

Richard M. Nixon

Presidency

- He served from 1969- 1974.
- He is the only U.S. president to have resigned from office. His resignation came in the face of potential impeachment related to the Watergate scandal.
- Nixon's misuse of presidential powers, along with his broad view of the prerogatives of the president, led many to call his time in the White House the imperial presidency.

Acts and Ideas

- He approved the Environmental Protection Agency.
- In the early 1970s, Nixon impounded billions of dollars in federal spending and expanded the power of the Office of Management and Budget. These encroachments on the power of Congress led to the passage of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974.
- On January 5, 1972, Nixon approved the development of the Space Shuttle program, a decision that profoundly influenced U.S. efforts to explore and develop space for several decades thereafter.

Interesting Facts

- In 1972, Nixon was re-elected in one of the biggest landslide election victories in U.S. political history, defeating George McGovern and garnering over 60% of the popular vote. He carried 49 of the 50 states, losing only in Massachusetts and the District of Columbia.
- The term Watergate has come to encompass a large array of illegal and secret activities undertaken by Nixon or his aides during his administration. Some of these began as early as 1969, when Nixon and Kissinger tapped the phones of numerous journalists and administration officials in an effort to stop leaks. Other major or well-known episodes of wrongdoing included the 1971 burglary of Dr. Lewis Fielding in search of the psychiatric records of Daniel Ellsberg, who leaked the Pentagon Papers to the press; Nixon's order to have the FBI investigate CBS News reporter Daniel Schorr after he reported critically on the administration; and talk by G. Gordon Liddy about having the newspaper columnist Jack Anderson assassinated.
- Nixon is noted for his innovative foreign policy, especially détente with the Soviet Union and his opening of U.S. relations with the People's Republic of China, as well as for his middle-of-the-road domestic policy that combined conservative rhetoric and, in many cases, liberal action, as in his civil rights, environmental and economic initiatives.