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Slide 1



Presidential funerals underscore the esteem that Americans accord the office of the president. One historian commented that they give Americans the opportunity to "rediscover . . . what holds us together instead of what pulls us apart." This is often the role of presidents—in life or in death.

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Study Guide Questions

How did Andrew Jackson and Abraham Lincoln change the presidency? **Pages 204-205**

How and why does the President attempt to use the public? What did Theodore Roosevelt call this process? **Page 211**

In what ways has the modern presidency changed from the original views of the writers of the Constitution? **Page 205**

What description best characterizes of the members of the White House staff? How and why are they chosen? **Pages 208-210**

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Establishing Presidential Authority: The First Presidents

- ▣ Challenges to accomplishing goals
- ▣ George Washington
 - Inherent powers
- ▣ Thomas Jefferson

Presidents often find that the checks and balances in our governing system stifle their ability to accomplish their goals. Circumstances that call for powerful executive leadership can be helpful in allowing a president to exercise more authority, such as President Lincoln did during the Civil War, but no president, even one with extraordinary leadership skills, comes close to accomplishing all of his goals in office.

The mandate for presidential power was deliberately vague in the Constitution and the first presidents set



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some important precedents for future use of presidential power.


George Washington established the primacy of the federal government. He began the practice of using a Cabinet of key advisers, and made it clear that the president was the main player in foreign affairs, first negotiating treaties and then submitting them to Congress for approval. He also asserted that the president had inherent powers, that is, powers inferred from the Constitution rather than explicitly stated, such as the power to conduct diplomatic relations.

Thomas Jefferson continued the claim of inherent powers when he expanded the size of the nation with the Louisiana Purchase in 1803.

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How did Andrew Jackson and Abraham Lincoln change the presidency?

- Andrew Jackson
 - Democratization of the presidency
- Abraham Lincoln
 - Extraordinary war powers



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Despite the leadership skills of some early presidents, Congress was the main player in the federal government. The president was remote, whereas citizens knew their representatives in Congress. All presidents had been chosen from a small group of Eastern elites until Andrew Jackson ran in 1828. By this time, eleven new states had been added. With the country's rapid westward expansion, a president who was from Tennessee instead of Virginia was a welcome change to voters. Party politics became more important in the Jacksonian era, and he rewarded loyal followers with federal appointments.

President Lincoln reacted boldly to the challenge of keeping the country together in the Civil War by assuming powers for himself that no prior




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president had dared to utilize, and by acting quickly and autonomously, without Congressional sanction. Lincoln argued that the inherent powers of his office allowed him to circumvent the Constitution in a time of war or national crisis. Since the Constitution conferred on the president the duty to make sure that the laws of the United States are faithfully executed, reasoned Lincoln, these acts were constitutional.

Slide 5

How and why does the President attempt to use the public? What did Theodore Roosevelt call this process?




- Teddy Roosevelt
The "Bully Pulpit"

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Modern presidents have attempted to use public opinion more and more to their advantage. Teddy Roosevelt's idea of the presidency as a "bully pulpit" set the example of attempting to speak directly to the public as a way to command the direction of policy. From the fireside chats of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt to the tweets of President Trump, presidents have become more visible and dominant in the public eye through the use of communications technologies.

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In what ways has the modern presidency changed from the original views of the writers of the Constitution?



- Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR)
 - Great Depression
 - New Deal
 - World War II

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We noted that Congress had the primary role in the federal government in the nineteenth century. That began to change after the Civil War, and since FDR it is clear that presidential decision-making has assumed primary importance.

When FDR took office during the Great Depression, the nation faced economic challenges of unprecedented scope that the states could not handle on their own. He acted boldly and swiftly to push Congress to pass many pieces of legislation that collectively are known as the New Deal. The



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bureaucracy built to execute these laws exponentially increased the size and scope of the federal government. Since the president heads this bureaucracy, his range of command was commensurately expanded.

FDR also led the nation during a major war, so he was required to exert presidential leadership in both extraordinary domestic and foreign policy circumstances.

The modern presidency has become the central focus of American politics since the 1930s, supplanting Congress as the "first branch" of government.

Slide 7

What description best characterizes the members of the White House staff?
How and why are they chosen?

- ▣ Personal assistants
- ▣ Senior aides
- ▣ Chosen for loyalty
- ▣ Chief of staff

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Closest to the president are his personal White House staff members, who are not subject to Senate confirmation. They do not have any independent legal authority but are chosen for their loyalty to the president. The chief of staff is the most important of these positions. He or she acts as gatekeeper for the president, with influence over who he sees and what he reads.



Slide 8

Exit Questions 7

How has the presidency changed from what the framers of the Constitution originally envisioned? Why? Explain your answers.



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