family trees. Siblings and related presidential candidates are mentioned as the reader enjoys a picture of caricature-style presidents climbing in and out of a huge tree containing a replica of the presidential seal.

Humor continues after the specific details of presidential personalities are scrutinized. The reader turns next to a two-page spread of Teddy Roosevelt's pet Shetland pony leaning over the bed of a sick child, as the words describe that Roosevelt's son once took the pony upstairs to cheer up his sick brother. The page also contains a real-life photo of Theodore Roosevelt in the bottom left corner. The dispersion of photos throughout the book create a biographical effect. Presidents dance and play musical

instruments through the next two pages as the reader finds out about several talents that presidents had. Did you know that Chester Arthur played the banjo? The reader turns the page to see a dripping, mad John Quincy Adams in a river after a woman swiped his clothes and would not return them until he granted her an interview. The next few pages take on a more serious note as the reader finds out that not all of the presidents went to college, and many of our past presidents served in the United States military. The office of Vice President is discussed next as St. George mentions that some of the presidents held the latter office prior to their move into the White House.

As the book comes to an end, the words along with the illustrations become somewhat somber and serious. Being honest is one of the most important traits of an American president. Two examples of dishonesty are mentioned as the reader sees two figures walking unhappily down the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. Serving the United States and its citizens is the top priority of a successful president, and St. George follows the statement with examples of several charitable deeds that presidents have accomplished. St. George takes the time to include all 35 words of the presidential oath, "I do solemnly swear 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" to remind the reader of the huge responsibility bestowed upon the president of the United States. The last pages include a short biographical sketch of each president (up to Bill Clinton), along with his date of birth and date of death and a couple of quips about his term as president.

AUTHOR SKETCH

Judith St. George was born in Westfield, New Jersey. She attended Smith College, and after marrying, she moved to and lived in Cambridge, Massachusetts in the Longfellow House, which served as George Washington's headquarters during the American Revolution. Facts such as these contribute to St. George's interest and research in American history. She has taught numerous workshops and enjoys leading story hours and reading programs for students. As her interest in history grew, she attended the White House Conference on Library and Informational Services as a delegate of New Jersey. She lives in Old Lyme, Connecticut and has four children and five grandchildren. Judith St. George currently teaches creative writing in the York Correctional Institution for Women in Connecticut.

Judith St. George states that she enjoys researching, and she visits actual settings of many of her books to do much of her research. It is with this enthusiasm that she has written more than 25 books in many genres including mysteries and histories.

These books have won her such awards as the American Book Honor Award in 1983, a Christopher Award in 1985, the Golden Kite Award in 1990, and a nomination for a Texas Bluebonnet Award for *So You Want to Be President?*

ILLUSTRATOR SKETCH

David Small began drawing at the age of two in Detroit, Michigan, where he was born and raised. He later took art lessons at the Detroit Institute of Arts, where he said he was profoundly affected by the works of such artists as Diego Rivera. He used these talents and muses to decorate his family's basement with murals. At a young age, Small was stricken with a childhood disease which left him indoors and bedridden for extended periods of time. These times led to the theme in many of his later books that deal with overcoming shyness and being an outsider. He received a Master of Fine Arts degree from Yale and taught drawing and printmaking in universities for 14 years. Small was laid off because of cutbacks in the 1980s, and the event allowed him to concentrate on his love of writing and illustrating. His first authored and illustrated book, *Eulalie and the Hopping Head*, was published in 1982. Many of his works include the illustrations of books authored by his wife, Sarah Stewart, including *The Library* and *The Gardener*.

David Small uses watercolor, pen, and pastel to create illustrations that are vibrant and detailed. He uses details in his pictures such as fine attention to facial features and attire, down to footwear and button detail. His work in *So You Want to Be President?* is the result of his idea that his work as an illustrator is never finite. He feels he should constantly grow and evolve in this profession. He uses a style of caricature and cartooning to create likenesses of each and every mentioned president. His creative, detailed, and historically accurate portrayals of presidential life earned him the 2001 Caldecott Award. He also received the 1999 Parents Choice Award in a collaborative effort with his wife for *The Library*.

