PRESIDENT'S REPORT CARD

**Introduction:**

The President is often one of the most criticized or praised positions in American government. Part of this arises from his responsibility to fulfill many different roles, thus meeting many different expectations. These roles include:

1. **Chief Legislator:** Famous legislation? Strength of relations with Congress?
2. **Commander-in-Chief:** Any military events? Defense policy?
3. **Chief Executive:** How did the government function? Any noted appointees? Was the President flexible or highly organized?
4. **Head of State:** How did the President present himself? Famous appearances? Speeches?
5. **Chief of Party:** Did the party win the midterm elections? Any famous campaigning? Did the party work together with the President and Congress?
6. **Guardian of the Economy:** How was the economy? Any policy initiatives?
7. **Chief Diplomat:** Foreign policy? Any special dignitaries hosted?

These roles become clearer as they are seen in execution. The presidency is the part of government best understood by studying it through history.

**Assignment:**

You will present to the other research pairs an in-depth assessment of an assigned president through evaluating each of the roles above. Your presentation should answer: “To what extent does \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (your assigned president) embody ideal presidential leadership?”

*Step 1:* Create criteria from the lessons in class to evaluate your assigned president. You will need to complete the rubric form with your partner to state why a president would receive an “A” or an “F.” The criteria should be designed as well as determined by you and your partner collectively; these criteria should be the determining factor in grading and evaluating your president.

*Step 2:* Initiate research with your partner. You should begin examining this President outside of class as well as use the days provided to the best of your ability. Understanding these roles, research instances from your assigned presidency to determine how well your president embodied presidential leadership.

*Step 3:* Create a presentation for the class using PowerPoint; this should be formatted as such:

1. Dedicate at least a slide to each role; these slides should have a grade as well as the evidence and analysis supporting that grade (remember that PowerPoint should be a guide, not a script)
2. One slide should be dedicated to the background of the President before entering office evaluating whether or not the President was qualified to take this position
3. One slide should give the President an overall, or final, grade with a justification for that grade
4. Do not forget title slide, contents slide, and questions slide

*Step 4:* With your partner, compose a two-page (double-spaced, 12 font, Times New Roman, 1-inch margins) justification for your evaluation of your assigned president. In doing so, explain how you came to your eventual critique of his presidency. This should be more reflective rather than summative. Submit this to the teacher with your PowerPoint presentation.

*Step 5:* Present your critique of the assigned president to your peers. In doing so, both you and your partner should share responsibility in discussing the president.

*Step 6:* Submit a report card for the presidents presented by your peers critiquing them in their seven roles utilizing the same criteria by which you judged your president. You will receive this report card when the presentations begin.

*Step 7:* Participate in a class wide deliberation discussing which of the presidents presented best embodies ideal presidential leadership.

**How you will be scored?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Presidential Performance Presentation Rubric** | |
| 1. Content | |
| 1. **Understanding of Presidential Roles:** presentation shows a clear and defined understanding of what the President does for each role discussed; examples provided match the appropriate role; students identify and describe criteria to judge that role by | \_\_\_x 3 |
| 1. **Use of Evidence:** presentation contains a multitude of research and examples of the assigned president fulfilling his specific roles; examples are understood in their historical and political context; does not overwhelm audience with facts, but uses these to set-up analysis; presidential summary/resume provided to class contains a list of highlights (both successes and failures) of presidency | \_\_\_x 2 |
| 1. **Analysis:** evidence found in the presentation is discussed for whether it signifies positive or negative leadership; interprets evidence; summarizes the performance of each role using evidence; analysis is evident and elaborated on in written summary | \_\_\_x 3 |
| 1. **Summation**: presentation contains a concluding slide that looks at all evidence in a holistic approach; takes into account various roles, large events, and other factors; written summary is reflective and elaborate (but concise) | \_\_\_x 2 |
| 1. **Record Keeping**: identifies significant aspects of peers’ presentations and demonstrates critical analysis in grading other presidents | \_\_\_x 2 |
| 1. Presentation | |
| 1. **Grammar and Spelling:** no spelling errors are evident; capitalization is utilized appropriately; appropriate wording | \_\_\_x 1 |
| 1. **Professional Format:** presentation adheres to guidelines set forth for what constitutes a professional presentation, such as minimal words, visually appealing background | \_\_\_x 1 |
| 1. **Public Speaking:** partners share in the discussion of their report; PowerPoint is used as a reference point, not a crutch;speaking is clear, expressive, and audible; eye contact, posture, facial expressions engage the audience | \_\_\_x 1 |
| 1. Deliberation |  |
| 1. **Discussion:** each student is graded individually, unlike the presentation; participation is required | \_\_\_x 3 |
| 1. **On task** |  |
| 1. **Classwork** | \_\_\_\_X2 |
| 1. **On Task during presentation** | \_\_\_\_x 2 |
| **Total Score** | \_\_\_\_/100 |

