Slide 1

Text: American and Arizona Government for Elementary Teachers

Presentation 8: The Presidency

Audio: Importance. And before we begin I'd like you to think about who in our history is the best and the worst president. I'd like you to pause the presentation and write down your choice. Write down the three best and the three worst presidents in your estimation. You should consider things more than what political party they belong to rather, think of things such as their accomplishments and whether the country benefited from their administration, benefits that have really lasted the test of time. Now, after you've written down your list, then advance to the next slide on the presentation.

Slide 2

Text: AEPA Objectives

0011 Understand the structure, organization, and operation of the federal government

AZ Social Studies Standard, Strand 3

Concept 2: Structure of Government

Audio: This presentation, we'll look at objective 11, you have the AEPA exam. Objective 11 is understanding the structure organization and operation of the federal government. We will also look at the concept two of the Arizona Social Studies Standards Strand 3 which deals with the structure of government. As always, I recommend that you look at the social study standards articulated by grade level for Strand 3-Civics and Government. And look at the objectives that are listed under concept two so you can familiarize yourself with the objectives that you will need to know and be able to do. And then at the end of this presentation, go back and review those objectives and see which ones you have learned and mastered.

Slide 3

Text: Who is the best president?

[Table of top 10 best and worst presidents]

Audio: What is represented here is a ranking of the 10 best and 10 worst presidents in our nation's history. Now this ranking was put together by survey of professional historians, this would be academics and historian writers ranking the leadership level of these presidents using their understanding of American history. And what we see is, that there are some common things to presidents that are considered the best. One of them is doesn't hurt your view of history to be killed while in office. Most of the presidents who died in office are on the best list even JFK who is not in office really long enough to have many accomplishments to earn a place on that list. But nevertheless, there he is. Other commonalities are war time presidents tend to be high on that list,
presidents that have seen the nation through a war or a time of intense crisis. So we have the Revolutionary War, we have the Civil War, we have World War II, and Cold War years, all listed on that ranking. Now some commonalities on the worst presidents are scandal. The presidents on the left there were marked by graft or corruption that became public. Some of them are on that list because they were not very active, they didn't accomplished much at all. They sort of squandered the potential that is the presidency. Some of them are presidents who had such severe domestic opposition in congress that they were simply incapable of passing their legislation. Now, I'd like to compare this list to your list. Odds are, your list looks a little bit different because it's populated by modern presidents of the 20th century. Most people only know enough about them, more recent presidents, to make this kind of judgment. But these kinds of list lead us to ask the question. What makes a good president? What differentiates a good president from a bad president? Now what we're going to in this presentation is we're going to examine the job description of the presidency. All of the expectations that we have for that office. We'll look at the authority by which the president operates. And the history of that office. And how it has changed overtime. And then we'll end by returning this question of what makes a president successful or not? And we'll begin by looking at the job description.

**Slide 4**

**Text:** The Job Description

How many roles do you play in a given day?

**Audio:** So I'd like to start by asking yourself, how many roles do you play in a given day? How many hats do you wear? You're a student right now while you're listening to this presentation. You're a wife or husband perhaps, or boyfriend, girlfriend. You're a mother or father or a child, son or daughter. You're a sibling maybe. You're friend. You're an employee, maybe you're an employer. You're a counselor perhaps. We carry all of these hats with us. As we go to through our life, we take these hats on and off. And sometimes, even our mode of speaking will change. When I'm speaking to you through this presentation, be assured, I have entirely different tone of voice than when I'm speaking to my children when they have not done the dishes which I asked them to do six times. So we change the way we interact. And we change our personas even a bit as we move through our day and change from one role to the next.

**Slide 5**

**Text:** The Job Description

- Head of State
- World Leader
- Party Leader
- National Leader
- CEO of the Executive Branch
Audio: Likewise, the President wears many hats. The President is expected to fulfill several different roles probably, more than anyone person can actually feel. Different times a day, the President probably works on all five of these roles. And these are being the head of state, the world leader, the party leader, the national leader, and the CEO, the executive branch. We'll look at each of this in turn. But what you'll find is that, it's a pretty full plate that the President has.

Slide 6

Text: Head of State

[Photo of White House with lighted Christmas tree] [Photo of George W. Bush accepting a sports jersey] [Photo of George W. Bush hugging a crying woman and girl] [Photo of Barack Obama making a toast]

Audio: One of the key roles of the President is to function as head of state. Now, the head of state is the symbolic head of government. Sort of the embodiment of the United States. Here in America, our President functions as head of state, and the head of government. Whereas, in other countries like England for example, that's divided into two different people. So the British Prime Minister is the head of government. And the Queen of England is the head of state, that symbolic embodiment of the English people. So the President is expected to do symbolic pro forma type of thing that are expected for a leader to do. So the examples on the slide are the lighting of the Christmas tree. The President presses the button, the Christmas tree goes on and the nation has officially began the shopping season of Christmas. The President welcomes the winners of the Super Bowl to the White House regardless of who wins and whether the President bet for or against them, they're expected to on behalf of the nation congratulate the winner of the Super Bowl. In the left hand, lower left hand corner we have picture of President Bush consoling people in the Katrina disaster. The President is the chief mourner when disaster strikes the nation. So when the Space Shuttle Columbia exploded killing the astronauts, President Reagan gave a speech that consoled the nation. When the Oklahoma City bombing occurred, President Clinton gave a speech to console the nation. When September 11th happened and President Bush stood on the ruins of the World Trade Center with a megaphone in his hand he was talking to the firefighters and one of the firefighters said, "We can't hear you" so they handed him the bullhorn and he'd said out the bullhorn, "You can hear me now, you're all going to hear me. In fact the whole world is going to hear from us about this". And it sort of embodied the sort of this rule need for revenge that the country was feeling at that time. And he then gave some consolatory speeches at the National Cathedral that consoled the nation. One of the great criticisms of President Bush was the way he handled the Katrina hurricane that he was on vacation and he didn't cut his vacation short. And it took him a couple of days to get around to addressing the nation about the disaster. And so Americans were watching this sort of terrible image of lawlessness and suffering go on their TV screens for days. And no word from the President. And people thought, "Where is our leader?" So that's the kind of symbolic leadership that presidents are expected to engage in. The picture on the lower right is the Beer Summit with Obama and policemen and the professor who got into a squabble. And the President injected himself into this not because the president's job to stop all arguments that happened around the country, but as
head of state to make a symbolic image or motion towards healing the racial rift that's kind of under current in the country. So these are all head of the state functions. That they're not using power in the sense of sending troops off to go invade a country or signing a piece of paper that commits resources. But it's willing--the very real power of persuasion that a President has. And that our country has now come to expect of the modern President in the head of state function. And one last illustration to show how this can be good as well as bad when President Bush senior was visiting Japan on a state visit, it's when the economy was in recession, this was in the late 1980s, lots of people were talking about how the Japanese economy was going to overpower the American economy, Japan was going to be the next super power. And these were all the sort of America in decline discussions that were going on the late '80s. Well President Bush goes to Japan and has the flu and jetlag on top of the flu. And so he's at this state dinner in Japan. And all of a sudden, he turns and just vomits into the lap of the Japanese Prime Minister. And everyone is sort of aghast. And there's pictures of the Japanese Prime Minister sort of holding Bush and consoling him, patting his head, it's all going to be okay. And all the commentators read great symbolism into that that the American giant was ill, and that Japan was the country that was going to come to its rescue, and aid our declines. It would be a soft landing not a hard landing. And some Japanese commentators were saying "And here go the Americans abusing us yet again". So it can be ridiculous at times. But the point is, we expect the leader to behave presidential in the sense of functioning as a head of state.

