

TERM LIMITS IN THE CONSTITUTION

LEVEL:

High School

TIMEFRAME:

One class period

OBJECTIVES:

Students will evaluate the practice of term limits for the American presidency.

Students will analyze Constitutional provisions to understand abilities and limitations of the American presidency.

Students will debate the merits of presidential term limits.

STANDARDS:

Reading and Writing Literacy in
History/Social Studies

Integrate and Evaluate Content in Diverse
Formats.

Writing Standards

Speaking and Listening

Principles of Democracy

Power, Authority, and Governance

Time, Continuity, and Change

PRE WRITE

1. Have students respond to the following pre-write question: Should American presidents be limited in how many times they can serve?
2. Give students 5-7 minutes to develop a written response. Have several students share their answers with the class.

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS

1. Begin by giving each student an original copy of Article II of the US Constitution (see Article II Handout).
 - a. You can also use and explore George Washington's personal copy [here](#). It is on page viii and goes until page x. These pages are free to download, print, and use.
2. Have students read the Article to themselves.

3. Instruct students to cross out the 3rd and 6th paragraphs of Article II, as these have since been stricken from the Constitution.
 - a. In the margin beside the now crossed out 3rd paragraph, students should write “12th Amendment: Electoral College revisions.”
 - b. Likewise, in the margin next to the crossed out 6th paragraph, students should write “25th Amendment: Succession to the Presidency, Vice Presidential vacancy, Presidential disability.”
4. Now ask students to take turns finding “rules” for American presidents in the text of Article II.
 - a. Require students to give you the “rules” both by quoting the text and by summarizing the “rule” in their own words. List students’ “rules” on the board.
5. Ask students to reflect on the list. Ask, “Is there a rule about how many times a person can be president?” Students should quickly see that the answer is “No.”
6. Inform students that the absence of term limits was not inevitable. In fact, there was a lot of debate about the question of “re-eligibility” for the office when the Founders were writing the Constitution.

TERM LIMITS

1. On the board, draw a t-chart / pro-con chart.
2. Call on each student to give a reason for or against term limits for presidents. This will get more challenging as the list gets longer. Just encourage students to think critically and creatively.

ACCOMODATIONS:

- For English Language Learners:
 - Lead students through a reading of Article II of the Constitution. Read the Article together phrase by phrase.
 - Identify “rules” for the president as you go and have students highlight or underline such rules as they encounter them.
 - “Think aloud” to summarize the Article and let students know which parts are relevant to the assigned task.

ORIGINAL ARTICLE II OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION

Section. 1.

The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America. He shall hold his Office during the Term of four Years, and, together with the Vice President, chosen for the same Term, be elected, as follows

Each State shall appoint, in such Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a Number of Electors, equal to the whole Number of Senators and Representatives to which the State may be entitled in the Congress: but no Senator or Representative, or Person holding an Office of Trust or Profit under the United States, shall be appointed an Elector.

The Electors shall meet in their respective States, and vote by Ballot for two Persons, of whom one at least shall not be an Inhabitant of the same State with themselves. And they shall make a List of all the Persons voted for, and of the Number of Votes for each; which List they shall sign and certify, and transmit sealed to the Seat of the Government of the United States, directed to the President of the Senate. The President of the Senate shall, in the Presence of the Senate and House of Representatives, open all the Certificates, and the Votes shall then be counted. The Person having the greatest Number of Votes shall be the President, if such Number be a Majority of the whole Number of Electors appointed; and if there be more than one who have such Majority, and have an equal Number of Votes, then the House of Representatives shall immediately chuse by Ballot one of them for President; and if no Person have a Majority, then from the five highest on the List the said House shall in like Manner chuse the President. But in chusing the President, the Votes shall be taken by States, the Representation from each State having one Vote; A quorum for this Purpose shall consist of a Member or Members from two thirds of the States, and a Majority of all the States shall be necessary to a Choice. In every Case, after the Choice of the President, the Person having the greatest Number of Votes of the Electors shall be the Vice President. But if there should remain two or more who have equal Votes, the Senate shall chuse from them by Ballot the Vice President.

The Congress may determine the Time of chusing the Electors, and the Day on which they shall give their Votes; which Day shall be the same throughout the United States.

No Person except a natural born Citizen, or a Citizen of the United States, at the time of the Adoption of this Constitution, shall be eligible to the Office of President; neither shall any Person be eligible to that Office who shall not have attained to the Age of thirty five Years, and been fourteen Years a Resident within the United States.

In Case of the Removal of the President from Office, or of his Death, Resignation, or Inability to discharge the Powers and Duties of the said Office, the Same shall devolve on the Vice President, and the Congress may by law provide for the Case of Removal, Death, Resignation or Inability, both of the President and Vice President, declaring what Officer shall then act as President, and such Officer shall act accordingly, until the Disability be removed, or a President shall be elected.

The President shall, at stated Times, receive for his Services, a Compensation, which shall neither be increased nor diminished during the Period for which he shall have been elected, and he shall not receive within that Period any other Emolument from the United States, or any of them.

Before he enter on the Execution of his Office, he shall take the following Oath or Affirmation:—"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."

Section. 2.

The President shall be Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of the several States, when called into the actual Service of the United States; he may require the Opinion, in writing, of the principal Officer in each of the executive Departments, upon any Subject relating to the Duties of their respective Offices, and he shall have Power to grant Reprieves and Pardons for Offences against the United States, except in Cases of Impeachment.

He shall have Power, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, to make Treaties, provided two thirds of the Senators present concur; and he shall nominate, and by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, shall appoint Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls, Judges of the supreme Court, and all other Officers of the United States, whose Appointments are not herein otherwise provided for, and which shall be established by Law: but the Congress may by Law vest the Appointment of such inferior Officers, as they think proper, in the President alone, in the Courts of Law, or in the Heads of Departments.

The President shall have Power to fill up all Vacancies that may happen during the Recess of the Senate, by granting Commissions which shall expire at the End of their next Session.

Section. 3.

He shall from time to time give to the Congress Information of the State of the Union, and recommend to their Consideration such Measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient; he may, on extraordinary Occasions, convene both Houses, or either of them, and in Case of Disagreement between them, with Respect to the Time of Adjournment, he may adjourn them to such Time as he shall think proper; he shall receive Ambassadors and other public Ministers; he shall take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed, and shall Commission all the Officers of the United States.

Section. 4.

The President, Vice President and all civil Officers of the United States, shall be removed from Office on Impeachment for, and Conviction of, Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors.