Kindergarten

THE WHITE HOUSE

Teacher Guide



From Foundation to Renovation: Unveiling the Legacy and Significance of the White House

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Kindergarten Teacher Guide



National Mall, Canva Pro

Key Themes

- American Identity and Unity
- Leadership
- Monuments

Core Values

- Community
- Liberty

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to

- Identify the White House.
- Outline the major renovations and changes the White House has experienced over the years.
- List two facts about the White House.



The White House, Canva Pro

Key Terms

01 **cornerstone:** an important stone that forms part of a corner or angle in a wall.

02 **Federal Hall:** the first capitol building of the United States, where George Washington was inaugurated as America's first president in 1789.

03 **Oval Office:** a very special room in the White House where the President of the United States works.

04 **Resolute Desk:** a nineteenth-century desk used by several presidents of the United States in the Oval Office.

05 **Washington, D.C.:** the capital of the United States. It was named after George Washington, our country's first president.

Introduction

TELL Students

Let's work together to solve a puzzle! [Please cut the image below into six puzzle pieces. Use your smart board to show the pieces to students. Write one White House fact on the back of each puzzle piece and read it to the class as you display each piece. (There is a movie theater inside. I was destroyed in the War of 1812. My name has changed over time. There are secret tunnels and passageways inside. An important person lives here.) Read each fact as you display each puzzle piece. Work together as a class to solve the puzzle].

ASK Students

What has a movie theater inside?
What was destroyed in the War of 1812?
What has a name that has changed over time?
What has secret tunnels and passageways?
Where does the president live?

