

Presidential Quiz and Answers

GRADING CRITERIA: Below there are 19 questions totaling 150 points. On the 5 points questions there is no partial credit. All of the 10 point questions ask for a list. If any one item on your answer is wrong then you get 0 points (so DO NOT GUESS!). If you get *over half* of the items, but not all of them then you get 5 points. If you get all of the items then, of course, you get 10 points.

Much of this material is from the books *Hail to the chiefs: Political mischief, morals, and Malarky from George W to George W* by Barbara Holland and *Bland Ambition: From Adams to Quayle- the Cranks, Criminals, Tax Cheats, and Golfers who made it to Vice President* by Steve Tally. I also use Wikipedia sometimes.

There is a table at the end of this document that has lots of information about presidents.

1. (5 points) How many different people have or are been president?

ANSWER: 43. See Table at the end for more detail You may have heard that Obama is *the 44th president*. Grover Cleveland served two non-consecutive terms which account for the discrepancy.

2. (5 points) How many different people have been vice president?

ANSWER: 47. See Table at the end for more detail.

3. (10 points) List all of the presidents that have died in office.

ANSWER: There were eight.

- (a) William Henry Harrison. Died of pneumonia in 1841. Wikipedia claims that the cold was NOT caused by giving his Inaugural Address in the cold rain without a coat, as is the rumor. WHH was 68.
- (b) Zachary Taylor. He consumed too much milk and cherries on July 4, 1850. He died of gastroenteritis as a result. ZT was 65.
- (c) Abraham Lincoln. Shot by John Wilkes Booth in 1865. JWB thought Lincoln was a tyrant. AL was 56.
- (d) James Garfield. Shot by Charles J. Guiteau in 1881. CJG wanted a job as the American Council in Paris, which Garfield didn't give to him. JG was 49.

- (e) William McKinley. Shot by Leon Frank Czolgosz in 1901. FC was an anarchist trying to make a political statement. WM was 58.
- (f) Warren G. Harding. According to *Hail to the Chiefs* the cause of Hardings death, in 1923, was mysterious: *all the doctors agreed that Harding died of a stroke, or pneumonia, or apoplexy, or a blood clot, or food poisoning*. That book also strongly suggests that his wife poisoned him. Wikipedia supports death by natural causes of some sort but notes that *enough doubts surround the presidents death to keep reputable scholars open to the possibility of murder*. WGH was 57.
- (g) Franklin D. Roosevelt. Died of a cerebral hemorrhage in 1945. FDR was 63.
- (h) John F. Kennedy. Shot by Lee Harvey Oswald in 1963. Some disagree or think it was part of a bigger conspiracy. JFK was 46.

There is a memory device for this if you already know some about the presidents: presidents elected in 1840, 1860, 1880, 1900, 1920, 1940, and 1960 all died in office. This accounts for all but Zachery Taylor.

Two more died within a year of leaving office: Polk (age 53) and Arthur (age 57). See comment after question on how many vice presidents went on to be president for some commentary.

4. (10 points) List all of the presidents who have resigned.

ANSWER: There was just one: Richard Nixon resigned in 1974.

5. (10 points) List all of the vice presidents that have died in office.

ANSWER: Seven. All of natural causes. Nobody has ever bothered to assassinate a vice president.

- (a) George Clinton. He was vice president during both Thomas Jefferson second term and James Madison's first term. Died of a heart attack at age 72 in 1812.
- (b) Edbridge Gerry (Gerrymandering is named after him). James Madison's vice president second term. Died of a stroke at age 70 in 1814.

- (c) William Rufus van King. Franklin Pierce's vice president. Died shortly after being sworn in as vice president, of tuberculosis, at age 67 in 1853.
 - (d) Henry Wilson. Grants second term vice president. Died of a stroke at age 63 in 1875.
 - (e) Thomas Hendricks. Cleveland's vice president first term. Actually first month only. He died early on at age 66 in 1885. (I could not find what he died of)
 - (f) Garret Hobart. McKinley's vice president. Died of Heart attack at age 55 in 1899.
 - (g) James Sherman. Taft's vice president. Died of complications brought on by gallstones at Age 57 in 1912.
6. (10 points) List all of the vice presidents that have resigned.

ANSWER: There were two:

John Calhoun, Andrew Jackson's vice president, resigned due to policy differences with Andrew Jackson. John Calhoun believed in States Rights and the right for states to nullify a law.

Spiro Agnew, Richard Nixon's vice president, resigned as part of a deal. He was convicted of bribery.

7. (10 points) List all of the vice presidents that went on to be presidents.

ANSWER: There were 13.

