

Name _____

Date _____

President Richard M. Nixon

Yorba Linda, California was not well known on the 9th of January 1913, the day when Richard Milhous Nixon was born. In fact it would not be well known until the January 20th, inauguration day of 1969 when Richard Milhous Nixon became the 37th President of the United States. Richard Nixon was the second of five boys born to Hannah and Francis Nixon. A direct descendant of one of the original Mayflower passengers, Henry Holland, the young Nixon was highly ranked in his educational achievements. The salutatorian of his college and third in the graduating class at Duke University Law School in 1937, Richard opened his law office in Whittier, California in the same year. After only five years of practice Richard Nixon helped the U.S. war effort by his work in the Office of Price Administration. However, after joining the Navy, the twenty nine year old lawyer became a supply officer in the South Pacific.

After his military service the young Nixon entered into politics, running for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives in California. During the campaign Mr. Nixon began to use a tactic that would become a continuing theme when he ran against other opponents. He listed his opponent as extremely liberal and very far to the left. In this first test of his political skills he was correct about Jerry Voorhis' background. Nixon won easily and as a new congressman was placed on the House Committee on Un-American Activities. National recognition of his energy and drive was brought to the fore when this committee oversaw the worldly explosive case of Alger Hiss, a Russian spy who revealed much information to the Russians. Readily being elected again to the House and continuing to receive recognition for his talents, Mr. Nixon ran successfully for a California Senate seat in Congress.

By 1952 the Senator Nixon was seen as the proper running mate for the Republican Presidential nominee, Dwight D. Eisenhower. Eisenhower had been the commander of all allied forces in the battle against Germany during World War II. As a senior military officer, Eisenhower had a stable and professional personality. At the same time his running mate Richard Nixon took a very strong and aggressive anti-Communist stand and was recognized for his speeches. The two were overwhelmingly elected. The new Vice-President did everything that was asked of him by his country, his party and the President, Mr. Eisenhower.

Richard Nixon became well known throughout the world because of his great number of international visits. Eisenhower and Nixon's were re-elected in 1956. 1959 Vice-President President Nixon took on Russia's Nikita Khrushchev in an impromptu debate, called the Kitchen Debate, during the opening of the new American National Exhibition in the communist country. This brought the Vice-President international recognition and he was seen as a true leader in international affairs.

President Richard M. Nixon (Cont'd)

When the Presidential election took place in 1960 Mr. Nixon was seen as the logical choice as the presidential nominee for the Republican Party. The Democratic Party however selected John Fitzgerald Kennedy as their candidate. Nixon lost to the charismatic Kennedy and then lost again when he attempted to become the governor of California in 1962. For several years the former Vice President traveled greatly and was a senior partner in a New York law firm. As the Vietnam War brought great stress to the American populace in the 1960s, Nixon was urged by Senator Barry Goldwater to run again for the U.S. presidency in 1968. Richard Milhous Nixon was elected President over the Democratic candidate George McGovern. Much of Nixon's success was due to the disarray in the Democratic Party due to the emotional turmoil over the way the Vietnam War was occurring.

Since he was a longtime opponent of Communism, the President Nixon accomplished many agreements with both the Russians and the Chinese Communists. The Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, also called the SALT treaty, with the Soviet Union was signed. Most boldly in 1972 Mr. Nixon went to China to speak with the Communist leader Mao Tse-tung. Meanwhile the war in Viet Nam continued but a cease fire occurred while Nixon was in office. Americans would now return home from this long and bitter struggle that so divided the American people. President Nixon had in his group of closest advisers Dr. Henry Kissinger as Secretary of State. As Secretary of State, Dr. Kissinger also organized a cease fire between the Israeli's and the Arab state of Egypt.

President Nixon's re-election in 1972 was a massive victory. However situations began to occur that would eventually lead to Mr. Nixon being the first President to resign from that office. Nixon's Vice President Spiro Agnew was charged with many counts of corruption going as far back as his political positions as a county official in Maryland. Then the infamous Watergate break-in scandal began to unravel. Growing ever more involved in lies and deceit of the public trust, the embattled President was actually to be charged with three articles of impeachment by the House. But rather than face impeachment Richard M. Nixon resigned from the Presidency on August 9, 1974.

This action brought about the most unique situation in Presidential history. Gerald R. Ford, who Mr. Nixon had selected to be Vice President after Spiro Agnew resigned, became the President of the United States without actually being elected. President Ford was criticized for giving the former President a full pardon one month after taking office. President Ford stated he did this to begin the healing of the wounds of the country and that such a prosecution would bring no good to the nation. Many feel that this action cost President Ford his re-election against Jimmy Carter in 1976.

Mr. Nixon spent his last twenty years of his life attempting to create an image of a retired elder statesman of the world. Many people regarded him as such. He died on April 22, 1994 at the age of 81.

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President Richard M. Nixon Questions

1. In his academic career, Richard Nixon was
 - a. A fair student
 - b. A good student
 - c. An outstanding student

2. During World War II, Richard Nixon served in the U.S.
 - a. Army
 - b. Navy
 - c. Marines

3. Richard Nixon served in public office as a
 - a. U.S. Congressman
 - b. U.S. Senator
 - c. Both a. and b. above

4. In the Kitchen Debate, Richard Nixon debated
 - a. Dwight Eisenhower
 - b. Nikita Khrushchev
 - c. Mao Tse-tung

5. How many times did Richard Nixon run for president?
 - a. Once
 - b. Twice
 - c. Three times

6. When Nixon first became President, who was his Vice President?
 - a. Spiro Agnew
 - b. George McGovern
 - c. Gerald Ford

7. Richard Nixon was the first President to
 - a. Resign from office
 - b. Become president without being elected
 - c. Face impeachment

8. Which war continued while Richard Nixon was President?
 - a. World War I
 - b. World War II
 - c. Vietnam War

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President Richard M. Nixon Answers

Multiple Choice

1. c.
2. b.
3. c.
4. b.
5. b.
6. a.
7. a.
8. c.