

presidents of the *United States of America*



**Gerald Ford
&
Jimmy Carter**



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presidents of the *United States of America*

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Gerald Ford

"I was the 38th President of the United States and helped heal the country after a very difficult time."





Become a Presidential Historian by Solving This Puzzle

In this book, you'll learn all sorts of facts about Gerald Ford's amazing life and accomplishments. But there's still one last thing we need to know about him.

Ford's wife had a nickname but we need to find out what it was. You can help us uncover the answer! Hidden in the text are bolded letters. Read this book carefully to find them, and fill the letters into the blanks below in the order they appear.

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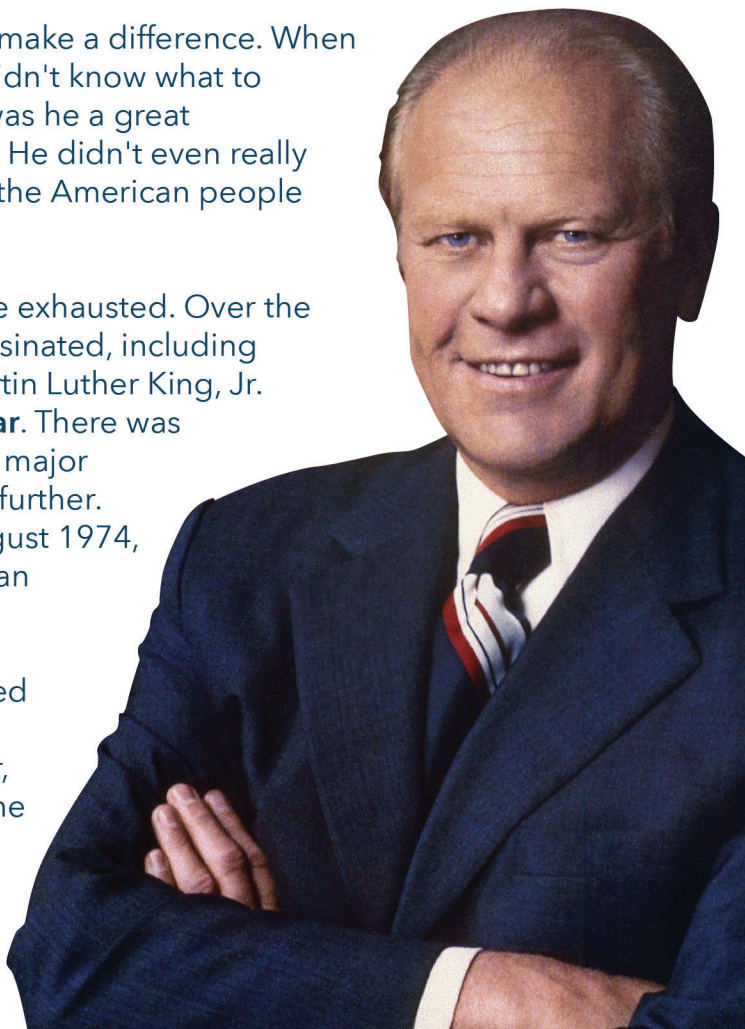
Once you've solved this puzzle, you'll be a true PragerU Kids presidential historian!

Meet Gerald Ford

Sometimes, it's the people you least expect that can make a difference. When Gerald Ford became president in 1974, Americans didn't know what to expect. He wasn't the most charismatic person, nor was he a great speaker—qualities that voters love in their presidents. He didn't even really want to be president. He was, however, exactly what the American people needed at that time.

When Ford entered office, the American people were exhausted. Over the previous 11 years, several of their leaders were assassinated, including President John F. Kennedy and civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. Thousands of Americans had died in the **Vietnam War**. There was violence in the cities, and the economy was failing. A major scandal, called **Watergate**, divided the country even further. Many Americans had lost faith in their leaders. In August 1974, Gerald Ford became president. He immediately began working to heal the wounds of the country.

Ford faced many challenges, and not everyone agreed with his decisions. When Ford ran to keep the presidency in 1976, he lost. Years afterward, however, people remembered how hard he worked to bring the country together. They remembered that he was a decent and honest man who was devoted to his family and tried his best to heal America. When Ford died in 2006, the nation had a greater appreciation of his leadership than when he was in office.