CRITICS' CORNER

Humor is sometimes an artful and successful way to introduce a topic such as history to children. Coupled with humor and biographical information, Judith St. George recounts several anecdotes of various past and present presidents. The presidents are portrayed as ordinary humans in a way children will comprehend and enjoy. Some presidents knew how to dance and some did not. "...the President has a swimming pool, bowling alley, and movie theater." These lines prove the mildly satirical story that St. George uses to explain that anyone can be president. The proof is in the facts: tall, short, handsome, homely, fat, skinny, shy, and outgoing name a few of these outstanding traits of our past leaders. The historical experience is then enriched with such illustrations as Mt. Rushmore, the White House, the presidential seal, the Lincoln Memorial, and a striking likeness of Abraham Lincoln on the page that contains the presidential oath and the reality that a successful president must make the United States and its citizens his top priority. As any great author will do, Judith St. George ends her story with a memorable experience: a historical list of each and every president with birthday and date of death, and facts on where he was born, his personality, and his term as president.

"*So You Want to Be President?* is a best bet for the classroom" says the Virginia Center for Children's Books. *Kirkus* (July 1, 2000) stated that the book is a "...superb, kid-centered survey

and a perfect way to enliven the perennial class unit on the presidents. The book's facts coupled with humor add to the intensity of the read. Children are introduced to a very important occupation in the United States, the job of the president of the United States, in such a way that they realize they, too could reach the goal. Susie Wilde of www.childrenslit.com stated that St. George and Small make history seem fun, the office attractive, and America's presidents human. The Cooperative Children's Book Center (2000) added that Judith St. George's light-hearted approach to presidential character may provide some answers for [children]. In conclusion, Connie Rockman of the Caldecott Award Selection Committee stated that "*So You Want to Be President?* captures the spirit of the individual and collectively provides a genuinely enlightening overview of this unique American institution" (American Library Association, 2000).

ADDITIONAL WORKS

Judith St. George, Author

- So You Want to Be An Inventor?* (2002)
- John and Abigail Adams* (2001)
- In the Line of Fire: Presidents Lives at Stake* (1999)
- Dear Dr. Bell...Your Friend, Helen Keller* (1999)
- Betsy Ross: Patriot of Philadelphia* (1997)
- Sacagawea* (1997)
- To See With the Heart: The Life of Sitting Bull* (1996)
- Crazy Horse* (1994)
- The Panama Canal: Gateway to the World* (1991)
- What's Happening to My Junior Year?* (1986)
- Call Me Margo* (1982)
- Do You See What I See?* (1982)
- The Amazing Voyage of the New Orleans* (1980)
- Mystery at St. Martin's* (1979)
- The Shad are Running* (1977)
- Shadow of the Shaman* (1977)
- By George, Bloomers!* (1976)
- The Chinese Puzzle of Shag Island* (1976)
- The Girl With Spunk* (1975)
- Turncoat Winter, Rebel Spring* (1970)

David Small, Author and Illustrator

- Eulalie and the Hopping Head* (2001) (new version)
- Ruby Mae Has Something to Say* (1999)
- Paper John* (1998)
- George Washington's Cows* (1997)
- Imogene's Antlers* (1986)

David Small, Illustrator of Texts by Other Authors

- So You Want to Be An Inventor?* by Judith St. George (2002)
- The Journey* by Sarah Stewart (2001)
- The Christmas Crocodile* by Bonny Becker (2001)
- The Mouse and His Child* by Russell Hoban (2001)
- The Gardener* by Sarah Stewart (2000)
- The Library* by Sarah Stewart (1999)
- The Money Tree* by Sarah Stewart (1994)
- Petey's Bedtime Story* by Beverly Cleary (1993)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- "Caldecott Medal Homepage," <www.ala.org/alsc/caldecott.html>
- "Judith St. George Biography," <teachervision.com/lesson-plans/lesson-6682.html>
- Kirkus Reviews*, July 1, 2000.

Norton, Donna E., *Through the Eyes of a Child: An Introduction to Children's Literature*. Prentice Hall, Inc, 1999.

