

# “MEET THE PRESS” – AMERICAN PRESIDENTS

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**LEVEL:**

High School

**TIMEFRAME:**

Approximately three class sessions

**OBJECTIVES:**

Students will gain insight into the views and character of Presidents Washington, Lincoln, and Roosevelt as well as the current President of the United States.

Students will use primary sources and current news articles to compare and contrast the economic, international, and political context of each president.

**STANDARDS:**

- Revolution and a New Nation
- Foundations of the Political System
- Role of Government
- Developing Research Skills
- Applying Language Skills
- Reading for Literacy
- Writing Standards for Technical Subjects
- Speaking and Listening

**PROCEDURE:**

1. As the longest running television show, “Meet the Press” has brought political and government leaders together for over sixty years to discuss U.S. politics, social change and world events. Have students watch an episode if they are not familiar with the show, or share the website, <http://www.nbcnews.com/meet-the-press>.
2. Divide students into four groups and assign each group a president to represent: President Washington, Lincoln, Roosevelt, or the current President of the United States. Distribute the Host’s Questions (included in PDF) to students.
  - Remind students that a copy of their group answers must be submitted with all sources cited. Groups will need to do research either during at least two class periods, or as homework. Have students choose the person who will portray their group’s assigned president before the day of the show.
1. For the show, arrange desks in the front of a room so that the presidents sit facing the class. One student from each group will portray the president and the teacher will be the host. Having them answer in order of their presidency (Washington, Lincoln, Roosevelt followed by the current President of the United States) will allow the class to see how our country has changed over time.
  - As each question is asked, give each president one minute to answer, but do not discourage any class discussion that may result from the answers. As a fun extension, ask students to dress up as their president or videotape the show.

## **“Meet the Press”**

“Meet the Press” has brought political and government leaders together for over sixty years to discuss U.S. politics, social change and world events. As a class, we will produce our own episode of “Meet the Press,” with Presidents George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt, and the current President of the United States as guests. You will be assigned to work in a group, and each group will be assigned a president. As a group, use primary sources and news articles to research your assigned president and prepare one minute answers to the questions below. The more sources you use, the stronger your answers. Each group will submit a printed copy of their answers with all sources cited on the day of the show.

### **Host’s Questions**

1. The only thing you seem to have in common is your status as presidents- can you give our audience a brief summary of your life leading up to your Inauguration?
2. Which events in your life helped prepare you for the presidency?
3. What role have political parties played during your presidency?
4. Each of you has led our nation through a significant war- what are three circumstances that propelled us into war in the first place?
5. How did the nation’s economic circumstances during your war differ from that during the wars of the other presidents?
6. What international policies have you pursued as president? Which countries are our strong allies and with which do we have difficulties?
7. How has your wife embraced her role as First Lady?
8. What advice would you give a future president?