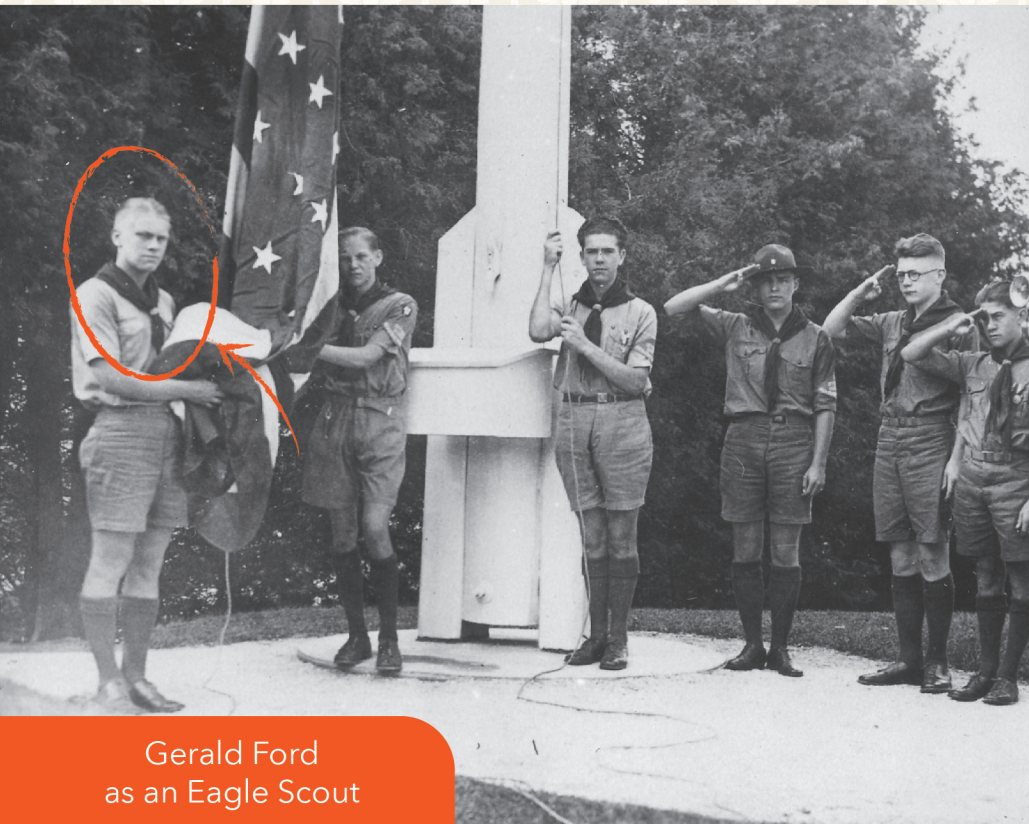


Young Gerald

Gerald Ford was born on July 14, 1913, in Omaha, Nebraska as Leslie Lynch King, Jr. After his parents divorced and his mother remarried a businessman named Gerald Ford, young Leslie Jr. took his stepdad's name and started going by Gerald Ford, Jr.

Young Gerald grew up in a close-knit family and eventually had three younger half-brothers. On his 12th birthday, he joined the **Boy Scouts** and eventually attained the rank of **Eagle Scout**. He then attended South High School in Grand Rapids, where he was a star student and athlete. He was named to the honor society and was the captain of the football team. Gerald became known as one of the top high school football players in Michigan. He also earned some extra money working at his family's paint business and a local restaurant.

The University of Michigan recognized Gerald's talent and recruited him to play for their football team. While there, he studied economics and political science and graduated in 1935.



Gerald Ford
as an Eagle Scout



Interesting Facts

- He was the first Eagle Scout to become president.
- He was a member of the Republican Party.
- He was the first president that was neither elected to presidency or vice presidency.
- He was the first president to take office after the resignation of another president.
- He survived two assassination attempts as president.
- He was the first president to visit Japan and Finland while in office.



Rise to Power

In 1938, Ford was admitted to Yale University Law School. He worked hard and graduated in the top quarter of his class in 1941. After World War II broke out that December, Ford joined the U.S. Navy and served in the South Pacific. He was almost swept overboard during a devastating typhoon in the Philippine Sea in 1944 but survived.

After the war ended in 1945, Ford returned to Michigan to start his legal career, but soon his family and friends encouraged him to run for office. In 1948, he won a seat as a Republican in the U.S. House of Representatives, where he would serve for almost 25 years. He also married a woman named Elizabeth Bloomer Warren in 1948—their marriage would last 58 years.

Congressman Ford earned a reputation as a hard worker who worked well with both Democrats and Republicans. In 1965, Ford was chosen to be the minority leader of the Republican Party in the House. At the same time, however, the country was going through difficult times, with many **assassinations** and many Americans fighting and dying in Vietnam.