"So You Want to Be President," <www.txla.org/groups/tba/nomnotes/president.html>

Wilde, Susie, <www.childrenslit.com>, 2000.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To provide proof of comprehension through a variety of thinking/discussion questions by responding to them orally or in written form
2. To gain knowledge in several areas of the curriculum by participating in a wide range of related activities
3. To expand students' vocabulary base by using context clues and class discussions as vehicles of comprehension
4. To engage in a number of artistic and thought-provoking activities which will further their interpretation of the reading
5. To recall specific facts and details of the major characters of the book and analyze their roles

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To be able to provide a detailed description of the duties and responsibilities of the President of the United States
2. To recognize that each president had his own personality, and be able to explain why this fact is important to the understanding of the book
3. To analyze the illustrations in the book and be prepared to discuss the beneficial factors of the pictures (along with the Caldecott Award Medal)
4. To recognize that presidential characteristics have changed during history through the reading of the text and observation of the illustrations
5. To be aware that humor can be an advantageous tool when creating books and/or stories
6. To be able to recognize that the book is nonfiction, with biographical traits and historical characteristics.
7. To realize that knowing specific details of the lives of the Presidents of the United States plays a role in the understanding that the Presidents are people, too

SETTINGS

This particular book contains numerous settings that provide a tone. There is no setting that shows itself throughout the book since there is no continuous story line. The illustrations, which portray the setting, are dynamic, in that they change throughout the book. The era in history is also portrayed in the settings and illustrations. The cover page of the book contains a setting that portrays George Washington in his office. He is dressed in colonial attire, and the furniture in the room is historical in nature. The book opens with a two-page illustration of the White House, which clearly shows the majesty of the home. Other settings of present time include the White House bowling alley that contains George Bush in an ecstatic pose after bowling a strike, and a drawing of a room in the White House that contains presidents and influential American leaders mingling in a single room.

The illustrations in the book are bright and cheerful when the mood is such, and dark and somber when the mood fits. At one point, as the author discusses the presidents that have been disloyal to their position, the setting is that of the Lincoln Memorial with two presidents hanging their heads and walking down the steps. Some of the settings also mix time era and president. For example, there is an illustration of George Washington speaking in front of a podium with microphones and a replica of the presidential seal. One setting, on the page containing the information

about family trees, includes eight presidents from different time periods sitting in a tree that is holding a presidential seal. The settings of the book contain symbolism of the words on the pages, as seen in the tree setting. The illustrations tell their own story by portraying a setting that clarifies and expands the story.

CROSS-CURRICULAR SOURCES

Books About Presidents

Simon Adams, *The Presidents of the United States*

Ann Bausum, *Our Country's Presidents*

Stephanie Britt, et al., *Story of George Washington*

Todd Davis and Marc E. Frey, *New Big Book of Presidents*

Russell Freedman, *Lincoln: A Photobiography*

Heron Marquez, *George W. Bush*

Andrew Santella, *U.S. Presidential Inaugurations*

Murray Suid, *How to Be President of the U.S.A.*

George Sullivan, *Mr. President: A Book of U.S. Presidents*

Books about the United States Government

Dan Gutman, *Landslide! A Kid's Guide to the U.S. Elections*

Kathleen Karr, *It Happened in the White House: Extraordinary Tales from America's Most Famous Home*

Arthur Meier Schlesinger, *History of the U.S. Political Parties*

Lola Shaefer, *U.S. Capitol (Symbols of Freedom)*

Syl Sobel, *How the United States Government Works and The U.S. Constitution and You*

Nancy Ann Van Wie, *Travels With Max: U.S. Capitol Building Audio*

The President's Rap: From Washington to Clinton by Blaine Selkirk and Sara Jordan (2001)

The President's Rap: New Version (2001)

Arthur Meets the President by Marc Brown (1996)

Internet for Students

"American Presidents: Life Portraits,"

<www.americanpresidents.org>

"Life in the White House," <www.whitehouse.gov/kids>

"United States Presidents Drill," <http://www.edu4kids.com/pres>>

Internet for Teachers

"So You Want to Be President,"

<www.pampetty.com/president.htm>

Video/DVD

Portraits of American Presidents (1992)

ABC News: Presidents (1990)

THEMES AND MOTIFS

While reading the book, students should have a basic understanding of the major ideas that are presented in the book. The following themes and motifs are those that are most prominent in the story. Discuss the themes as they appear in the story.