- (a) John Adams (elected right after being vice president)
- (b) Thomas Jefferson (elected right after being vice president)
- (c) Martin van Buren (elected right after being vice president)
- (d) John Tyler (replaced Harrison who died in office)
- (e) Millard Fillmore (replaced Taylor who died in office)
- (f) Andrew Johnson (replaced Lincoln who died in office)
- (g) Theodore Roosevelt (replaced McKinley who died in office, but then was elected in his own right- a first!)

- (h) Calvin Coolidge (replaced Harding who died in office, but then was elected in his own right)
- (i) Harry Truman (replaced FDR who died in office, but then was elected in his own right).
- (j) Lyndon Johnson (replaced JFK who died in office, but then was elected in his own right).
- (k) Richard Nixon (ran after being vice president and lost, and then ran eight years later and won)
- (l) Gerald Ford (replaced Nixon who resigned)
- (m) George Bush (elected right after being vice president)

The number of people who have been president is 43. The number of people who have been vice president is 47. The number of people who have been both is 13. Hence the number of people who have been either president or vice president is 77. The number of presidents who died in office is eight. The number of vice presidents who died in office is seven. Hence 15 out of 77 died. This is a rather large percentage, around 19%. If you also include the two presidents who died within a year of leaving office (Polk and Arthur) you get 17 out of 77 which is over 22%. Sounds like its a dangerous job; however note that (1) no president has died in office since Kennedy in 1960, (2) no vice president has died in office since Sherman in 1912, (3) most of the people involved were over 60, and (4) medical care and security for presidents and vice presidents are much better now then it was then.

8. (10 points) What is the max number of ex-presidents alive at the same time? List the times this has happened. Your answer should be a list of statements of the following form: *Shortly after X took office there were Y ex-presidents: Z(1), Z(2), ... , Z(Y).*

ANSWER: The max number of ex-presidents alive at the same time is five. This has happened three times.

- (a) In 1861 just after Lincoln took office there were five ex-presidents: Martin van Buren (died in 1862), John Tyler (died in 1862), Millard Fillmore (died in 1874), Franklin Pierce (died in 1869), James Buchanan (died in 1868). Key factors: (1) Between 1836 and 1860

there were no 2-term presidents, (2) Martin van Buren lived a long time after being president.

- (b) In 1993 just after Clinton took office there were five ex-presidents: Richard M. Nixon (died in 1994), Gerald Ford (died in 2006), Jimmy Carter (still alive as of Jan 2009), Ronald Reagan (died in 2004), George Bush (still alive as of Jan 2009). Key factors: (1) Nixon, Ford, Carter, Bush covered 16 years total, and (2) Reagan lived a long time.
- (c) In 2001 just after George W. Bush took office there were five ex-presidents: Gerald Ford (died in 2006), Jimmy Carter (still alive as of Jan 2009), Ronald Reagan (died in 2004), George Bush (still alive as of Jan 2009), Bill Clinton (still alive as of Jan 2009). Key factors: (1) Ford, Carter, Bush covered 12 years, and (2) Reagan lived a long time.

Ford and Reagan died during the George W. Bush presidency. When Obama took office there were four ex-presidents (Carter, Bush Sr, Clinton, Bush Jr.) Since Obama is young (he turned 46 on Aug 4 2008) he may help us get to five living ex-presidents and maybe even six.

However, note that Bush Sr. and Carter were both born in 1924, so they are both approx 85 years old. Make of that what you will.

9. (10 points) What is the min number of ex-presidents alive at the same time? List all the times this has happened. Your answer should be a list of statements that (roughly) say *During X's term there was a time when there were only Y living ex-presidents.*

ANSWER: Zero. This happened three times.

- (a) When George Washington was president there were zero living ex-presidents.
- (b) Shortly after John Adams became president George Washington died. At that time there were zero ex-presidents.
- (c) During Nixon's term, in 1973, Lyndon Johnson died. At that time there were zero ex-presidents. (Personal Note: I noticed this at the time and it got me interested in questions of this sort.)

10. (10 points) List all of the presidents who got a patent.

ANSWER: There was only one and it was NOT Thomas Jefferson. It's Abraham Lincoln Patent 6469 *A Device for Buoying Vessels over Shoals*.

11. (5 points) What is the most common first name for a president? List all of the presidents that had that name.

ANSWER: James, six times. Here are all the first names that occur more than once:

- (a) 6 James: Madison, Monroe, Polk, Buchanan, Garfield, Carter.
- (b) 4 William : Harrison, McKinley, Taft, Clinton.
- (c) 4 John: Adams, Quincy Adams, Tyler, Kennedy.
- (d) 3 George: Washington, Bush Senior, Bush.
- (e) 2 Franklin: Pierce, Roosevelt.
- (f) 2 Andrew: Jackson, Johnson.

Side note: There were 22 presidents that had unique first names among presidents (they are listed below). It is not surprising that Barak is a unique president's first name. However, there are several non-exotic names on the list as well. Tom, Dick, and Harry are on the list.