Quote

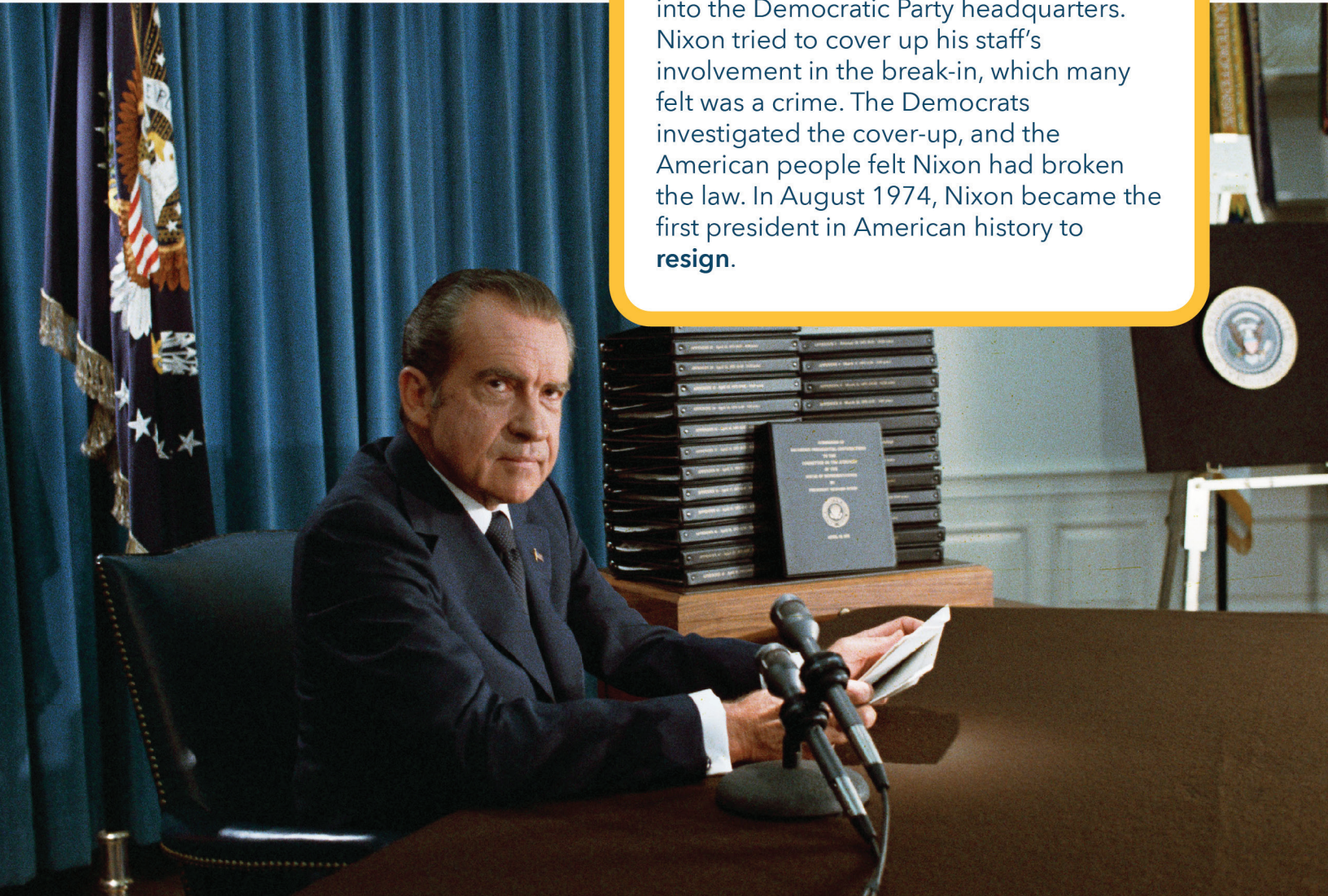
*"Being a citizen of the United States of America is the greatest honor and privilege in this world."
- January 1977*



Vice President

In 1968, Richard Nixon was elected president, and Spiro Agnew was elected vice president. They were both Republicans and were re-elected in 1972. Unfortunately, both were involved in major **scandals**. In 1973, Vice President Agnew resigned due to financial crimes. Knowing that many people liked Ford, President Nixon appointed him to replace Agnew as vice president.

In the meantime, Nixon was dealing with his own scandal—the Watergate scandal. Several people knew Nixon's staff broke into the Democratic Party headquarters. Nixon tried to cover up his staff's involvement in the break-in, which many felt was a crime. The Democrats investigated the cover-up, and the American people felt Nixon had broken the law. In August 1974, Nixon became the first president in American history to **resign**.





Quote

*"My fellow Americans,
our long national
nightmare is over."
- August 1974*

President

The American people were very upset about the Watergate scandal and many other things happening at the time, such as the Vietnam War. They wanted a fresh start. President Ford captured that feeling when he said, "Our long national nightmare is over." People across the United States felt better that such an honest, kind man was now in the White House.

Ford felt it was important for the country to move on from the past. Many people wanted Nixon to be tried and imprisoned for Watergate, but Ford decided to **pardon** the former president. At the time, the decision was controversial, but he felt that a trial

would divide the country even further.

Ford also worked hard to revive the economy, especially since **inflation** was rising. In addition, he tried to help the South Vietnamese fight against the communists, but Democrats in Congress prevented him from doing so. Without American assistance, the communists took over South Vietnam and created a brutal dictatorship there, and the Vietnam War finally ended.

In 1976, Ford ran for his own term as president, but he lost a close race to the former Governor of Georgia, Jimmy Carter.