Themes

- humor
- honesty
- patriotism
- diversity
- freedom

Motifs

- constitution
- presidential oath
- presidential seal
- United States culture
- White House

MEANING STUDY

Several important vocabulary words are used throughout the book. The words in bold are some of these. As students read, make sure that the vocabulary words are discussed and understood.

1. "...he won the campaign with a log cabin and hard cider slogan.
(A slogan is a catchy saying or phrase that presidential candidates use to gather the attention of the public. The slogan may rhyme with his name or deal with a main idea the president is trying to promote.)
2. Presidents and citizens have to follow the rules outlined in the Constitution of the United States.
(A constitution is a set of laws and rules that all citizens follow in order to have a peaceful country. Every president promises to uphold and abide by the rules stated in the United States constitution.)
3. William Harrison was thrifty.
(Thrifty means that a person is careful in the way that he or she spends money. A thrifty person saves money and/or other resources by carefully planning actions. William Harrison saved money and natural resources by walking to the market.)
4. The oath of office for the president is only thirty-five words long, but its meaning is much bigger.
(The oath of office is a promise that the president makes to follow the constitution and to serve the citizens of the United States. It ends with "preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States.")
5. "At his inaugural ball, George Washington danced..."
(Inauguration is the act of formally accepting a person into the presidency. It is the time that the president takes the oath of office and is announced president for the first time. The inaugural ball is a party that follows the actual inauguration.)
6. "Another route to the White House..."
(A route is a way of getting somewhere. For example, in the story, the author states that a route to get to the presidency is to be Vice-President first. There are several routes a person can follow to become president.)
7. "...if you want to be President—and stay president—be honest."
(Being honest simply means to always tell the truth. Presidents have the big responsibility of upholding the constitution and protecting the citizens of the United States. Being honest is one of the traits they must have to be successful at their jobs.)
8. Democrat Bill Clinton, and Republican Richard Nixon
(There are two main political parties in the United States, the Democratic and the Republican party. These are groups of people that come together because they share the same beliefs and ideals.)

COMPREHENSION/DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Students should orally discuss questions to provide some alternate levels of assessment. Discuss each question and have several students input their opinions. Students may also be asked to provide written answers for the questions as a source of formal assessment.

1. Take a look at the front cover of the book. What do you notice? What hints does the cover give to the mood of the book?

(The cover contains bold, bright pictures with a patriotic sketch of Mt. Rushmore. However, the presidents are smiling and laughing in the sketch. The cover points to the humorous nature of the book.)

2. Why do you think the author begins the book with the line she does? Does she give you room to make your own opinions about the good and the bad things about being president?
(The author begins by making a very general statement. Throughout the book, she adds details to her statement that there are good things and bad things about being president. However, she leaves plenty of room for individual interpretation of the statements—George Bush in the bowling alley and William Howard Taft holding up the cabbage that was thrown at his head)
3. The very first picture in the book contains a background of the White House with a president and first lady sitting outside having tea. There is also a dog in the picture. Why do you suppose the illustrator chose this picture as the opening scene of the book?
(The picture of the White House gives a clear representation of the presidency today. It shows the president and the first lady in modern clothes along with large, exaggerated smiles on their faces. It is probably meant to give some background of the job of president and the place where the president lives along with his lifestyle.)
4. Where are some examples of actual phrases that the actual presidents made? Why do you think these are included?
(William Howard Taft on page 11, Ronald Reagan on page 18, Abraham Lincoln on page 20, Warren Harding on page 21, etc. The actual words spoken by the presidents contribute to the theme that presidents are people, too. They lived somewhat normal lives and had emotions and feelings like common citizens. It may also serve as a way to add personality to the book.)
5. Why do you think that the author feels that physical characteristics are not important to becoming president? What are some specific examples? What do you think?
(She talks about the sizes of Abraham Lincoln, William Howard Taft, and James Madison. She also mentions the facial characteristics of Abraham Lincoln and Warren Harding while stating that their looks did not have a bearing on their success as president. The clothing of presidents is also mentioned. Allow students to share their own opinions.)
6. Look at several of the illustrations in the book. On some pages there are real photos of the presidents. What could the inclusion of these photos suggest?
(The author and illustrator use humor to carry out the major themes of the book. However, with the inclusion of some real photos, they force the reader to remember that the information is real, and the book contains real historical facts about the presidents. The pictures add to the credibility of the words.)
7. What does the author say about presidents and the importance of college, or furthering education? Why do you think she included this page? Do you think education is important to the presidency?
(The author could have included this page so that there was a realization that college and extended education may not

be necessary for all important careers. Students should realize that there has to be some extent of learning, if not necessarily in college. Some presidents may have had knowledge in government workings, social skills, agriculture, or history. Presidents also have to also learn what the citizens expect from them.)

8. What is the one thing that a president has to do to become and stay president? Why is this trait important in the presidency? Has anyone not followed this idea?

(A person has to be honest to become and stay president. People of the United States expect their leader to always tell them the truth. The president should behave in the manner in which he expects his citizens to behave. Some presidents have been documented as lying in office. Bill Clinton lied under oath, and Richard Nixon had his staff break into a campaign headquarters and steal campaign information.)

9. Did all the presidents find the job a good experience? How do you know? Why might the job of president be negative at some times?

(No, some presidents were worried they weren't doing a good job, and John Quincy Adams said it was the four most miserable years of his life. Allow students to give several opinions.)

10. The author states that every president was different from every other president. Give some examples and discuss why you think this is so.

(Answers will vary. There are several examples in the book. The picture on the corresponding page shows a great array of each president's aspects. Students may use the illustrations to jog their memories.)

11. How does the author reject the idea that some people believe that presidents have swelled heads, are greedy, and want power?

(The author gives several examples of presidents who performed volunteer acts to better their country. Thomas Jefferson sending Lewis and Clark on their expedition of the Louisiana Territory, Franklin Roosevelt giving food to the hungry, and John Kennedy sending the Peace Corps to teach others around the world are all examples.)

12. What is the oath that the president has to take? How many words is it? What does it mean?

(The oath is only 35 words long, and every president of the United States has to say the exact same words. It means that the president must first fill the needs of the people that he serves. He also promises to uphold the Constitution of the United States, which is the set of rules that every American citizen abides by.)

13. When looking at the end of the book and reading the ending words, what is the main theme that the author is trying to tell us?

(The author stresses that presidents are all different, and they have all carried out their jobs in different ways. However, the good presidents have been those who served their country and the people in it to the best of their abilities.)

14. What type of story do you think this is?

(The story has characteristics of a biography, but it contains several different people, so it also contains traits of a realistic or historic narrative. The end of the book contains precise but informative biographies about each of the presi-

dents up to the time of publication.)

ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Arts

1. The pictures in the book are representative sketches of real people, called caricatures (exaggerated facial features). Have students compare the style of illustrations in *So You Want To Be President?* with other historical books, especially those about the presidents. How are these styles similar and different? (Many historical books contain real photos or realistic drawings.) Make original caricatures of classmates, friends, or family members.
2. Use political cartoons, like those found in newspapers and/or magazines. Discuss their meanings. Do they resemble the illustrations in the book? Research the rise of the political cartoon. What kinds of things led to negative connotations of political cartoons? What do you suppose the goal of the illustrator was in the book? Create an original political cartoon.
3. Use the book as a model script. Students should research a particular president. Choose some of the most interesting characteristics of the president. Put on a living museum where students perform a biographical skit dressed as their chosen president.
4. Play a game of presidential charades. Each player should choose personality traits that are indicative of a certain president to portray during the game, or they may choose a president at random from a box or hat. Have students broken into teams so that one team attempts to guess the president of the opposing team.
5. Make a scale model of the White House using craft supplies such as craft sticks, wooden dowels, paint, glue, etc. Have different groups research different rooms to create. Use pictures from the book to provide a basis of what the inside of the White House looks like.