Slide 7

**Text:** World Leader

[Photo of Barack Obama shaking hands with a head of state]

**Audio:** The next role to discuss is that of world leader. And the American President is not just the leader of America. We like to say that the American President is the leader of the free world. And by that, we mean the entire world. The world, ever since World War II, has looked to the United States for leadership and that is for several reasons. One of them is we are the largest economy on the planet, and have been since the outbreak of World War II. Which means that we are the country with the resources to do things. Do great things on the planet that other country simply do not have the resources to do. So we're very rich. We're also very powerful. We ended World War II with a ginormous military with bases position all over the globe. And so we have the ability to project force immediately anywhere on the planet. If the President picks up the phone, then someone can be annihilated half the planet away. And we're the only country in the planet that can do that. That means, we have responsibility that the world expects us to maintain global peace and stability, to police, to oceans water waste, to prevent piracy, to guarantee the safety of commerce. To prevent local outbreaks of violence from spilling over into neighboring states. These are all things the world expects us to do because we have the capability and resources to do it, should we choose to. Madeleine Albright likes to refer to the United States as the essential nation, meaning the rest of the world can talk all at once to about it plans, but unless the United States is in agreement, nothing happens that you have to have the United States on board and cooperating and contributing in order for anything to be accomplished on the world
stage. So, people in other countries follow our elections even more closely than many Americans follow our elections, because who our President is matters to them almost as much as it matters to us. So, this is a key role that the President has to play is to be the world leader.

Slide 8
Text: Party Leader

[Photo of George H. W. Bush at a 1988 election event]

Audio: The next office or duty is that of party leader. The President is the official head of their political party. So right now in 2010, President Obama is the head of the Democratic Party where Michael Steele is the head of the Republican Party. Now, when President Bush was in office, he was the head of the Republican Party and Howard Dean was the head of the Democratic Party. So, whoever is elected President is automatically the head of their political party. And the President is seen as responsible for the electoral success or failure of their party. For this reason, midterm elections are often seen as a plebiscite or judgment on how well the President is being viewed. And that may or may not be true, there's a lot of data that shows that the midterm elections are a lot more about the local race than it is about the President. But the perceptions there, all the same. Now, when the President is elected--if the President is popular, then a lot of other members of the President's political party are also elected. That's called the coattail effect and that harkens back to the 1800s when tuxedo had long tails on the suit coat. And so the image you get is of the President walking in the office wearing this sort of old fashion tuxedo and the five or six or 10 or 12 people are standing on the tail of the coat being dragged in to office along with the President. Now another thing that the President does functioning as party leader is raising money. That's one of the main jobs in this role as a party leader. So, the President will go around during election session and speak on behalf of candidates of their political party. And they'll raise money because people will pay up to 1,000 dollars, a plate to be able to be in the room and have dinner with the President of the United States. Many people call this the rubber chicken circuit because the meals, the banquets are usually overcooked chicken and overcooked vegetables being sold for an awful lot of money. That's because it's a fund raiser. So, President Bush traveled around the country, pitching for Republicans. President Obama has traveled around the country pitching for Democrats. President Clinton traveled around the country pitching for Democrats. That's--it's part of the job is trying to improve the electoral chances of your political party when you're President.

Slide 9
Text: National Leader

[Photo of Barack Obama signing a law in the Oval Office]

Audio: The next role to think about is that of national leader. Now most countries, this would be prime minister, meaning someone who is in charge of making sure that legislation passes through the Congress and is passed into law. That public policy moves in a direction that the
President wants it to move in. Now, as national leader, one way to think of that is that they are the chief lobbyist for the country. We see, presidents make bids for policy initiatives that they think are important or have a higher priority. And they coax and cajole and threaten to try to get congressional leadership to fall in line with their vision of what should happen. We saw this with President Obama and the Healthcare Reform that went through. He gave a set of directions, and then just sort of handed it over to Congress to let them do it without a whole lot of support or guidance. And that, the result of that was a lengthy process and multiple plans being put forward until Obama reengaged the process and began to use his own political capital to control, persuade and try to get the votes behind the version of healthcare that he wanted to go through. And at times, he was fighting his own political party. At times, he was fighting the other political party. Now, a similar situation happened with President Bush. In his second term, he tried to enact a signature bid of legislation in Social Security form and he gave speeches and he made policy proposals and recommendations and he tried to coerce and cajole and persuade Congress to move in the direction he wanted them to go. Without success, even though Congress was full of people of his own political party, he was unable to get them to pick up a Social Security form treaty form package. So, this job as national leader is a difficult one. But it's one that we expect our presidents to do well.

Slide 10

**Text:** CEO of Executive Branch

[Logos of federal agencies]

**Audio:** The final role that the President has to play is that of CEO of the Executive Branch. We'll talk about this role in more detail later. But in essence, the President is the head of the executive branch of government. And is therefore, ultimately responsible for everything the government does. Now the President may not even be aware of many of the actions of the government. But nevertheless, the President will be judge and evaluated by how well each of these agencies does their job and their task. So I just say, we'll talk more about this particular role in a few minutes. But it's another key role that the President is expected to fulfill.