Retirement

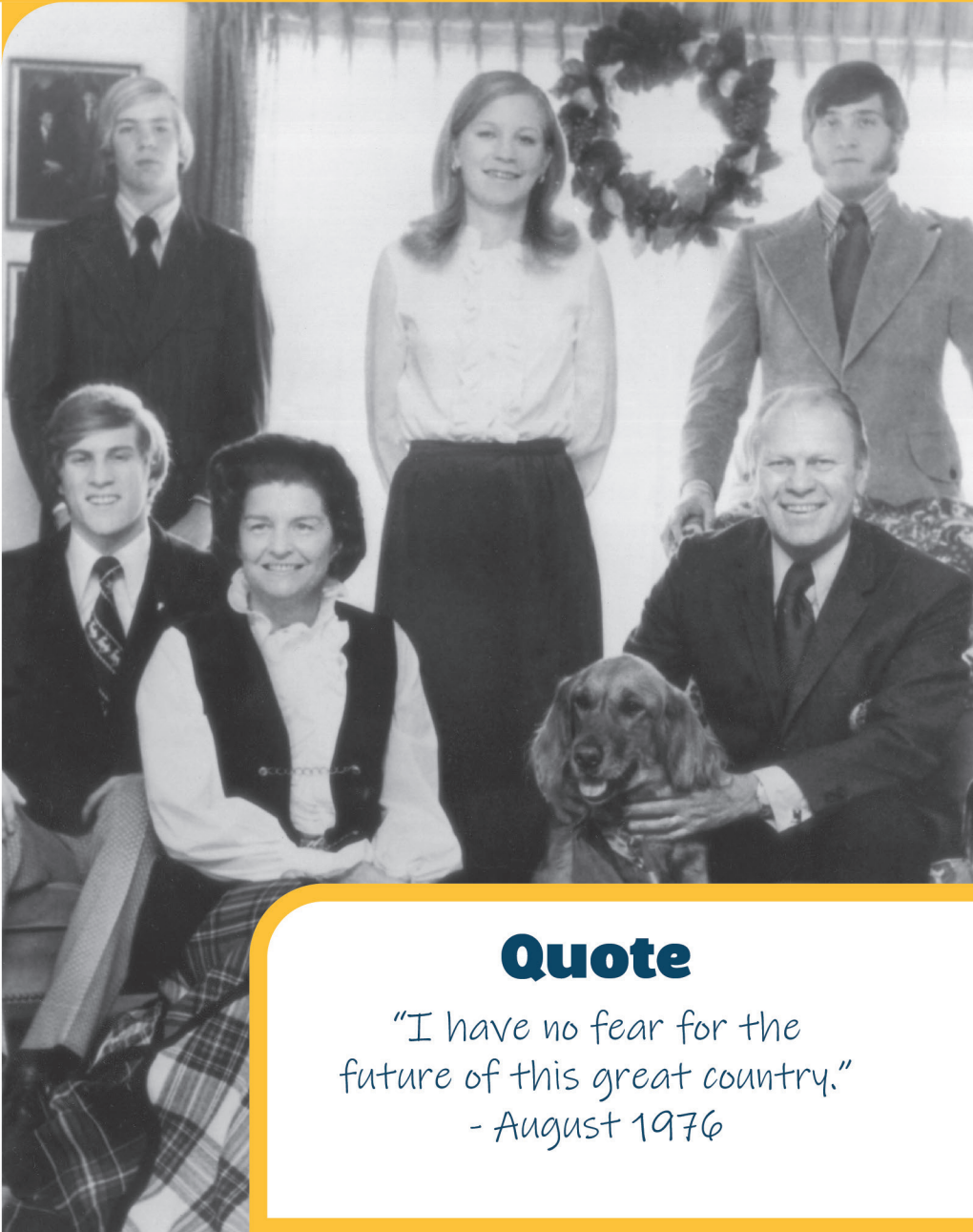
After leaving the White House, he retired to Rancho Mirage, California. He spent his retirement writing books, playing golf, and giving speeches. He almost ran in the 1980 election as Ronald Reagan's vice presidential running mate, but, in the end, Reagan chose George H.W. Bush instead.

Ford lived until 2006 and died on December 26, 2006 in Rancho Mirage, California. He was 93 years old and was, at the time, the longest-lived president.

Legacy

When people learn about Gerald Ford and watch videos of his speeches, they notice that he wasn't the most charismatic president. They also learn that he lost the 1976 election, which leads many to believe that Ford was a weak or failed president. There is, however, more to the story.

After Ford left office, people began to appreciate him more. They realized that, after the painful events of the 1960s and early 1970s, they needed a president who was honest and maybe even a little **bland**. At the time, they were upset that Ford pardoned Nixon, but **y**ears later, they realized that he was helping the country move on from the past. Gerald Ford might not be considered a great president, but he is now respected for his character and for the way he helped heal the divisions in America.



Quote

"I have no fear for the future of this great country."
- August 1976



and
He

ay
e

After Ford graduated, the Detroit Lions and Green Bay Packers offered him contracts to play for them, but he declined to attend law school instead. Even in law school, Ford continued to be involved in sports. He served as an assistant football coach and also coached boxing. Michigan University eventually retired Ford's jersey number, and *Sports Illustrated* named him to their Silver Anniversary All-American Football Team.

"Our Constitution works; our great Republic is a government of laws and not of men."
- August 1974

Write about the importance of integrity. Consider your personal integrity and write about how you might be even more honest.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. On the far left edge, there is a vertical yellow strip, likely representing a binder or margin. The paper has rounded corners on the right side. There are no markings, text, or drawings on the page.

Gerald Ford's Character

Solve the puzzle to learn one of Gerald Ford's attributes.

1 Someone who is photographed wearing newly-designed clothes or using products.

2 The killing of an important person, especially a country's leader.

3 When a president or other government figure decides someone who is accused of or has been found guilty of a crime is forgiven and no longer has to be punished for that crime.

4 An event involving dishonest and/or illegal activity that provokes outrage.

5 A major scandal from 1972 to 1974 that resulted in Richard Nixon resigning from the presidency.

6 A famous youth organization in the United States that helps prepare boys to be good citizens and participate in outdoor activities.

7 To voluntarily leave a job or position.

One of Gerald Ford's character attributes:

Our First Model President

Like most presidents, Gerald Ford was a lawyer and politician. Unlike other presidents, however, Ford was once a **fashion model**—which he did for some extra money. His handsome looks and athletic physique made him an ideal model. He even appeared on the cover of *Cosmopolitan* magazine in 1942.

1	2	3	4
5	6	7	K

Glossary

Vietnam War: A military conflict from 1955 until 1975 that began when communists in North Vietnam tried to impose a dictatorship over the entire country. The United States sent about 2.7 million soldiers to support the South Vietnamese against the communists, but this decision became unpopular among Americans.

Watergate: A political controversy from 1972 to 1974 that resulted in Richard Nixon's resignation from the presidency. The scandal began when members of a group called the Plumbers were arrested for burglarizing the Democratic Party headquarters in the Watergate Hotel. When Congress prepared to impeach him, Nixon resigned on August 9, 1974.