**5 = GREAT**: meets all standards in a manner that exceeds expectations; goes beyond what is expected; has a “wow” factor

**4 = GOOD**: meets expectations in a consistent manner with few omissions or errors; reveals a mastery of the standard

**3 = AVERAGE**: meets standards set forth with some errors or omissions; some questions arise due to the effort at completing the task

**2 = NEEDS IMPRO VEMENT**: significant errors or omissions are present; task is completed at a minimal level

**1 = POOR:** little attempt at completing the task is evident; knowledge of task is questionable

**0 = NOT EVIDENT IN PRESENTATION**

**Rubric for Grading Presidential Performance in the 7 Roles of a President**

**DIRECTIONS:** With your partner, fill out this “rubric” that you will use to guide you in grading your assigned president. Criteria should include basic concepts or ideals you feel the president should meet, while evidence should be tangible things you may see or observe. For example, if you feel your president should pursue an isolationist foreign policy, you would put isolationism under criteria while writing such things as high tariffs or little foreign intervention in the evidence box.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Criteria for Achieving an “A” | Criteria for Achieving an “F” |
| Chief Legislator | Criteria | Criteria: |
| Evidence may include: | Evidence may include: |
| Commander -in-Chief | Criteria: | Criteria: |
| Evidence may include: | Evidence may include: |
| Chief Executive | Criteria: | Criteria: |
| Evidence may include: | Evidence may include: |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Chief of Party | Criteria: | Criteria: |
| Evidence May Include: | Evidence May Include: |
| Guardian of the Economy | Criteria: | Criteria: |
| Evidence May Include: | Evidence May Include: |
| Chief Diplomat | Criteria: | Criteria: |
| Evidence May Include: | Evidence May Include: |
| Head of State | Criteria: | Criteria: |
| Evidence may include: | Evidence may include: |

Any additional criteria you wish to include to judge the president by (i.e. think of how teachers consider such things as attendance, behavior, etc. in addition to the actual grades received in class):**QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER AND ANSWER IN YOUR CRITIQUE**

The following questions should help guide you in (1) developing your criteria and (2) identifying aspects of your assigned president’s term to report on. They are designed to help you think more critically about each role. Not all questions need to be answered, yet they should be considered.

Chief Legislator

* What was the perceived image of the President in the eyes of Congress? Vice versa?
* What was the President’s legislative agenda? How did he present this or pursue its achievement?
* Did the President serve during a period of divided government? How much gridlock was encountered during his term(s)?
  + If there was divided government, how well did the President pursue a sense of bipartisanship?
* What major pieces of legislation were signed during his term(s)?
* How much did the President wield his veto power?

Guardian of the Economy

* What do the economic indicators during his presidency indicate about the President’s handling of the economy (such as trade, unemployment, inflation, etc.)?
* What type of economic policy did the President embrace (such as Keynesian, supply-side, etc.)?
* What were the President’s major fiscal and monetary policies and priorities?
* Was any major economic reform legislation passed during his presidency?
* Were there any major recessions or depressions during this presidency? Or, was there sustained growth?
* Did the President expand economic opportunities available to all Americans?
* Did the President improve the economic infrastructure of the country?
* Did the President improve the performance of the economy during his time in office?