Slide 11

**Text:** CEO of Executive Branch

[Image of layered pyramid labeled: President is at the top of a pyramid of power]

[Image of layered, inverted pyramid labeled: But at the bottom of a funnel of information]

**Audio:** One of the great ironies of power is that the more power you have, the less information you typically have as the President is the CEO of the executive branch. We can think of the President as being at the top of a pyramid of power. So if we'll get all the things a federal government can do, and who is the boss of the male carrier walking down your street. And who is that person's boss, and that person has a boss and that person has a boss. Ultimately, you get
up to the President as the ultimate boss of the entire administration at the top of that pyramid of power. However, the more power you have, the less information you are likely to have to decide how to use that power. The mail carrier knows exactly what's going on, on the street that they're delivering their mail to. But the President doesn't know. The President isn't going to be told what's happening on that street. At the bottom levels of government is where the most information is known and gathered. I had a friend of mine who worked in the White House with the CIA and he was an analyst for Humanitarian Affairs. And he would write briefs for what was going on around the world in the Humanitarian Affairs, and that was his area of responsibility. And he would write a detailed report about a particular situation. And he would then hand that report to his supervisor. Now, his supervisor got his report and also got the reports of six or seven other people. Maybe it's the East Africa desk and the Eastern Europe desk and the Central Asia desk and the Latin America desk, and they're all handed to the main Humanitarian Affairs person. And that person's going to read all of those reports and decide out of these several reports what's really important. And they're going to take that little negative information and put it in their own report. And all the rest of the information just stays on their desk. And then, they write their report and give it to their superior. And so, their superior gets the report from the Humanitarian desk and the report from the Missile Proliferation desk and the report from the Weapons of Mass Destruction desk, and a report from the Industrial Espionage desk. And they get all of these reports in and they read through those reports, and they say, "Out of all these reports, what's the most important piece of information here?" and they'll take that nugget and pass it on to their supervisor. And so it goes. So, as each level of the hierarchy passes on less detail up to the higher level. Now hopefully, the important stuff rises to the top through this process. But, as we've seen over and over again, crucial details don't get pass along up the chain of command. So that by the time, all of these information are handed to the President. The Presidential Daily Briefing is a compilation of the CIA and the FBI and the Treasury and the Defense Intelligence and the Secret Service, and all of these different agencies, there's about 11 different Intelligence Agencies, they've all contributed information for the President's Daily Briefing and it has to fit in a two-page, single spaced document. Well, they could have backed a semi-truck up to the White House salon and empty. They didn't say, "Here's everything we learned about the world yesterday, Mr. President." That would be unworkable. Instead, they give him that two-page report and that's all the information the President to go by. So, the President is at the top of a pyramid of power, but they're at the bottom of a funnel of information. Now, there's two reasons to understand this. One, is that it's not really a valid criticism if a president doesn't know everything that happens in the government wide. That's just--it doesn't work that way. But another reason I don't understand this concept of a funnel of information is that at each level where information get to passed along, somebody acts as a gatekeeper. They decide what information gets pass along and what information doesn't. And as that information gets passed upward the chain, those gatekeepers become more and more important as they decide what is going to command the President's attention. And if your pet project doesn't make to that final list, it will never get to the Presidential attention and prioritization that it may need. And so, the people who control access to the President become very powerful individuals, you know, of themselves and that's an important part of the power calculation of the way Washington works is, is who controls access to the President.
Slide 12

Text: White House

[Photo of the White House]

Audio: So thinking in terms of the funnel of information or the pyramid of power, we can think of the executive branch as a series of concentric circles with the President in the middle and other agencies or groups controlling information going in and power going out. Now the first circle we would draw around the President then would be the White House and the White House staff. The White House has the Office of the Vice President, the Office of the First Lady. It also has offices such as the National Security Council, the National Economic Council, the advisors to the President with various offices in the White House. Sometimes, the directors of these offices are referred to as Czars that harkens back to the Reagan administration when he created the Office of Drug Control. And the person he appointed to that office, he referred to as the Drug Czar. Meaning, his job was to coordinate all the actions of the many federal agencies involved with the drug problem. Now that person doesn't actually work for any of those agencies. And they don't have the authority to direct any of those agencies do anything. But having an office in the White House, gives those agencies a voice, an access point to the President that they might not otherwise have. Now there's been a lot of inks, ink spilled over the issue of Obama having appointing lots of Czars. And some have suggested that that's somehow undemocratic for him to do that. He's just following a long tradition of presidents appointing presidential advisors who job it is to focus on a particular policy area to give the President advice and also to pass along presidential directives to the heads of the government agencies. It's sort of like having a mid level manager in a company. And so, that that--that's that first circle of power is the White House and the White House staff.

Slide 13

Text: CEO of Executive Branch

- White House staff
- Growth of White House Staff
  - Franklin D. Roosevelt: 47
  - Harry Truman: 200
  - Nixon: 555
  - Ronald Regan: 600
  - Bush Jr.: around 500
  - Obama: 487

Audio: And to get a sense for the size of the White House staff, these figures show some of the more recent presidents and how large there White House staff was. Now if we go back in the early history, President Washington just had his own personal secretary and a few servants was the extent of the White House staff. Just a handful of people. But in the modern presidency, the
staff in the White House has grown considerably starting with around 50 with Franklin Roosevelt to the 100's by his successors. The high point was Ronald Reagan. He had a larger White House staff than any other president. And Obama and Bush had about the same amount around 500. So, it's a fairly large group of people that work on presidential priorities and presidential directives.

**Slide 14**

**Text:** Executive Office of the President

[Photo of old Executive Office building]

**Audio:** The next circle to draw in the rings of power around the President would be the executive Office of the President. This is a picture of the old executive office building which is across the street from the White House. The executive office has grown to the point that it long ago outgrew this office building. But there are still some offices in there. Most important among the Executive Office Building is the OMB, the Office of Management and Budget. This is the President's budgetary tool. And all federal agencies are required to write up a budget, a budget request. And they submit that request to the OMB. The OMB then goes through that request line by line and brings it into compliance with the President's prioritization. So, if the President says, "No pencils?" then the OMB goes through and zeros out all of the budget requests for pencil. Right, that's a clear silly example, but that's the kind of thing that happens. It's a way for the President to exert some authority control over the various government agencies. Now once the OMB has taken all those budget requests and put them together, that then comprises the President's budget. And the President submits that budget to Congress, and Congress then slices and dices it further reducing the funding of some agencies giving more funding than requested to other agencies depending on the priorities of that particular Congress that year. But it's a very powerful office within the executive branch because it sets that budget and prioritization for all the other government agencies. Another office within the Executive Office is the National Security Council. This office varies in importance from president to president. Some presidents have relied heavily on their National Security Advisor. One comes to mind of President Bush with Condoleezza Rice and his first term in the build up to the Iraq war. Condoleezza Rice then moved over to the Secretary of State position and the National Security Advisor position plummeted an importance. And Bush received his advice from the state department at that point from Condoleezza Rice. Nixon is another example of a president who have really relied on the National Security Advisor who is the head of this council, and that was Henry Kissinger. He didn't trust the State Department and basically didn't listened to any of their recommendations. The reformed policy was run out of the National Security Council. Now, this council is essentially a board which has all of the intelligence and defense agencies have representation. And so, they will call meeting and say, "All right there are flooding going in Pakistan, what do we know about that?" And the CIA would talk about what they know what's going on the ground and how it's affecting the Taliban. And the army would talk about how the flooding is affecting their supply chain for the troops in Afghanistan. And the State Department would talk about the humanitarian disaster of the hundreds of thousands people displaced by the flooding. And all this different agencies bring with their area of expertise has to the table to try to construct a
meaningful picture of what's going on. And then National Security Advisor then takes that back to the President and advises the President on what course of action, what policy the National Security Council recommends. Now, there is also a National Economic Council which has a similar job or duty with domestic policy but it doesn't get near the press that the National Security Council does because they don't have guns, I think. But the National Economic Council will have all of the agencies that have some knowledge or impact on the job and economic situation. So, the Treasury and the Department of Labor and the Department of Commerce, even the EPA. They would all be at the table and they would say, "All right, how long is this recession going to last?" And the Department of Labor Statistics would say, "Well here's what's going on," and the SCC would say, "Here's what's happening on the stock market." And the Department of Housing and Urban Development would say, "Here's what's going on with housing," and they all would bring their piece of the puzzle to the table. And the National Economic advisor will then compile all that and return to the President with a picture of what's going on, so the President can formulate a policy response. So, these are some of duties that occur in the Executive Office of the President. They are powerful, but obviously, not as powerful as the White House staff. Because this folks have to go through the White House staff in order to get an appointment with the President. And as I said before, power is all about access in Washington.