Thomas Jefferson, Martin Van Buren, Zachery Taylor, Millard Fillmore, Abraham Lincoln, Ulysses Grant, Dwight Eisenhower, Rutherford Hayes, Chester Author, Grover Cleveland, Benjamin Harrison, Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Warren Harding, Calvin Coolidge, Herbert Hoover, Harry Truman, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, Ronald Reagan, Barak Obama.

12. (10 points) List all of the presidents who lived at least 90 years (as of Jan 1, 2009).

ANSWER:

- (a) Gerald Ford: 93 years 5.5 months (July 14, 1913- Dec 26, 2006)
- (b) Ronald Reagan: 93 years 4 months (Feb 6, 1911-June 5, 2004)
- (c) John Adams: 90 years 6 months (Dec 30, 1735-July 4, 1826)

(d) Herbert Hoover: 90 years 1.5 months (Aug 10, 1874-Oct 20, 1964)

Carter and Bush were both born in 1924 so they are approx 85 years old. Hence either one may very well live longer than some or all of the people on this list.

13. (5 points) Who is the only deceased president who was not buried with honors? Why?

ANSWER: John Tyler. The reason is that he served in the confederate house of representatives.

14. (10 points) List all of the presidents who later served in Congress or on the Supreme Court.

ANSWER:

- (a) John Q. Adams: House of Reps.
- (b) Andrew Johnson: Senate.
- (c) William Taft: Supreme Court.

This seems unlikely to happen now since taking any job in Wash DC after being president seems like a step down. Way down.

15. (10 points) List all of the presidents that ran again four or more years after leaving office.

ANSWER: This has happened four times.

- (a) Martin van Buren (*Free Soilers party*- did not carry a single state).
- (b) Fillmore (*Know Nothing party*, carried Maryland and got 21.6% of the vote across the country. That is the parties real name. See below.)
- (c) Cleveland (*Democratic party* - Won!).
- (d) T. Roosevelt (*Bull Moose party*- got 88 electoral votes and lost.)

In three of the four cases the candidate ran as a third-party. Once you leave the White House, its hard to come back.

The *Know Nothing Party* was so named since it was semi-secret. If you were a member and asked about it you were supposed to say *I know nothing about it*.

16. (5 points) Name a fictional street gang named after a president.

ANSWER: In Seinfeld *the van Buren boys* were a street gang. Kramer said *they are every bit as mean as he was*. Their secret sign was to show eight fingers since he was the eighth president. (There may be other fictional street gangs named after presidents, but I do not know of any. If you do, let me know.)

17. (5 points) Who was the first president elected after women could vote?

ANSWER: Warren G. Harding. The book *Hail to the Chiefs* has the following quote: *It was the first election women voted in. They needed more practice*. More seriously, Harding had supported the women's right to vote (I could not find info on if his opponent Cox did.) And Harding's wife Florence campaigned with him which helped a lot. Harding won by a large margin: 404 Electoral votes and 60% of the popular vote.

18. (5 points) Who is the only person who was named after a president, and was played in a movie by an actor who later became president?

ANSWER: Grover Cleveland Alexander. He was a baseball pitcher, named after president Grover Cleveland. He was played in the movie *The Winning Team* by Ronald Reagan. (My source on this one is one of Bill James Baseball Abstract books.)

19. (5 points) In what movie did a main character get John Quincy Adams' vice president wrong?

ANSWER: In *Miracle on 34th Street* Kris Kringle, who claims to be Santa Claus, states that he has passed psychological tests, and brags that he knows that John Quincy Adams vice president was Daniel Tompkins. But this is incorrect! John Quincy Adams' vice president was John Calhoun! (Tompkins was James Monroe's vice president.)

Daniel Tompkins was our sixth vice president John Quincy Adams was our sixth president. They just didn't line up, as the chart at the end of this document shows.

END OF PRES QUIZ

TABLE OF INFORMATION

In the table below I have a line whenever there was *any* change in president or vice president.

1. Pres is who is president.
2. Vice Pres is who is president.
3. NP is the Number of Presidents there are at that point.
4. NVP is the Number of Vice Presidents there are at that point.
5. diff is the number $NVP-NP$.
6. Lspan is the Lifespan of the president
7. D means the person died in office. R means the person resigned from office.
8. To save space I left out middle names, except for John Q. Adams and George W. Bush who needs that middle initial to distinguish them from there fathers who were also presidents. In one cases this is a mistake: *William King* is really *William Rufus de Vane King*.
9. To save space I leave out the first two digits of a year in phrases like "1735-26" This means 1735-1826. There is no case where this is ambiguous.