Boy Scouts: A famous youth organization in the United States that helps prepare boys to be good citizens and participate in outdoor activities.

Eagle Scout: The highest rank attainable in the Boy Scouts.

Assassination: The killing of an important person, especially a country's leader.

Scandal: An event involving dishonest and/or illegal activity that provokes outrage.

Resign: To voluntarily leave a job or position.

Pardon: When a president or other government figure decides someone who is accused of or has been found guilty of a crime is forgiven and no longer has to be punished for that crime.

Inflation: When things that you buy, such as food, clothes, and other products, are more expensive.

Bland: Being unexciting but pleasant.

Fashion Model: Someone who is photographed wearing newly-designed clothes or using products. They are often considered good-looking and work for advertising companies that want to convince people to buy that product.

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Images: Getty Images, WikiCommons, FreePik

Answers

FORD'S WIFE'S NICKNAME:
BETTY

GERALD FORD'S CHARACTER:

1 F A S H I O N M O D E L
2 A S S A S S I N A T I O N
3 P A R D O N
4 S C A N D A L
5 W A T E R G A T E
6 B O Y S C O U T S
7 R E S I G N

One of Gerald Ford's character attributes:

H A R D
1 2 3 4
W O R K
5 6 7

jimmy Carter



"I served as the
39th President of
the United States
and promoted
human rights
causes."



Become a Presidential Historian by Solving This Puzzle

In this book, you'll learn all sorts of facts about Jimmy Carter's life and accomplishments. But there's still one last thing we need to know about him.

The Secret Service had a codename for President Carter. We need your help to find out what it was. Your task is to help us uncover the answer! Hidden in the text are bolded letters. Read this book carefully to find them, and fill in the letters in the blanks below in the order they appear.

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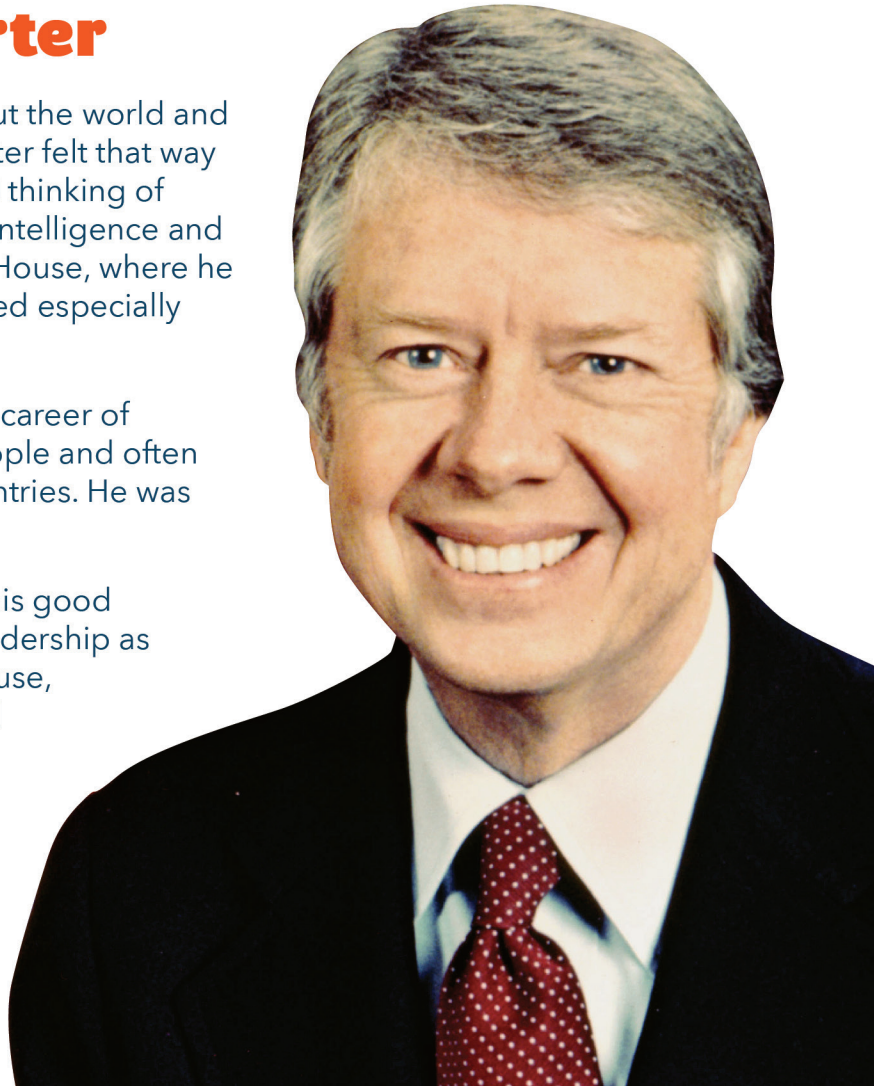
Once you've solved this puzzle, you'll be a true PragerU Kids presidential historian!

Meet Jimmy Carter

Have you ever met someone who cared about the world and wanted to make it a better place? Jimmy Carter felt that way and spent much of his life serving others and thinking of ways to solve the world's problems. Carter's intelligence and abilities carried him all the way to the White House, where he served as America's 39th president. He worked especially hard to promote **human rights**.

Even after Carter left office, he continued his career of service. He helped build homes for poor people and often traveled abroad to bring peace to other countries. He was even awarded with the **Nobel Peace Prize**.