Slide 15

Text: Cabinet

[Photo of President Obama in a cabinet meeting]

Audio: That issue of access illustrates the importance of the president's cabinet. The cabinets is the name we gave to the group of agencies who have direct access to the President. They have an occasional cabinet meeting where they don't have to go through the OMB or the White House Chief of Staff in order to get some face-to-face time with the President and pitch what their agencies priorities are and receive direction from the President on what their agency ought to be doing. Now, which agencies merit the cabinet rank vary from president to president. Presidents promote and demote agencies into cabinet levels status. President Reagan famously demoted the Department of Education. So, it just became the Agency of Education. And then when Bush Sr. became President. He re-promoted it to cabinet level status and it once again became the Department of Education. Another example of this would be with President Bush and Homeland Security. After 09/11, Bush created an office of Homeland Security which operated out of the White House office. It was essentially as a Homeland Security Czar are to use the modern vernacular. That didn't work for reasons that we'll discuss later. And so Congress passed the law creating a new government agency, the Department of Homeland Security. And that department was immediately granted cabinet level status. So, if you look closely to the picture, you'll see Janet Napolitano sitting at the table as Obama's head of that agency. So, the cabinets have--give access to the President for their agency. These agencies though typically also operate as an umbrella agency for lots of subsidiary groups. So, for example, if the ICE agency, the Immigration and Costumes Enforcement Agency, needs some direction from the President and has some prioritization that it wants to recommend the director of ICE can't just go to the
President. The director of ICE would go to the head of Homeland Security Johnette Napolitano who as a Cabinet member is guaranteed some access to the President at the very least during the Cabinet meetings, she can bring that up. And take that position from ICE and put it on the table in front of the President. And so that, that's one function that the cabinet level agencies give. It's another circle of power that is further removed than the White House or the Executive Office. But is closer than the rest of the Federal Bureaucracy.

Slide 16

Text: The Bureaucracy

[Images of logos of multiple bureaucracies]

Finally, the last circle we would draw would be the rest of the bureaucracy. And this would be the agencies that are either subsidiary to a Cabinet level agency which means they have to go through their Cabinet level like the ICE Homeland Security example I gave. Or perhaps they are an independent agency like AMTRAK or Post Office or the EPA that does not have another agency it has to go through. It's independent, it's not part of an umbrella group. But it's not necessarily on the Cabinet either. There's government corporations. Amtrak again being an example that there is independent agencies like the SCC or the FCC that are independent regulatory agencies. These are all groups that are part of the bureaucracy. They might have some access to the President, but only if they can get someone on that one of the inner circles to grant them that access, or I guess if there's some terrible tragedy and the President calls them up, but that's usually not a good thing for, of head of an agency. So, we will talk about the bureaucracy in general in much greater detail in a separate presentation.

Slide 17

Text: The authority to do the job

- Formal powers
- Implied powers
- Informal powers

Audio: Now that we've described the scope of the job that the President has and some of the factors surrounding the President while they do that job. Let's look at the authority by which the President does the job where--where do all this jobs comes from. And there's three different types of powers that the President has. There are formal powers, which are those that are expressly in the constitution; they're sometimes called enumerated powers. They're in black and white, right there in the constitution. Then there are implied powers which are powers that may not be in black and white necessarily. But the powers that are formal suggest in order to do that job, they need to be able to do these other things. They were implied in the Office of the President. And there's a third category that are informal powers. These are powers that aren't anywhere in the constitution, but the real power, just the same. They're powers that we give the President merely by the attention and status we accord with the Office of the President. And then
enables the President to do things that he might not otherwise be able to do. So, let's look at each of these types of power that the President has.

Slide 18

Text: Formal Powers

[Photo of John F. Kennedy signing a bill]

Audio: The first type of power are the formal powers. And again, these are the ones that are explicitly in the constitution. The first of this is the ability to sign legislation in the law which is what is pictured here. That gives the President the ultimate say in what laws are passed. How long with signing the bill into law to make it official? The President has the option of a veto. And the Presidential veto means that that law is rejected. It then goes back to Congress, and Congress has to have a two thirds majority vote in order to override that veto and make it a law in the phase of a presidential opposition. Now, presidents typically try not to use a veto, because a veto is an indicator that they have failed to move the legislative process in the direction that they wanted to go. So, the number of vetoes wielded by a president are more of an indication of a president's failures than an indication of a strong president. The same token, a president needs to be strong enough to stand up to Congress to veto legislation that they disagree with. Now, with one little wrinkle on the veto is, if the President veto's a bill, and that veto can be overwritten by Congress. But if the President takes a bill and doesn't sign it in the law, it automatically becomes law without his signature after 10 days. So, if Congress hands the President a law, and then ends it session, so it's no longer in session. Then, the bill only becomes law if Congress is in session. So, the President concede on that bill, not sign it and the bill dies if Congress is adjourned. So, that's called the pocket veto, the President just putting the bill on his pocket and pretending that it doesn't exist. That only works if the bills is given to the President at the very end of a legislative session and Congress is adjourned. Okay, another formal power that the President has is that of commander in chief. The president is the ultimate civilian, the highest civilian authority when it comes to military matters and giving direction to the military. The president also negotiating treaties and can sign treaties on behalf of the United States. Those treaties do not actually take effect until they're ratified by the Senate, but it is the President's job to negotiate those treaties. The President also has the power of appointments. So, the President appoints the head of the executive branch. The President appoints the judicial branch members and the President can make a vacancy appointments when Congress is not in session. The President can appoint someone without that nomination being confirmed. But normally, those appointments are subject to confirmation by the Senate. Another formal power that the constitution gives to the President is that of a pardon. The President acting as the executive can commute a sentence or reverse the sentenced. It can pardon someone of a crime. And the President is typically do most of this, their second term when they don't have to face reelection having pardoned a bunch people. And there is a, the Justice Department that gives recommendations to the President and the President normally follows those recommendations one way or the other. One exception would be the Clinton presidency, the last couple of weeks Clinton was in office, the Justice Department gave him a stock of recommendations. And he pardoned those people and then a whole bunch of other
people that were not recommended for pardon by the Justice Department. And that caused some
controversy. But Clinton was within his constitutional authority to make those pardons. So those
are the formal powers that the constitution gives to the President.