History and Social Studies

1. Use at least three to five presidents characterized in the book to create a time-line of a certain period in American history. Chart the main events of the period. Do actions of one president sometimes lead to actions of another?
2. Have students research some commonalities of presidents that served in similar eras. (For example, Ronald Reagan, George Bush, and Bill Clinton or Abraham Lincoln, Andrew Johnson, and Ulysses S. Grant) What are some similarities and/or differences in the styles? Do you think that certain points in American history have contributed to the style of our presidents?
3. The book discussed several presidents that were involved with the armed forces. Research the different branches of the armed forces, and find out how many and which presidents were involved with each branch. Since the president becomes the commander in chief of the United States military as he assumes office, is it important to have some military knowledge? Create a chart or cluster map that describes the presidents' involvement in the armed forces.
4. Think about the job of vice-president. What are the main responsibilities of the vice-president? Research several vice-presidents. Which ones have gone on to become president? Do you think the experience of being vice-president would help positively or negatively if he became president?

5. Study a map of the United States. Plot each president's name on the map on the state where he was/is from. Is there a state that has produced the most United States presidents? Which states have had the most presidents? Is there a pattern? Why do you think there is/is not?

Language Arts

1. Watch or read examples of campaign and/or political acceptance speeches. Use information learned about the presidency of the United States to create an original speech to write and perform.
2. Debate a certain present-day issue in true presidential style. Students should research their topics and be prepared to defend their positions while cross-examining their opponents. Some examples of debate topics are: whether or not to wear school uniforms, year-around vs. nine/three school years, whether or not it would be conducive to start and end school an hour later, or teacher/student ratio.
3. Discuss the style of the author's writing. Does the humor add to the story or hurt it? Have students create a detailed critical analysis of the book complete with specific examples of humor. They should include their opinions about whether or not they enjoyed the history portrayed in a humorous fashion.
4. Compare and contrast two presidents. Use the time period, the events in American history, and the personality traits of each president to form an opinion about positive traits in a good president. Will everyone have the same ideas? Why or why not?

Mathematics

1. Look at United States money. Compare the bills and the coins. Who are the pictures on the bills? What is on the coins? Why do you suppose money contains pictures of presidents and other patriotic symbols?
2. Research several money mints in the United States. Which president opened the first mint and/or first implemented the use of money? At what time in American history did these things happen? Is there a reason the United States had to have a standard system of money that was recognized by all citizens?
3. Conduct a mock voting session. Set up a polling place and box. Choose a position that is important to the class (class president, line leader, class representative) and vote on several candidates. Graph or chart the results.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

1. The book discusses several occupations that the presidents have had over the course of history. What kinds of jobs would be helpful to the job of being president? Make a chart of several jobs along with their characteristics that would be useful in the presidency. Compare and contrast the jobs and figure out the best matches.
2. Research your community's government system along with the United States government system as a whole. Is your community's government just a miniature version of that of the United States, or does your community government work in another way?
3. Several men who became president had some sort of family relation to a past president. Use a family genealogy to see if students have had any community, state, or national government officials in their families. Discuss the official role

of the family member and the activities he or she had to perform. Interviews could be conducted if that family member is still alive. Share findings with the class. If students do not find an official in their backgrounds, have them use a modern president or county official.

4. Imagine you are running for president of the United States. Write a detailed account of the things you would want to accomplish in your term. What is important to you? Have those same ideas been important to presidents in the past and the present?
5. Pretend you could interview a president, as mentioned on pages 30-31 in the book. What kinds of questions would you ask the president? What do you think some of his answers would be? How would you feel if people always wanted to talk to you and ask you questions?
6. Think about each detail given in the book about each president. Decide if you have any traits in common with any of the presidents. Which presidents are you most like? Share your findings with your classmates.
3. Look at the front cover of the book. What is on the picture? (Mt. Rushmore) Do some research on the historic monument and write a detailed report on your findings. Where is it? Who is on it? Why do you suppose those certain presidents were chosen?

ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

1. Do you think the office of president is an important one? What are the main responsibilities of the president, and how is the president chosen?
2. Describe how the author's style in writing complements the illustrations in the book. The book's words take on a light, satirical tone. Do the pictures match the tone of the story or undermine the words?
3. Read the presidential oath on page 46 in the book. What do the words mean? Explain why each and every president has to recite these exact words when he takes office.
4. Do you think you gained valuable information about the presidents from the author? Is it important to look at small details in each president's life so that you realize that each president is a regular person? What are some of the pros and cons of knowing some of these minute details?

VOCABULARY TEST

Read the sentence and think about the meaning of the boldfaced (dark) word. Choose the answer that is the closest to the meaning of the boldfaced word. Put the answer in the space at the beginning of the sentence.

- _____ 1. The **constitution** says you have to be 35 years old to be president.
a. letters written on a chalkboard
b. set of rules that a country or city follows
c. book that tells a story about someone
- _____ 2. Presidents' **personalities** have all been different.
a. the way a person acts and lives
b. houses
c. kinds of clothes
- _____ 3. He was **thrifty**. He walked to market each morning.
a. very tall
b. saves money
c. nice to others
- _____ 4. At his **inaugural** ball, the president danced.
a. to go to school
b. to be put into office
c. to tell others what to do
- _____ 5. If you want to stay president, you have to be **honest**...
a. not telling a lie
b. pretty
c. able to talk loudly
- _____ 6. Every president has taken an **oath**.
a. promise
b. letter
c. help from others
- _____ 7. His **opponents** listed his fights, duels, and brawls.
a. parents
b. friends
c. people running for president
- _____ 8. He was an **expert** on agriculture
a. writer
b. person who knows a lot about something
c. someone who loves dogs
- _____ 9. One president was **impeached** for lying.
a. take a walk around the park
b. taken on a tour of a city
c. taken out of office for doing something wrong
- _____ 10. ... sent **volunteers** to teach and help others.
a. those who do things without expecting payment or reward
b. people who work in a factory
c. a person running for president

Part II: Matching (10 points)

Directions: Find the best answer to the description. Write your answer choice in the space in front of the number. Each answer will only be used one time.

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| _____ 1. He was the smallest president (5 feet 4 inches tall). | a. George Bush |
| _____ 2. This president had the most brothers and sisters. | b. Ronald Reagan |
| _____ 3. His bathtub could hold four men. | c. William Howard Taft |
| _____ 4. His dog, Millie, wrote a book about being a pet in the White House. | d. James Madison |
| _____ 5. This president was a movie actor before he took office. | e. Benjamin Harrison |

Part III: True/False (20 points)

Mark each of the following statements either **T** for true or **F** if any part is false.

- _____ 1. All presidents have to have the same way of thinking and acting.
- _____ 2. Ronald Reagan was the oldest person to ever become president.
- _____ 3. Presidents should care only about themselves.
- _____ 4. The illustrations in the story look like real photos.
- _____ 5. Every president has to promise to follow the Constitution of the United States.
- _____ 6. Presidents have to live in mansions before they can be elected.
- _____ 7. A person has to be at least 35 years old to become president.
- _____ 8. Only handsome men can be good presidents.
- _____ 9. Some of our presidents have been in the army.
- _____ 10. Pets are not allowed in the White House.

Part IV: Essay (Extra Credit)

Directions: Use facts from the book along with your opinions to write the best answer for the question. You may choose one of the two essays for extra points on your test.

- 1. There are several good things and several bad things about being president that were mentioned in the story. What are two of these good things and two of these bad things?
- 2. What do you think you would have to do to become president? What do you think is important for a good president to have or to do?

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Directions: Choose the best answer for the blank in the sentence. Write the letter of the answer in the blank in front of the number.