While most Americans recognize Carter for his good intentions, they were disappointed by his leadership as president. During his tenure in the White House, the United States faced several crises, as well as the threat of communist aggression from the **Soviet Union**. Many felt that Carter wasn't tough enough to handle these situations. His life story teaches us an important lesson: having good intentions is not always enough to make the world a better place.



Young Jimmy

James Earl Carter, Jr. was born on October 1, 1924, in the small farming town of Plains, Georgia. He was the oldest of James Earl, Sr. and Lillian Carter's four children. James Sr. was a peanut farmer and store owner, and Lillian had been a nurse but stayed home to raise the kids.

The Carter family lived a frugal life—their house had no electricity or indoor plumbing. Young Jimmy helped his family sell produce from the family farm in the town square. Even at a young age, he developed a strong business sense—by the time he was 13, Jimmy was making money by renting out several homes to local families.

He was also a very good student, and in 1941, he graduated as the valedictorian of his high school.

Jimmy Carter with his basketball team



Interesting Facts

- He is the only president (as of 2024) who was born in Georgia.
- He is a member of the Democratic Party.
- He is the first president to be born in a hospital.
- He is the first president born after World War I.
- Before entering political office, he was a peanut farmer.
- He is the only president (as of 2024) to have graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy.
- He is the third president to win the Nobel Peace Prize.
- He has had (as of 2024) the longest retirement of any president, at 43 years.
- He is (as of 2024) the longest-lived president, at 99 years.
- He and his wife Rosalynn are the longest-married presidential couple in American history (77 years).

The Navy

Carter began attending the **U.S. Naval Academy** in Annapolis, Maryland, in 1943—right in the middle of World War II. He graduated in the top ten percent of his class in 1946, the year after the war ended.

That same year, he married an attractive young woman named Rosalynn Smith. Although she had turned down his first marriage proposal, Carter remained persistent, and she accepted his second proposal. They eventually had four children.

After graduating, Carter went on to earn the rank of lieutenant and helped the Navy develop **nuclear-powered submarines**—a dangerous line of work. Carter was also studying nuclear physics at a nearby college. He planned to become a naval engineering officer.

Carter had an exciting career ahead of him. He was about to join the crew of the newly-built *Seawolf* submarine when, in 1953, everything changed: his father died of cancer.

It was a heartbreaking loss for him and his family. Also, Carter's career had forever altered: the family needed him to come home and run the farm. Instead of working in a submarine, he resigned his commission and, along with Rosalynn and their kids, returned to Plains, Georgia.



Rise to Power



Quote

*"Human rights is the soul of our foreign policy, because human rights is the very soul of our sense of nationhood."
- December 1978*

Some people might have been upset at changing careers, but Carter didn't waste time thinking about what might have been. He took control of the family peanut farms and, through hard work, turned them into profitable businesses by 1960.

During this time, the South went through dramatic changes. For almost a century, black Americans had suffered from unfair and discriminatory **Jim Crow laws** that kept them segregated away from white Americans. Civil rights activists, however, were fighting back against these laws so that all Americans, regardless of race, would be treated equally.

Although Carter had grown up in the segregated South, he hated racism and supported equal rights for all. When the White Citizens Council—a group supporting segregation—invited and pressured him to join, he refused (the only white male in Plains to do so).

Meanwhile, Carter became a major figure in his community. He served on the boards of local hospitals and libraries and chaired the county board of education. He was also a devout Christian and served as a deacon and Sunday school teacher at Plains Baptist Church.

Carter's success led him to consider a run for political office. In 1962, he was elected as a Democrat to the Georgia Senate. He served two terms in the state senate and even ran for governor in 1966 but failed to win the nomination.

Governor

Carter ran for Governor of Georgia again in 1970. This time, he downplayed his views supporting black American rights, which helped him win the election. As governor, however, he said in his inaugural address that "the time for racial discrimination is over." He then called for an end to segregation and gave many black Americans jobs in the state government.

Carter proposed many liberal policies, such as making new environmental rules and increasing funding for government-run education. He also reorganized the state government to become more efficient.

Despite these successes, many state legislators found him hard to work with—they felt Governor Carter was too stubborn and unwilling to compromise.



A Country in Crisis

Carter's term as governor ended in 1975, and he set his sights on an even higher office: the presidency. Most Americans didn't know who Jimmy Carter was, but the more they learned about him, the more they liked him.

By this time, the American people were desperate for change. Over the past decade, they had seen many of their leaders assassinated, experienced the horror of the Vietnam War, and endured the drama of the **Watergate Scandal**. In 1974, as a result of the scandal, Richard Nixon became the first president to resign. The people were exhausted from all of the drama. Even worse, they felt that many of their leaders had lied to them during the war and the Watergate Scandal. People lost trust in Washington, D.C. politicians and wanted to try something new.

Quote

*"In a nation that was proud of hard work, strong families, close-knit communities, and our faith in God, too many of us now tend to worship self-indulgence and consumption. Human identity is no longer defined by what one does, but by what one owns."
- July 1979*

The 1976 Presidential Election

For millions of voters, Jimmy Carter seemed like a breath of fresh air. They hoped this devout Christian with a big smile would restore honesty in the White House. After all, he promised he would never lie to the American people. Carter seemingly came out of nowhere to win the Democratic nomination in the summer of 1976 and selected Minnesota Senator Walter Mondale as his running mate.