Slide 19

Text: Implied Powers

[Photo of statue being torn down in Iraq]

Audio: The next category of powers that the President has are the implied powers. First of these,
is we talked about is the power of military intervention. Now, the constitution says that the
President is the Commander in Chief but it gives Congress the authority to declare war. Now,
Presidents' right from the very beginning, even with President Washington had no hesitation
using the forces of the military under an executive command rather than wait for Congress to get
a formal declaration of war. The pictured, that the conflict pictured here in the slide is that of the
Iraq war. There was no formal declaration of war with Iraq. And yet, we had spent years there
and tens of billions of dollars fighting in Iraq by executive order. Now, Congress attempted to
Iranian 0:51:09 to presidency during the Nixon administration by passing the War Powers Act. It
was an effort to limit the ability of the President to use this power of military intervention. And
what the War Powers Act says that the President has 60 days to come to Congress after his
committed troops by an executive order and justify that commitment. And Congress has to vote
to approve that deployment of troops. And if Congress does not approve it or if the President
fails to appear before Congress to ask for their approval, the President has another 30 days at
which time he has to withdraw those troops. So that gives a total window of 90 days for the
President if he wanted to use troops in a manner that Congress did not approve off. Now, you
should note that no President of either political party has ever acknowledged the constitutional
right of the Congress to pass the War Powers Act. And every Congress, again, regardless of
which party controls it, has asserted that right. So this is a constitutional question that at
someday, will have to be decided by the Supreme Court whether or not Congress has this
authority. Presidents have been careful since then though to seek the approval of congress so as
to avoid a constitutional struggle. The President Bush Sr. asked Congress to give a declaration of
support for the Kuwait invasion. At the same time, being careful to not acknowledge the
legitimacy of the War Powers Act. And he got that vote, President Bush Jr. also asked Congress
to give a vote of approval to that deployment. Again, without acknowledging legitimacy of the
War Powers Act, and he received that approval. The closest we've come to an actual test is the
attack on the Serbs over the Kosovo conflict when Clinton ordered NATO to attack the Serbs to
get them to stop committing genocide on the Albanians. That move was very unpopular with the
Republicans who controlled Congress at that time. And I thought that we might have a test case
here of the War Powers Act but the Serbs surrendered and accepted the terms of the ultimatum
after about 30 days of bombing. So, we still have an open question whether the President has that
right or Congress has that right. Another implied power is that of an executive order. The
President is the CEO of the executive branch. And so presidents have long been in the habit of
issuing executive orders with a order of government agency to take an action. Again, without
waiting for a Congress to authorize that action. One example of an executive order would be during the Ford Administration as the information of the assassinations that the CIA had undertaken in the 1970s came to light. These were assassinations that were not approved by Congress nor by the White House. And in most of these cases, actually run counter to American national interests. And so the Ford Administration passed an executive order prohibiting any entity of the US government to assassinate an individual. And that prohibition was in place until after September 11th. President Bush issued a new executive order which authorized government agencies to assassinate people but only if they received an, "okay" on a case by case basis from the White House. So the President was not willing to sort of set the dogs loose so to speak. But it was with an executive order that he was able to reverse that policy, not an act of legislation.

Now, a final implied power would be that of executive privilege. And this has been a privilege that is accepted by all three branches of government that is implied by the President's formal power of commander in chief and negotiating treaties. Because that suggest that there is a certain amount of secrecy that the President has to be allowed to maintain in order to effectively maintain security with the commander in chief position. But also, effectively negotiate particularly tricky situations where the public might not particularly like a detail. The President needs to be able to negotiate in good faith with other powers over those details. And so, executive privilege has been accorded to the President. Now, the boundaries of that privilege have been debated. President Nixon run what's called the imperial presidency where he changed the uniforms of the guards and he claimed a lot of executive privileges that were later reversed. He was forced by a court to turn over the audio recordings that he had made of conversations in his White House. The Clinton Administration attempted to evoke executive privilege with the Monica Lewinsky trial, the impeachment attorney's proceedings sought testimony from the secret service carts that guarded President Clinton to get them to testify that he had had an illicit affair. The President countered that the secret service needed to not be forced to testify because if they were, then some future President, if they wanted to engage in some type of shenanigan would dismiss their secret security guard so as not to have witnesses around and that would then endanger the physical safety of that future President. That argument did not hold water in the court indeed for secret service to testify against the President. The Bush Administration also claimed executive privilege in an unprecedented way. In particular, the Vice President claimed that his office held the same level of executive privilege that the President's office did and refused to comply with congressional demand for records of how the energy bill had been negotiated. And there was some suggestion that private industry had basically written that bill and they wanted to see whether that was true or not. Oddly enough, when the White House gave orders for all government agencies to comply with secrecy protocols, the office of the Vice President said that it was not bound by that order because the Vice President was not part of the executive branch. So there was sort of an interesting, have your cake and eat it too argument taking place with Vice President Cheney. But it all centered around the controversy over this notion of executive privilege. So these are some of the implied powers that presidents have traditionally enjoyed.