Chief Diplomat

* Did the President make any famous trips abroad? Did he welcome any famous visitors?
* Did the President lead or participate in any major negotiations with foreign leaders or nations?
* How was the United States and the President perceived abroad during his presidency?
* Were there any major treaties negotiated by the President? Did Congress embrace or oppose these?
* Did the President create a doctrine regarding foreign affairs?
* What were the foreign policy goals of the president? How did these reflect the foreign policy ideology of the President?

Commander-in-Chief

* Did the President initiate or end the use of force anywhere? (Why did the President use force? Were the circumstances justified? How successful was the use of force if it was used?)
* Did the President lead a major reorganization of the military? If so, how did this reflect his budget priorities?
* Did the President and the military cooperate well with one another?
* Did the President have a military doctrine?

Head of State

* What type of speaking style did the President utilize?
* How well did the President meet the expectations and needs of the people (especially in times of crisis)?
* What was the public image of the President?
* What were the public opinion/approval ratings of the president?
* Were any famous speeches given by the president? What made these famous? What was their context?
* Did the President actively speak to the public or the press? Was it too little or too often?

Chief of Party

* Did the President make successful appearances on behalf of his party?
* To what extent did the president’s popularity or lack of impact the party? How well did the president’s party perform during elections? Did the party lose or gain congressional seats?
* To what extent did the President reflect the ideology and positions of the party? Did the President ignore the traditional positions of the party (what was the Party’s response if so?)? Did the President lead an ideological restructuring of the party?
* How did the President shape his party? Did he create a larger coalition, or voting base, for the party? To what extent did his election create an electoral realignment?
* How well did the President’s party fare in future electoral success? Did his presidency hurt or help future candidates?

Chief Executive

* What type of leadership style did the President model in the White House?
* How did the President address the size of the government (expand, decrease)? Were these changes good ideas or simply political moves?
* Were the president’s appointments good choices? Did they reflect well on his presidency or create scandals?
* Did the President work well with the Senate during the nomination process of his appointees?
* Did the President have to replace members of his staff or Cabinet frequently?

Other Questions to Consider

* Was the President qualified to take office? What were his qualifications? Prior resume?
* What influenced or motivated the President (such as religion, life history, etc.)?
* Did the President continue to lead and seek a positive impact after the Presidency?
* Did the President display exemplary personal character? Did the President have any embarrassing scandals?
* Was the President able to present/communicate a vision for the country? Or, did the President seek to simply maintain the status quo?
* How did the President embody the characteristics of a “modern president?”
* Did the President fail to utilize the power of the office? Or, did the President abuse the power of the office?

**President’s Report Card Project Checklist: We Want an “A”…Right?**

Use the following check-list to self-evaluate your project:

Required Content Slides

* \_\_\_ Background: was he qualified to run for president?
* \_\_\_ Chief Legislator
* \_\_\_ Guardian of the Economy
* \_\_\_ Commander-in-Chief
* \_\_\_ Head of State
* \_\_\_ Chief Diplomat
* \_\_\_ Chief Executive
* \_\_\_ Head of Party
* \_\_\_ Overall critique

AND…

* \_\_\_ Each slide (except background) has a grade associated with it

PowerPoint Checklist

* \_\_\_ Use short statements; avoid complete sentences; take away unnecessary words
* \_\_\_ Use bullets and sub-bullets appropriately
* \_\_\_ Spelling and grammar checked
* \_\_\_ Professional background (no image established as background)
* \_\_\_ Font color and type professional and do not clash with background
* \_\_\_Avoid gimmicky sounds and transitions
* \_\_\_ Incorporate a table of contents slide as well as a conclusion/questions slide

PowerPoint Content Checklist

* \_\_\_ Uses specific examples rooted in factual evidence (do not make assumptions)
* \_\_\_ Avoids a summative presentation, but uses examples to justify critique
* \_\_\_ Evidence serves as material to prop up arguments made about the president
* \_\_\_ Slides balance historical examples and criticism