Carter faced Republican President Gerald Ford in the general election. Ford had previously been vice president but rose to the top job when Nixon resigned. Carter and Ford took part in three presidential debates—the first since the 1960 election. In November, Carter won a close race, becoming the 39th President of the United States.



President



President Carter had high hopes for his presidency. It was the **Cold War**, and America faced a great enemy—the communist Soviet Union. Carter, however, wanted to change America's strategy. He was an **idealistic** man and wanted to focus more on human rights. As president, he urged the leaders of other countries to respect the rights of their citizens.

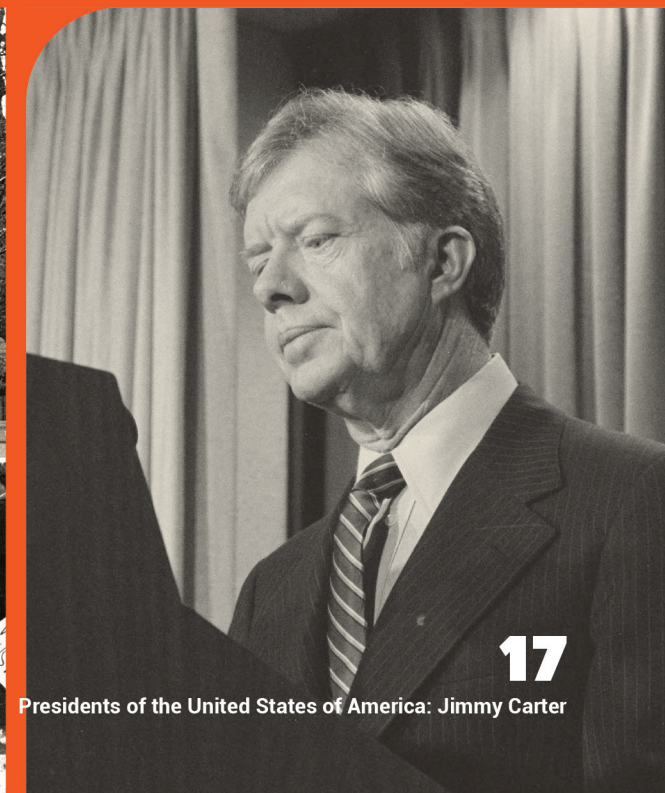
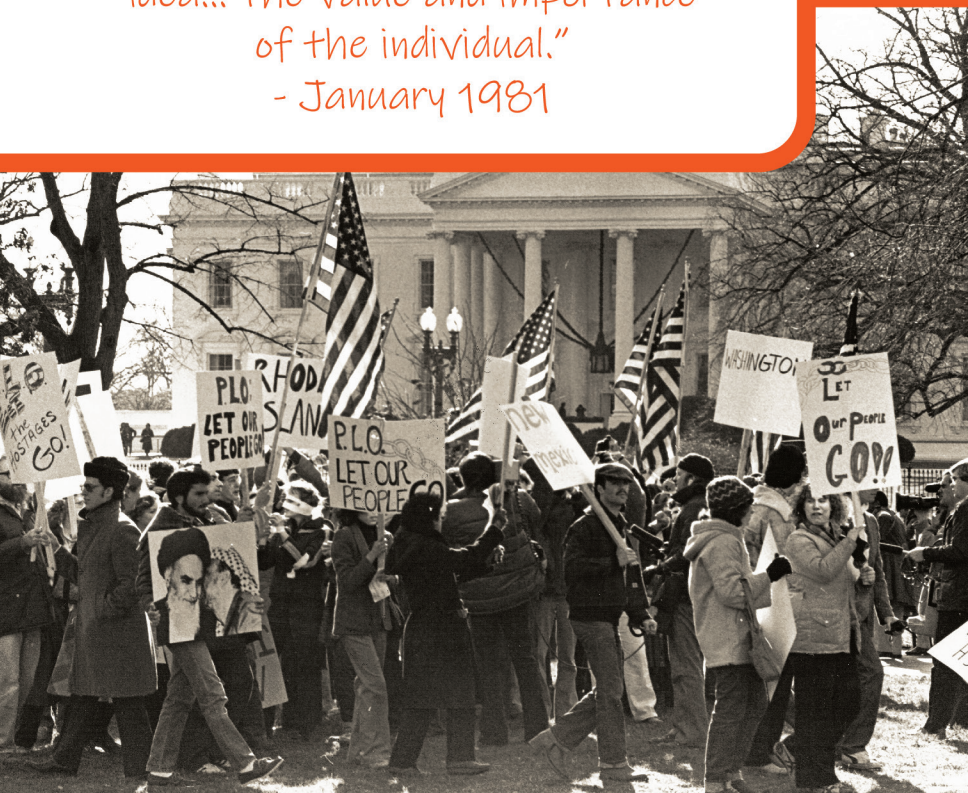
Carter was also concerned about the Middle East. Ever since Israel was established in 1948, it has had very tense relations with its neighbors, such as Egypt, and even fought wars against them. In September 1978, Carter brought Israel leader Menachem Begin and Egyptian leader Anwar Sadat together at the presidential retreat in Camp David. He got the two leaders to sign a historic treaty, the **Camp David Accords**, which created peace between their nations. It was the high point of Carter's presidency.

The rest of Carter's presidency, however, was full of crises. The nation's economy suffered from **inflation**—especially high gas prices. In 1979, a new Islamic government that hated the United States took over in Iran. In November of that year, a group of Iranian college students took over the U.S. embassy in the capital, Tehran, and held 52 Americans hostage. The situation would be known as the **Iran Hostage Crisis**. Carter ordered a military rescue effort called "Operation Eagle Claw," but it fell apart when a series of mechanical problems and accidents led to one of the helicopters crashing. It was an embarrassing failure that resulted in the deaths of eight American servicemen.

