

# **“If I Were President...”**

**Grade Level:** 6-8

**Subject:** Visual Arts

**Time Required:** (will vary)

## **Activity Overview and Objectives**

This project is designed to introduce 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students to the role of the President of the United States as well as to encourage them to understand the multi-dimensional roles and responsibilities of the position. The project will culminate in the visual expression of each child’s personal view of what the world look like “If I Were President...”

The purpose of this project is not to direct students to any particular partisan train of thought with the examples or questions included in this packet. Teachers are encouraged to expand upon included examples with suggestions that conform to no specific party, but instead provide students with a broad understanding of major duties included in the office of the President of the United States.

## **Suggested Materials**

- White sketch paper (8X10 or larger)
- Writing utensils (crayons, pencils, markers, pastels, acrylic/tempura/oil paints, colored pencils, etc.)
- Materials for collages are optional
- Additional types of two-dimensional works such as photography are permitted if they are no smaller than 8x10 and meet the “recognizable people” caveat mentioned below.

**Please note:** For this year’s BBG VI we will not be able to review entries with images of recognizable people (i.e. politicians).

## **Project Discussion**

### **Part One: The Job of President**

#### ***What defines a Presidency?***

There are several things that frequently define the role of a President or that a President leaves behind as one of the most memorable aspects of his Presidency. Ideally, these legacies should be positive. Point out that, for instance, Abraham Lincoln is remembered for the Emancipation Proclamation, Teddy Roosevelt for the National Parks System, and FDR for Social Security. Ask the students if they can come up with any additional U.S. Presidents’ positive defining aspects of their terms in office. Facilitate answers based on time allotted.

***What are the qualifications for President of the United States?***

- At least 35 years old
- A natural-born citizen of the United States
- A resident of the United States for at least fourteen years

***Offer reminders on some basic duties of the President.***

- Chief duty is to make sure laws are faithfully executed
- Appoint Presidential Cabinet heads to assist
- Commander in Chief of U.S. Military
- Approve or reject bills passed by Congress
  - Congress may override Presidential veto by 2/3 majority
- Make treaties with foreign governments
  - Senate must approve by 2/3 majority
- Nominate Supreme Court Justices as vacancies arise
  - Must be approved by Senate

*(Encyclopedia Britannica, 2007)*

**Part Two: If *You* Were President...**

Explain to the students that they will be creating images of how they envision life would look if they were President. Examples may include (but are not limited to) anything from a typical day in their life as President, a different look in arts or culture, everyday life, a change in policy, etc.

While not directly instructing the students on *what* to create, guide them on *how* to reach their decision by offering a springboard of recalling the examples discussed earlier of defining earmarks of former Presidents and by asking the students what would define *their* Presidency.

Allow sufficient time for the students to utilize provided materials to complete the project.

**Additional Source**

**“Presidency of the United States of America.”** (2007). In *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Retrieved November 5, 2007 from Encyclopedia Britannica Online:  
<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9218450>.