Paper Checklist

* \_\_\_ At least two pages (Times New Roman and 12-font w/ 1 inch borders-)
* \_\_\_ Paper is not a biography, but rather a proven critique with examples and evidence used
* \_\_\_ Paper examines the president’s activities holistically
* \_\_\_ Grammar and spelling checked

Presentation Checklist

* \_\_\_ Are we prepared to use the PowerPoint as merely talking points and not a crutch?
* \_\_\_ Can we elaborate on the points included in the PowerPoint?
* \_\_\_ Can we answer who, what, when, where, why, and how about the major events?
* \_\_\_ Are we ready to share in the presenting of the material? Do we both have familiarity with the material?
* \_\_\_ Can we be concise and not ramble about our presentation?

**SAMPLE ESSAY**

*To what extent did President Theodore Roosevelt embody ideal presidential leadership?*

When comparing the concept of the modern president to presidents of the 19th century, one reflects on the emergence of the president as a leader in policymaking and of public opinion as well as the director of the enlarged American government. Yet, such an amplification of responsibility is not necessarily positive due to the possibility of the mishandling of power. To handle such power in a responsible manner requires a president with great composure and sense of leadership. President Theodore Roosevelt successfully handled his role as a modern president in his domestic affairs, but failed to utilize his responsibility in an ethical manner internationally.

In respect to America’s role in the world, Roosevelt greatly expanded America’s presence in both positive and negative ways. Roosevelt responsibly used America’s newfound power in the 20th century to negotiate peace to the Russo-Japanese War, for which he won the Nobel Peace Prize. Yet, Roosevelt employed a racially-biased view of the world and tried to force American economic and expansion goals throughout Latin America and Asia. While he sought economic profit for the US, his means of forcing countries into advantageous relationships with America were unjustified; his employment of the military and support for coups demonstrated a failure to respect national sovereignty of countries that popular sentiment deemed uncivilized. Thus, while Roosevelt built America’s reputation amongst established world powers, he used this reputation to violate the sovereign rights of others.

Roosevelt’s domestic agenda reflected a grandiose vision, which future presidents should try to adopt. His passion for the issues he adopted was admirable. His issues, such as conservation and corporate regulation, reflected what he felt was needed, rather than what issues were politically acceptable at the time. He understood what was needed for the “common good” by working to promote the needs of the lower-middle and lower classes that had suffered during the Gilded Age. Unlike most Republicans, Roosevelt embodied a progressive ideology that called for an active government and control of corporate excess. A respectable president would seek to achieve what is needed for the well-being of the public, rather than what is desired by his party or what is perceived as politically popular.

Roosevelt utilized his position as president to seek action on his proposed agenda. Serving as the inspiration for the term bully pulpit, Roosevelt, unlike previous presidents, actively toured the country making public appearances and speeches pressing for public support. He institutionalized the presence of the media inside the White House by establishing press briefings and conferences; he also developed a tendency to release information specific to supporting his cause, thus creating constructing a presidential viewpoint to be highlighted in the news. Seeing the need for electoral successes of politicians similar to his own mold, Roosevelt broke with tradition and actively campaigned for fellow Progressives as well as for himself. Roosevelt invented and successfully utilized means of public persuasion to help actualize his political agenda setting a standard for future presidents.

While President Roosevelt sought ambitious and positive goals for America, his overemphasis on the power of his office and the disregard for constitutional relationships has made his leadership questionable. One must applaud Roosevelt for his vision, but it raises the age-old question: do the means justify the ends? Roosevelt’s overreliance on executive orders and the powers of public persuasion indicate that Roosevelt failed to understand how to collegially achieve his objectives directly with Congress. In addition, his emphasis on using force and confrontation to achieve his foreign policy objectives is questionable and lacks the need for the US to act as a morally-upright foreign power. Thus, while Roosevelt’s triumphs are great and praiseworthy, the means he went by to achieve these prevent him from achieving the equivalent of sainthood amongst the presidents.