Then, in December of 1979, America's great foe, the Soviet Union, invaded **Afghanistan**. The world seemed to be spinning out of control, and the United States' enemies seemed to be on the march. The American people felt Carter wasn't tough enough to stand up to their enemies and sought new leadership. In the 1980 presidential election, Republican candidate Ronald Reagan defeated Carter in a landslide, winning 44 out of 50 states.

Quote

*"Ours was the first nation in the history of the world to be founded explicitly on such an idea... the value and importance of the individual."
- January 1981*



Retirement

In 1981, Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter returned to their home in Georgia. His 1980 election loss was difficult, but Carter was determined to make the most of his retirement. In 1982, he started the Carter Presidential Center at Emory University, which continues his advocacy for human rights. He also worked closely with **Habitat for Humanity** to build and repair homes for the less fortunate.

Carter also spent much of his time writing several books. He even went on diplomatic missions for subsequent presidents to places like South Africa, Sudan, and North Korea. For his efforts, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2002. Although Carter was not a popular president, many people around the world came to respect him for his lifelong record of service.

The longer Carter lived, the more presidential records he broke. In September 2012, he broke the record for the longest retirement of any president. In March of 2019, he became the longest-lived president. In October of that year, he and Rosalynn became the longest-married presidential couple ever. Sadly, Rosalynn passed away in November 2023. Carter himself continues to live in his hometown, Plains.



Quote

*"The fundamental force that unites us is not kinship or place of origin or religious preference. The love of liberty is a common blood that flows in our American veins."
- January 1981*

Legacy

Most Americans respect Carter for having his heart in the right place and wanting to do what he felt was right. Some believe that Carter is one of the best ex-presidents America has ever had since he stayed active and continued to serve others after leaving the White House. However, the admiration for Carter's activities in retirement stands in contrast to the disappointment many felt about his presidency.

Few people doubt that Carter meant well when he tried to make human rights an important part of American foreign policy. He didn't realize, however, that the best way to make the world a better place was to make the United

States a strong, powerful country. When America is strong, its enemies will have less reason to misbehave and treat their own people poorly. Instead, Carter appeared weak in the face of threats from the Soviet Union and even from a group of Iranian students who had taken Americans hostage. His foreign policy did little to actually improve human rights around the world.

Carter's life story teaches us that America must always combine good intentions with wisdom and strength.

Writing Activity



Write about a time when an idea or goal didn't turn out how you hoped.
What do you think you could have done differently, or how can you
improve to do better next time?



Answers

JIMMY CARTER'S CODENAME:
DEACON



Glossary

Human Rights: The benefits everyone deserves, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, or religion. It often includes the freedom to pursue life, liberty, and happiness, and to express yourself and worship as you please.

Nobel Peace Prize: One of five prizes established by inventor Alfred Nobel. The Peace Prize is awarded annually (starting in 1901) to those who have "done the most or the best work for fraternity between nations..." It is one of the most well-known awards in the world.

Soviet Union: A country that existed from 1922 to 1991 that oppressed its people and tried to spread its communist system around the world.

United States Naval Academy: The U.S. Navy's top military academy, which provides undergraduate education and training to students who will become commissioned Navy or Marine Corps officers. It is located in Annapolis, Maryland. Jimmy Carter received his degree from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1946.

Nuclear-Powered Submarines: A watercraft capable of operating underwater and powered by a nuclear reactor. The United States began developing nuclear-powered submarines in the 1940s and 1950s.

Jim Crow Laws: A series of oppressive laws in the United States, particularly in the Southern states, enforced from the late 1800s until the mid-1900s, which legalized the separation of races in all public facilities and social interactions under the doctrine of "separate but equal." They were eventually overturned through the civil rights movement.

Watergate Scandal: A political controversy from 1972 to 1974 that resulted in Richard Nixon's resignation from the presidency. The scandal began when members of a group called the Plumbers were arrested for burglarizing the Democratic Party headquarters in the Watergate Hotel. When Congress prepared to impeach him, Nixon resigned on August 9, 1974.

Cold War: The conflict between America, which was free, and the Soviet Union, which was a communist dictatorship, that lasted from the 1940s to the late 1980s.

Idealistic: Forming or pursuing ideals, especially unrealistically.

Camp David Accords: Agreements negotiated in the presidential retreat at Camp David in Maryland in September 1978. President Jimmy Carter facilitated the negotiations between Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat. The accords were a major breakthrough and resulted in peace between the two enemy nations after three decades of conflict.

Inflation: When things you buy, such as food, clothes, and other products, are more expensive.

Iran Hostage Crisis: An event involving a group of Iranian students who took over the U.S. embassy in Iran in 1979 and held 52 American personnel hostage for over a year. The crisis was the result of a revolution in Iran which toppled the pro-American government and replaced it with Islamic leadership hostile to the United States. A failed rescue attempt in 1980 led Americans to lose faith in President Carter's leadership.

Afghanistan: A country located in Central and South Asia with a predominantly Muslim population. It has been the site of numerous foreign invasions. In 1979, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan to prop up a communist-friendly government.

Habitat for Humanity: A non-profit organization founded in 1976 to build homes for the less fortunate.

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Notes

Lined area for taking notes, consisting of multiple horizontal blue lines.

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