	Pres	Vice Pres	NP	NVP	diff	Lspan
1789-97	George Washington	John Adams	1	1	0	1732-99
1797-01	John Adams	Thomas Jefferson	2	2	0	1735-26
1801-05	Thomas Jefferson	Aaron Burr	3	3	0	1743-26
1805-09	Thomas Jefferson	George Clinton	3	4	1	
1809-12	James Madison	George Clinton D	4	4	0	1751-36
1813-14	James Madison	Edbridge Gerry D	4	5	1	
1814-17	James Madison	NO VP	4	5	1	
1817-25	James Monroe	Daniel Tompkins	5	6	1	1758-31
1825-29	John Q. Adams	John Calhoun	6	7	1	1767-48
1829-32	Andrew Jackson	John Calhoun R	7	7	0	1767-45
1833-37	Andrew Jackson	Martin van Buren	7	8	1	
1837-41	Martin van Buren	Richard Johnson	8	9	1	1782-62
1841-41	William Harrison D	John Tyler	9	10	1	1773-41
1841-45	John Tyler	NO VP	10	10	0	1790-62
1845-49	James Polk	George Dallas	11	11	0	1795-49
1849-50	Zachery Taylor D	Millard Fillmore	12	12	0	1784-50
1850-53	Millard Fillmore	NO VP	13	12	-1	1800-74
1853-53	Franklin Pierce	William King D	14	13	-1	1804-69
1853-57	Franklin Pierce	NO VP	14	13	-1	
1857-61	James Buchanan	John Breckenridge	15	14	-1	1791-68
1861-65	Abraham Lincoln	Hannibal Hamlin	16	15	-1	1809-65
1865-65	Abraham Lincoln D	Andrew Johnson	16	16	0	
1865-69	Andrew Johnson	NO VP	17	16	-1	1808-75
1869-73	Ulysses Grant	Schuyler Colfax	18	17	-1	1822-85
1873-75	Ulysses Grant	Henry Wilson D	18	18	0	
1875-77	Ulysses Grant	NO VP	18	18	0	
1877-81	Rutherford Hayes	William Wheeler	19	19	0	1822-93
1881-81	James Garfield D	Chester Arthur	20	20	0	1831-81
1881-85	Chester Arthur	NO VP	21	20	-1	1829-86
1885-85	Grover Cleveland (I)	Thomas Hendricks D	22	21	-1	1837-08
1885-89	Grover Cleveland (I)	NO VP	22	21	-1	
1889-93	Benjamin Harrison	Levi Morton	23	22	0	1833-01
1893-97	Grover Cleveland (II)	Adlai Stevenson	23	23	0	

	Pres	Vice Pres	NP	NVP	diff	Lspan
1897-99	William McKinley	Garret Hobart D	24	24	0	1843-01
1899-01	William McKinley	NO VP	24	24	0	
1901-01	William McKinley D	Theodore Roosevelt	24	25	1	
1901-05	Theodore Roosevelt	NO VP	25	25	0	
1905-09	Theodore Roosevelt	Charles Fairbanks	25	26	1	1858-19
1909-13	William Taft	James Sherman D	26	27	1	1857-30
1913-21	Woodrow Wilson	Thomas Marshal	27	28	1	1856-24
1921-23	Warren Harding D	Calvin Coolidge	28	29	1	1865-23
1923-25	Calvin Coolidge	NO VP	29	29	0	1872-33
1925-29	Calvin Coolidge	Charles Dawes	29	30	1	
1929-33	Herbert Hoover	Charles Curtis	30	31	1	1874-64
1933-41	Franklin Roosevelt	John Gardner	31	32	1	1882-45
1941-45	Franklin Roosevelt	Henry Wallace	31	33	2	
1945-45	Franklin Roosevelt D	Harry Truman	31	34	3	
1945-49	Harry Truman	NO VP	32	34	2	1884-72
1949-53	Harry Truman	Alben Barkely	32	35	3	
1953-61	Dwight Eisenhower	Richard Nixon	33	36	3	1890-69
1961-63	John Kennedy D	Lyndon Johnson	34	37	3	1917-63
1963-68	Lyndon Johnson	Hubert Humphrey	35	38	3	1908-73
1969-73	Richard Nixon	Spiro Agnew R	36	39	3	1913-94
1973-74	Richard Nixon R	Gerald Ford	36	40	4	
1974-76	Gerald Ford	Nelson Rockefeller	37	41	4	1913-06
1976-80	Jimmy Carter	Walter Mondale	38	42	4	1924-
1981-89	Ronald Reagan	George Bush	39	43	4	1911-04
1989-93	George Bush	Dan Quayle	40	44	4	1924-
1993-01	Bill Clinton	Al Gore	41	45	4	1946-
2001-09	George W Bush	Dick Cheney	42	46	4	1946-
2009-??	Barak Obama	Joe Biden	43	47	4	1961-