**SAMPLE ROLE SLIDE**



**SAMPLE FULL EVALUATION SLIDE**



Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**GRADING THE OTHER PRESIDENTS**

**Directions:** Complete each grading slot following each of your peer’s presentations using historical evidence and holistic analysis.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| President \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | | |
| My grade for this president is: | Grade Justification: | |
| Why not higher: | Why not lower: |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| President \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | | |
| My grade for this president is: | Grade Justification: | |
| Why not higher: | Why not lower: |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| President \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | | |
| My grade for this president is: | Grade Justification: | |
| Why not higher: | Why not lower: |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| President \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | | |
| My grade for this president is: | Grade Justification: | |
| Why not higher: | Why not lower: |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| President \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | | |
| My grade for this president is: | Grade Justification: | |
| Why not higher: | Why not lower: |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| President \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | | |
| My grade for this president is: | Grade Justification: | |
| Why not higher: | Why not lower: |

**Teacher Question Script for President Deliberation**

Utilize the proposed questions as needed to guide a class discussion on the presidents presented in an effort to determine which president best represented ideal presidential leadership.

* What defines the ideal presidential leadership?
* What should be used as criteria to rate the presidency?
* Are there certain roles we should emphasize over others? (for example, do we head of state more important than guardian of the economy?)
* Does the time define the president? (I.e. FDR succeeded, but LBJ is defined by Vietnam)
  + What presidents may have performed in an exemplary fashion if given the right circumstances?
* Should the future results of presidential decisions be held against them? (Social security-FDR, Vietnam escalation-JFK, housing bubble-Clinton)
* Is it fair to judge a president on the performance of the economy?
  + To what extent does a president have control over economic performance?
* Commander-in-chief: based on the presentations, what president would you judge as the most successful Commander-in-Chief?
  + Which President used force in the most justifiable means? Least justifiable means?
  + Should we hold a president accountable for an unjustifiable means, but a very successful use of force?
  + Restructuring of the military?(desegregation, Don’t Ask Don’t Tell, arms deals/limitations)
  + Can we declare a president a successful commander-in-chief if they never have to use force in a large-scale war?
* Which president had the most organizational-leadership capacity? What defines good leadership in the White House? (wheel-n-spokes versus business model)
  + Ran the best White House?
  + What tools are essential for the maintenance of an effective White House?
  + Why is organizational capacity critical to the success of a modern president?
* Which president proved to be most transformational for America?
  + Did any president create a vision for America that helped set it on a new path? (i.e. Bush-national security; Carter-energy focus; Reagan-economics; Truman-international leadership)
    - Who had the best ability to inspire American’s to achieve their vision set out for the country?
  + Did any president stand up for an issue that America was largely against or that was politically unpopular? (LBJ and the poor/African-Americans; Nixon for working with China)
* Which president set forth and achieved the best legislative agenda?
  + What methods are justified or legitimate in seeking to have Congress adopt one’s agenda?
  + Should we hold legislative achievements or the lack thereof against the president?
  + Is divided government relevant to the assessment of presidents?
  + Does it matter the number of laws passed or the quality of these laws as well as if they hold up in Court (FDR)?
  + Would a good president intervene in the legislative process-veto, lobby, “going public?”
* Which leader left his party in the best standing?
  + Does a “good” president ignore his party when necessary?
  + To what extent does a leader maintain a set ideology for the benefit of others?
  + Should we judge a president for the success of others?
* Which leader transformed his party the most? (coalitions, realignment, philosophy)
  + Carter and human rights, Reagan and push towards conservatism, FDR coalition
* Which president connected best with the American public?
  + What was that president’s speaking style?
  + Were there any significant events that kept their approval ratings high? Dropped their approval ratings?
* How do we weigh achievements versus scandals?
  + Does the president set a moral standard or example for the nation?
  + Example of Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky-should we hold personal life against an individual (should we hold this against FDR?)
  + Richard Nixon and Watergate
  + Which president best upheld the legitimacy of office?