Slide 20

Text: Informal Powers
Audio: Finally, we have the informal powers that the President has. And in many regards, these are the most powerful powers that the President can wield and yet, they don't exist anywhere in the constitution. There are power that we give the President because of the status that we accord with the office of the presidency. As long as we believe the office of the presidency to be important, it is. And the President is able to use that attention to their advantage. Teddy Roosevelt coined the term for this function of persuasion with the bully pulpit. Bully being a very old fashion word for good. So the good pulpit, the bully pulpit was that the President could command the attention of the nation on a particular issue and use that attention to drive forward a policy preference of the President. Now, here we have pictured President Reagan giving a speech from the White House. Now, anytime the President wants to talk to the nation, they can simply notify the networks, "Hey, I'd like to give a speech at 7 o'clock on Tuesday," and all the networks say, "Wow, whatever the President is going to say must be important. We're going to preempt all of our normal programming and we're going to broadcast this speech directly from the President to the American people. There are few people in the country who can command that kind of attention. There are celebrities that can pull that kind of thing off but the presidents are able to do it. And so they use those opportunities carefully because if they use it too much, the networks might stop carrying them. And this actually happened to President Bush in his second term. He announced that he'd wanted to make a speech and the media decided he didn't have anything important enough to say and did not preempt their programming. That typically does not happen though. And no one was better at this in the modern presidency than Ronald Reagan. Franklin Roosevelt was also very good at this. But within the last 30 years, Ronald Reagan is the master at using that bully pulpit. Congress was controlled by the Democrats and they would be doing some law, some legislative agenda that Reagan didn't like. And so he would go on TV and he'd wear his Mr. Rogers sweater and he would talk about how important this is for the country and how it all makes sense. And he just didn't understand why Congress couldn't see it that way. And he wanted the American people to just do him a small favor and call Congress up and let them know how important this policy is. And then the next day, the switchboard to Congress would shut down from thousands and thousands of phone calls as people contacted their legislatures and demanded that they do whatever it was the President was pushing. President Reagan got his way a lot in Congress using that method. It was quite powerful. Another indication of this status accorded to the President is the importance given to the Lincoln Bedroom, that's the guest room in the White House. And if you can stay in the Lincoln Bedroom by association, you must be a very important person. I remember when I was going to college, I had a job one time when I was driving a truck that only had Mayhem Radio and the only station I got was that Right Wing Talk Radio. And so I'd listen to Rush Limbaugh all the time. And there was one time, this is during the Bush Sr. Administration. Bush had invited him to the White House and he had spent the night in the Lincoln Bedroom. And he spent the entire three hours of his program bragging about being in the Lincoln Bedroom telling all the details, and just basically saying over and over again for three hours. I spent the night in Lincoln Bedroom. It's tremendous status associated with that. The idea is if you are next to someone who is important, you must be important too. Another example of this would be a fellow who got his picture taken with President Clinton and then
went to Asia and convinced a whole group of investors and even governments that he was buddies with the President and that he could be a lobbyist to get the American government to do what they wanted to do. And they gave him hundreds of thousands of dollars because of this claim that he had a connection and access to the President all because he had a picture taken with him standing next to the President. The people who he built that money from assumed if he's standing next to someone important, he must be important. Closer to home, if you've ever gone to the Pollack Theaters, there is a larger than life picture of Mr. Pollack standing next to Dick Cheney and it's at the entrance of the theater. And as you walk out, you see this giant picture and what Mr. Pollack is doing with that is saying, "I'm standing next to an important person. That makes me important." That kind of status, that kind of celebrity is real power when it's applied to a policy domain. When you're trying to get people to agree with you, that kind of celebrity status can really turn the tables. So, again, it's an informal power, it's nowhere in the constitution. It only exists because we, the American people think it exists. But it is nonetheless a very real power that presidents hold.

**Slide 21**

**Text:** History of the Presidency

[Image of President Washington being sworn into office]

**Audio:** Let's now look at this office of the presidency and how it has changed over time. Now, when the office began at the beginning of the Republic, it was much less important office than we accorded today. The presidency was seen as a check on Congress. If you recall from the last presentation, the legislature was seen as the most important branch of office. And so the President's job was to keep an eye on the legislature, make sure they didn't go too crazy. And also to be kind of a clerk to actually execute the law that had been passed by the legislature to facilitate that process of bringing public policy to life. And for most of our country's history, that's all the President did. Remember that our country was fairly minor country. We did not have that large of a population. We didn't have a military to speak of at all. Our economy was very small. The super powers of the day were in Europe. And we were a bit player on the international stage and most of our attention was focused on internal developments and expansion. So the President's day-to-day duties were again quite different than they are today. However, George Washington set the tone for the presidency. And he, as I've said before, is justifiably seen as the Father of the Country. He was so popular that he could have been a king had he wanted to. The people, that first generation Americans just revered to George Washington. He was the reason they were free and he could do no wrong. They loved George Washington. And so he immediately became the first President. That was no--there's no question about that. And he then run for reelection and easily won. And he could very well had been president for life because he was again, so popular and towered over all of the other political figures of the day. Had he done that, our democracy very much could have looked like a Mexico or a Columbia or any number of fail the democracies where the party that makes, that reaches power with the first election decides, you know what, power looks really good and they end up never really could have seen it. Mozambique is a good example here where the President was
elected, very popular. He serves term, after term, after term, after term until finally he is an old man who now uses despotic tyrannical means to silence opposition. It's no longer a functioning democracy. Washington didn't allow that to happen. After he served two terms, he left, he resigned, and let someone else take his place. That set the tone for the presidency and it wasn't until Franklin Roosevelt that we had the President who served more than two terms. The other way he set the tone, was what to call the President. Congress was debating a law to establish the protocol for the new nation. And they were trying to decide should we refer to him as his highness? Should we refer to him as his excellency? Should we refer to him as his most highness? Those were all options that were being debated. Washington would have none of that and he said, "There's two things you can call me and that is Mr. President or Mr. Washington." And that continues to this day to be the formal title of the President, Mr. President or Mr. Obama. The President is every man. The President is a citizen just as everyone else is. So, Washington set the tone for the office but it was a very small office compared to what we have today.

Slide 22

Text: Exceptionally Strong Early Presidents

[Photo of Thomas Jefferson] [Photo of Abraham Lincoln] [Photo of James A. Polk]

Audio: There are some exceptions to this early rule that the presidency was weak of strong presidents who saw some of the potential of that office and exploited it to do things at their contemporaries we are not expecting. Thomas Jefferson bought the Louisiana Purchase from the French in a completely unconstitutional action. He was not authorized to negotiate with the French. Purchased it from the French without the consent of the Senate and authorized the Treasure to pay that funds. Now, while an unconstitutional power grab, the legislative branch and the judicial branch realized it was such a screaming deal that neither of them challenged President Jefferson in that act, so he got away with it. And Abraham Lincoln was another early and strong President. He clearly held the union together during the Civil War. And but, some of the things he did were very expansive in his view of federal authority because he saw it as a time of emergency. For example, the State of Maryland was right on the edge of seceding just as Virginia had. And the city of Washington D.C. nestles right in between Virginia and Maryland. So had Maryland seceded, Washington would have become untenable. They would have had to either evacuate or merely surrender. The war probably would have been lost before it had even begun had Maryland seceded. And so, President Lincoln declared a state of emergency and declared martial law in the state of Maryland. He then took the entire Maryland legislature, or at least the secessionists in the legislature, and put them all in jail for the duration of the Civil War. And the US army administered the State of Maryland during the time of the war. This was clearly not acting as a clerk for Congress but he felt justified as the Commander in Chief and that it was his job to support the constitution and took those actions regardless of the perceived constitutionality of those actions. James Polk was another example. He is the President who essentially instigated a war with Texas and used his office in a very activist way to garner
the support in Congress for that war with Mexico. So, the early presidents were not uniformly minor players in the political stage. But for the most part, they were.

Slide 23

Text: 20th Century Transformation

- Theodore Roosevelt
  - Saw the office as a “bully pulpit”
  - Broke monopolies and trusts

[Photo of Theodore Roosevelt]

Audio: The Office of the President began to change and take more of the modern trappings that we associate with it now under Teddy Roosevelt. Teddy Roosevelt saw in the office of the presidency an office that the head of state could really be the leader of the nation not simply the clerk of the Congress and take his cues from Congress but actually point the direction and lead the way. And Congress would then follow that direction that the President had pointed towards. This was a new activist position for a president to take. He also intervened in the domestic economy quite heavily and broke up the monopolies and trusts that had been associated with the gilded age and in addition to that, he took a very activist role in foreign policy. He received the first Nobel Peace Prize for negotiating a peace agreement between Russia and Japan. He also wanted the United States to be seen as a great power, remember that the earlier presidents had administered a country that was a fairly minor player in international relations. By the time Teddy Roosevelt was President, the United States has expanded throughout the continent. We're a continental power. The economy had nationalized throughout those 1800's and the economy of the United State was equal to or greater than the economy of the more powerful European counties. And so Theodore Roosevelt thought that the European should start taking American viewpoints into account and treating America with the respect that a great power deserved. Now great powers at the time didn't have respect given to them. They took that respect and the primary currency of global power was naval. And so what Teddy Roosevelt did was, he bought a bunch of destroyers and battleships from the Brazilian Navy painted them white and sent them on a tour around the world. And the Congress thought that was a terrible idea. They thought it was a waste of money and he basically blew the entire defense budget to do that. And he--but Roosevelt painted the ships white because he wanted everybody to see them coming. Normally, ships are gray so they can fade into the horizon. But he wanted them white to announce the arrival of America on the world stage. And so he sent them in spite of the opposition of Congress and this naval squadrons went around the world and made port calls to show the American flag and say the Americans has arrived and we're capable of projecting force. Well the money run out again, he spent the entire defense budget buying the ships. And so the Defense Department run out of money. And so Roosevelt went to Congress and he said, "Well I know you guys didn't want to send them but they're currently in India and there isn't any money to bring them back, to buy coal, to bring them back. So I would appreciate it greatly if you guys would give me more money anyway so we can bring this boys home." So Congress went ahead
and allocated the money. So he get the ships home. So Roosevelt got his way and he started asserting the power that was latent in the office of the presidency.

**Slide 24**

**Text:** 20th Century Transformation

- Woodrow Wilson
  - Restructured economy
  - US as world leader

[Photo of Woodrow Wilson]

**Audio:** The next President that altered the presidency and expanded its powers was Woodrow Wilson. Now Woodrow Wilson is most known for the leadership he showed with the entry of the Unites States into World War I. At that point, the United States was recognized as a great power one among many. But with the entrance in the World War I, the United States assumed a dominant role in international relations. And Wilson announced that America would serve as the arsenal of democracy that we were such a wealthy and powerful nation. That we would arm our allies and we would win the war and help them win the war that they couldn't win without us. Now when the allied powers did win World War I, Wilson drafted a post war architecture with his 10 points for peace. And with it, a league of nations and a new world order that would be structured in a way that would prevent another world war between imperial powers as it happened with the World War I. He was fabulously popular throughout Europe. When Wilson traveled in London and France, there were ticker tape parades and everyone waved American flags. He wasn't as popular at home though which has explains why the United States didn't actually enter the League of Nations even though it was Wilson's idea. But he was very powerful president in the sense that he volted the Unites States onto the world stage and took the mantle of world leadership that currently, we expect our presidents to [inaudible]. He also was quite active on the domestic front and he restructured the US economy particularly with the creation of the Federal Reserve. He created a centralized bank which is something that the first generation Americans had been unable to do, unwilling to do in many cases and set a president that Roosevelt followed later by doing it in a way that it didn't violate the constitutional prohibition for the executive branch having that kind of power by setting up a quasi private quasi government entity in the Federal Reserve. So quite an active, quite a powerful president in Woodrow Wilson.

**Slide 24**

**Text:** 20th Century Transformation

- Franklin Roosevelt
  - New Deal programs
  - Increased size of government
  - US global leadership
o Personalized the office with Fireside Chats
o 1st 100 days
o Set the standard for modern presidents

[Photo of Franklin Roosevelt]

**Audio:** The President though responsible for really transforming the office from its prior position as a, the lesser of the two branches to the dominant position that it has today was Franklin Roosevelt. Franklin Roosevelt was a very active president. He essentially rewrote the playbook on how someone should be a president. And as a result, FDR is the standard by which all other presidents are measured against. If you want to know, if you had a good presidency, you measure yourself up to Franklin Roosevelt. And how well you compare to FDR tells you how well of a president you've been. This new deal programs dramatically increased the size of the government. And not just in size, but in scope as well. The--what the federal government did and did not due to change after Roosevelt during World War II. The United State again assumed the mantle of global leadership that had been dropped after Wilson and never let it go. The United States has been the world leader ever since. Franklin Roosevelt personalized the office. Prior to Roosevelt, the presidents campaigned, but they didn't campaign in a personal way. People didn't feel like they had a connection with the personality of the presidents. And this was made possible because of the advent of modern mass communications particularly radio during the time of Roosevelt. And so for the first time, a president could speak directly to the American people. Prior to this, communication was written format which meant the President relied on other opinion leaders to pass his word along to the people. Newspaper editors, local politicians, clergy, these were the people who mediated a president to the people. Roosevelt because of the technology of radio was able to speak directly to the people for the first time. And that is when those informal powers of the President, the celebrity status that the American people accord to the President began to really take place. And Roosevelt did that with his fireside chats which was a presidential address once a week where he reassure the American public and inform them of the policy details of what was going on to address the crisis of the day. Now every president since then has maintained weekly address. But those addresses do not have the impact that Roosevelt had. Mainly, because this days that we can address is drowned out by the many, many other media around. Very few people sit and listen to the President's weekly address, whereas in Roosevelt's stay, there wasn't anything else on the radio, and few people have radios. And so people would travel to their friends who owned radios and they will all sit together and listen to the President's words. It's a platform that no president has had before or since. The president's first 100 days set an agenda of a very activist president that has become a standard which again all subsequent presidents have been measured against. And that 100 days is a completely arbitrary figure, but yet, it's become a yardstick by which other presidents have to compare themselves. So Roosevelt left an indelible mark on the American presidency.