- _____ 1. _____ had a pony named Algonquin for a pet.
a. Theodore Roosevelt b. George Bush c. Richard Nixon d. Harry S. Truman
- _____ 2. The first priority of a good president is _____.
a. getting into a fight b. being rich c. building roads d. to serve country and people
- _____ 3. This president wrote the Declaration of Independence.
a. Thomas Jefferson b. Abraham Lincoln c. John Adams d. Bill Clinton
- _____ 4. _____ presidents were all named James (more than any other name).
a. 8 b. 4 c. 6 d. 3
- _____ 5. The president lives in a really big house called the _____.
a. Golden House b. mansion c. cabin d. White House
- _____ 6. This president saved money while he was in office. He walked to the market with a basket.
a. William H. Taft b. William Harrison c. James Monroe d. Herbert Hoover
- _____ 7. John Quincy Adams was an excellent _____.
a. swimmer b. banjo player c. driver d. builder
- _____ 8. This story can best be described as _____.
a. fantasy b. science fiction c. nonfiction d. fiction
- _____ 9. It took _____ years for a woman to run for vice-president.
a. about 15 b. almost 200 c. almost 450 d. about 345
- _____ 10. _____ bought the land that used to be called the Louisiana Territory.
a. Thomas Jefferson b. John F. Kennedy c. Woodrow Wilson d. Martin Van Buren

Part II: Matching (10 points)

Directions: Find the best answer to the description. Write your answer choice in the space in front of the number. Each answer will only be used one time.

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| _____ 1. Someone threw a cabbage at this president | a. George Bush |
| _____ 2. He was the oldest man to ever be elected president. | b. William Howard Taft |
| _____ 3. He hated broccoli. | c. John Quincy Adams |
| _____ 4. This president won the Civil War. | d. Ronald Reagan |
| _____ 5. Playing the flute was one of his favorite things. | e. Abraham Lincoln |

Part III: True/False (20 points)

Mark each of the following statements either **T** for true or **F** if any part is false.

- _____ 1. To be president of the United States, a person must know how to dance.
- _____ 2. The president has to promise to follow the rules of the Constitution of the United States.
- _____ 3. The presidents of the United States all loved their job.
- _____ 4. There is a swimming pool, bowling alley, and movie theater in the president's house.
- _____ 5. No one who has been president has been related to any other president.
- _____ 6. John Kennedy sent volunteers around the world to teach and help others.
- _____ 7. To be president, a person has to be vice-president first.
- _____ 8. All presidents have to graduate from college.
- _____ 9. Presidents can be rude to anyone they want.
- _____ 10. One of the presidents was a movie actor before he became president.

Part IV: Essay (Extra Credit)

Directions: Use facts from the book along with your opinions to write the best answer for the question. You may choose one of the two essays for extra points on your test.

- 1. Do all the presidents have the same personality (the way they act and live)? Why do you think they do or do not?
- 2. Talk about how the pictures in the story give you ideas about the way that the presidents lived and the way they did things in their lives. Do the pictures help or hurt the story? Why or why not?

ANSWER KEY

VOCABULARY TEST

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. b | 6. a |
| 2. a | 7. c |
| 3. b | 8. b |
| 4. b | 9. c |
| 5. a | 10. a |

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Multiple Choice (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. b | 6. a |
| 2. c | 7. c |
| 3. a | 8. d |
| 4. d | 9. a |
| 5. b | 10. d |

Part II: Matching (10 points)

- d
- e
- c
- a
- b

Part III: True/False (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. T | 6. F |
| 2. F | 7. T |
| 3. F | 8. F |
| 4. F | 9. T |
| 5. T | 10. F |

Part IV: Essay (Extra Credit)

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Multiple Choice (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. a | 6. b |
| 2. d | 7. a |
| 3. a | 8. c |
| 4. c | 9. b |
| 5. d | 10. a |

Part II: Matching (10 points)

- b
- d
- a
- e
- c

Part III: True/False (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. F | 6. T |
| 2. T | 7. F |
| 3. F | 8. F |
| 4. T | 9. F |
| 5. F | 10. T |

Part IV: Essay (Extra Credit)

Answers will vary.



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