**Slide 26**

**Text:** What makes a president successful?
• Relationship with Congress
  o Congress has given power to president
  o Congress has limited power of the president
  o The president needs Congress
  o Divided government or not
  o Vetoes as a measure of influence
• Control of the Party

Audio: So let's go back to the question that we began this presentation with. What makes a successful president? How does a president make that list of top 10 and avoid being put on the list of the bottom 10? Well probably the most important measure of a successful president is the president's relationship with Congress. Congress has had a, a losing relationship with president since Roosevelt. What I mean by that is Congress has lost power relative to the President in many ways. And some of it the, presidents have taken that power. And in many other cases though, Congress has abdicated that power. Congress has taken a power that belongs to Congress and turn it over to the executive branch and said, "You guys take care of that." On the other hand, Congress has limited the power of the President. We spoke about the Work Powers Act as an example of that. Occasionally, Congress would hold hearings, will they bring agencies and executive branch to task and try to embarrass them and reign in their actions. The church hearings that dealt with the CIA assassinations that I mentioned earlier is an example of Congress trying to reign in an executive branch that they thought was out of control. So there's tension between Congress and the presidency. Now that tension is more stark when there's a divided government and one party controls Congress and then another party controls the President. But that's not the only issue because there are times when--even when the same political controls both branches, those branches are at odds with one another. President Bush fought with the Republican Congress and President Carter fought with Democratic Congress. So that this relationship with Congress varies by President and by Congress and it has a huge impact on whether the President is able to pass their legislative agenda. Most scholars for example, see President Carter as a very weak president. And one reason is he was not able to get his agenda to through Congress even when he controlled it. For the same reason, many people argue that President Bush had a very powerful first term. He got everything he wanted through Congress, but a very weak second term. He hardly got anything through Congress. The next measure of power is whether the party controls both houses of Congress or the presidency.

Slide 27

Text: 20th Century Transformation

[Photo of George W. Bush in a meeting in Oval Office] [Photo of Bill Clinton and

When the President controls the party that is in Congress, it typically makes it much easier for the President to get their agenda through. This is one reason why midterm elections are seen as such an important indicator of a president's strength. President Bush in his first term did quite well in the midterm elections and the Republicans actually did not lose many seats at all.
Historically, the President's party, the party in power loses around 20 odd seats in the House of Representative because the coattail effects are gone since the President is not on the ballot. A lot of people stay home and don't vote. Now, during Bush's second term, the midterm elections were a disaster. And the Democrats took control of both the House of Representative and the Senate. Now President Clinton also had a reasonably successful midterm election on his second term. But his first term, the midterm election was a disaster and that is when the Republicans took control of both the House and the Senate during Clinton's first term. So, the changing of party that can occur during the midterm election can alter the course of a presidency, and plans and agenda's that the President had hope to accomplish will not be able to accomplish if they lose enough seats in the midterm election to lose control of Congress. Now with Obama and his first term on this presentation is being recorded in the summer of 2010 and there is much speculation that the Republicans will gain several seats, and possibly control of the House of Representatives. It's a long shot that they could control the Senate. Now, if they were to gain control of either or both of those Houses, it will seriously complicate Obama's ability to pursue his domestic agenda. Well, the partisans of either side have much hand wringing over the outcomes of these elections. It's important to remember that Madison designed the system that was inefficient and didn't get anything done unless there was a consensus in all three branches of government. And so anytime, there's gridlock, and Congress doesn't appear to beginning much done, and the President is in odds with Congress. That's always the time when you know that Madison is just smiling in his grave that the system working according to his design.

### Slide 28

**Text:** Presidential Approval

[Graph of Presidential Disapproval for President Roosevelt through George W. Bush]

**Audio:** One other measure of presidential power is popular opinion and this is gathered by various polling agencies who will ask the question, "Do you approve of what the President is doing? Do you strongly approve? Do you disapprove? Do you strongly disapprove?" And these measures of approval or disapproval are on the one hand, not that important as Ronald Reagan was fond of quipping, there's only one poll that really matters, and that's the one that occurs on election day. All the other opinion polls are just putting your finger in the wind so to speak. On the other hand, the approval or disapproval ratings that a president had is a proxy measure of how much of--how much of the informal power the President still has. If you recall when we were talking about the informal powers of the President, they all rely upon the power that we give him as President. The President only has those powers because the people think the President has those powers. Their powers of persuasions, their powers of the public forum, the public pulpit so to speak. If a President is deeply unpopular, then the President loses the ability to wield those informal powers. And so presidential popularity does in fact have a direct correlation with presidential power. And politicians, particularly those in the house who have to stand for election every two years are very keen to those. Because they don't want associate themselves with an unpopular president and they will rush to associate themselves with the popular president. So in 2008 it was difficult for the President Bush to find Republicans who wanted to
stand next to him on their elections because his approval ratings were so low that it did actually
would hurt their chances for election. If the President came into town and gave a speech on their
behalf, similarly, Barack Obama is a very popular president, but his popularity is beginning to
decline. And the concern from the Democrats point of view, is that if his popularity continues to
slide, then he will be unable to use those informal powers to push through his agenda and will
also begin to fail in his role as party leader. Remember that the President, that the fortunes of the
party are blamed or given credit for the President. So, this graph that we're looking at tracks the
disapproval rating overtime. And you see that it is fairly consistent. It's difficult to get
Americans, all of the Americans to like a president. Now if we were to look at approval ratings,
there'd be much more fluctuation going up and down. But this disapproval rating reflects a core
level of disenchantment that exists at all times that the President has to deal with. A Republican
President is going to always have Democrats and activists on the left, attacking, sniping,
criticizing, everything the President does. And a Democratic President is always going to have
Republicans and right wing activists constantly criticizing, sniping, and attacking everything he
does. The politics of attack have become normal part of the presidency. And presidents just have
to weather that storm of discontent. Because no matter which party takes office, that dynamic is
going to continue. But not to be completely negative. If a president's approval rating is high
enough, then they can ignore those who disapprove of what they're doing and push through their
agenda.

**Slide 29**

**Text:** Conclusion

[Photo of George W.H. Bush]

**Audio:** So as we've seen in this presentation, the office of the presidency has changed overtime.
It is arguably the most important elected office on the planet. And while it is the most powerful
position in the country, if you remember that funnel of information, the President is often the last
to know something. It's difficult for the President to escape the circle of advisors that they've
surrounded with to get new information, more information that would help the President lead.
And so, as the presidency has grown, it is arguably impossible now for anyone one person to do
well in all five of the roles that a presidency must assume. And as we've seen with those
disapproval ratings, it's also almost impossible for a president to escape withering criticism of
pretty much everything the President does. So the question that anyone who wants to become
president should ask themselves is, is it even possible for someone to have a successful
presidency in this day and age? This concludes for the presentation on The Presidency. The next
presentation, we'll turn to the third branch of government which is the court system.

**Slide 30**

**Text:** This presentation

This presentation is courtesy of Brian Dille, Professor of Political Science at Mesa Community
College.
Audio: This presentation is courtesy of Brian Dille. I am a speaker and I am Professor of Political Science at Mesa Community College, a college of the American Community College District in Mesa, Arizona. I hope you've enjoyed this presentation.