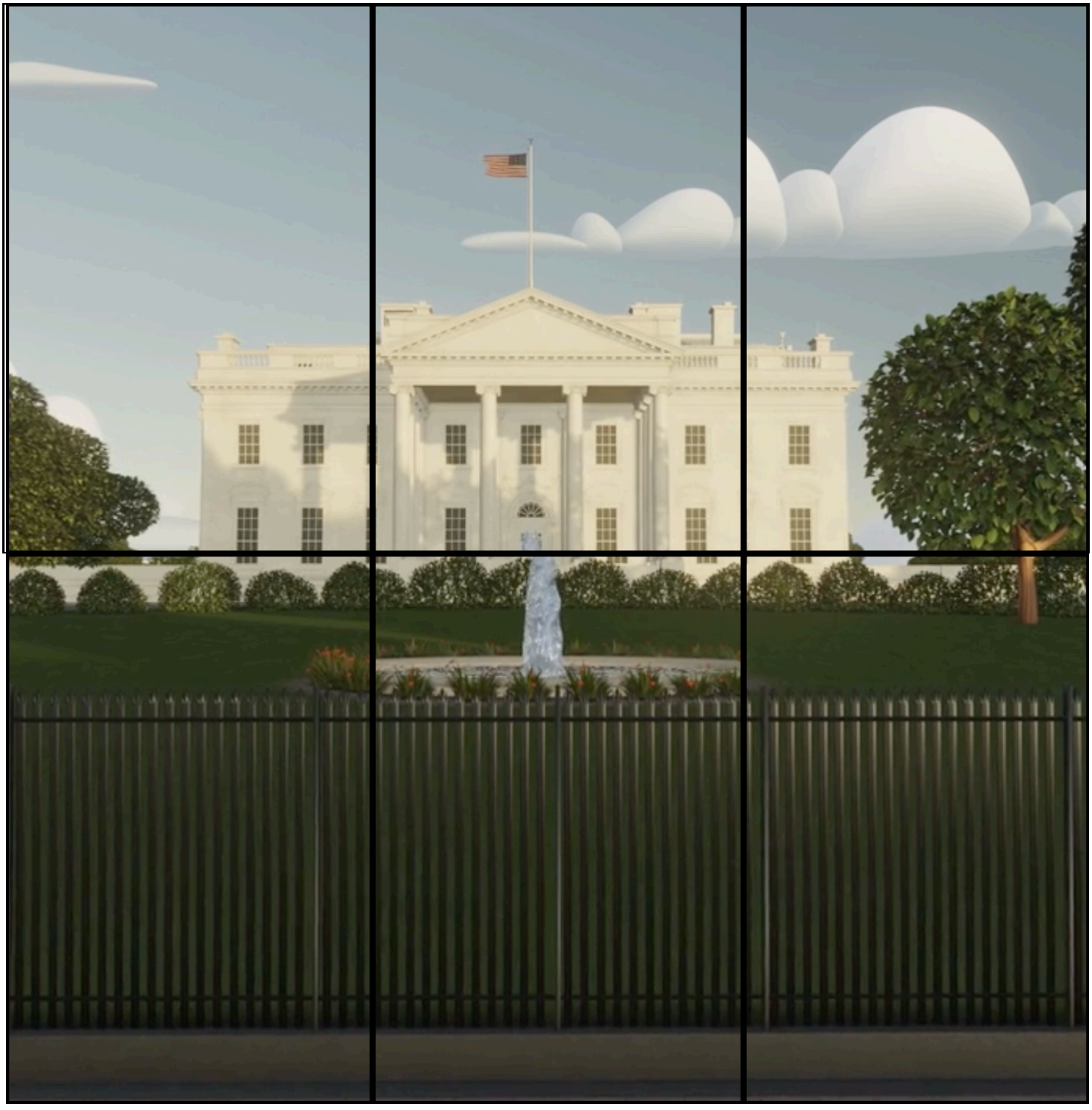
TELL Students

That is correct! We are going to learn about the White House today. The White House is where the President of the United States lives and works. The White House is a very big place! There are 132 rooms and 35 bathrooms in the White House! [Count to 100 as a class and explain that the White House has more than 100 rooms.] Let's watch another episode of Star Spangled Adventures to learn more!

WATCH

Star Spangled Adventures Cartoon Ep. 28: The White House

Introduction



Lesson

TELL Students

Did you know that when George Washington, America's first president, was in charge, there was no White House? At that time, the White House had not been built. And Washington, D.C. wasn't even a city! **Washington, D.C.** is the capital of the United States. It was named after George Washington, our country's first president.

ASK Students

Who was the first President of the United States?

TELL Students

Yes, George Washington! The first capital of the United States was in New York City. This is where George Washington took his oath of office in a special place called Federal Hall. **Federal Hall** is the first capitol building of the United States, where George Washington was inaugurated as America's first president in 1789.



Federal Hall, Canva Pro



George Washington, Canva Pro

Lesson

ASK Students

Where do you think George Washington lived?

TELL Students

When George Washington became president in 1789, he did not have the White House to move into because it had not been built yet, and Washington, D.C. did not exist. The first capital of the United States was New York City, where Congress met and where George Washington took his oath of office. Since there was no White House, Congress found a house for him to live in on 3 Cherry Street. It was a good place at first, but soon it became too small and too far from important places.

ASK Students

Where did George Washington live when he became president?

TELL Students

In 1790, George Washington and his family moved to a larger house on 39 Broadway. The leaders of the country had to decide where the permanent capital should be. After some debating, they agreed on a spot along the Potomac River. George Washington helped plan the new city. They named it Washington, D.C., and it became the capital of the United States.

ASK Students

Where is the capital of the United States today? Why do you think it was named Washington, D.C.?

Lesson

TELL Students

When George Washington finished his time as president, John Adams moved into the President's House in Philadelphia, which was the official residence for presidents before the White House was built. During the time when presidents lived in Philadelphia, our nation was busy building its capital city, Washington, D.C.

ASK Students

Who became president after George Washington?

TELL Students

The design of the White House, which was then called the "President's House" or the "Executive Mansion," was decided through a contest announced by Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson. An Irish-born architect named James Hoban won the contest.

ASK Students

Who won the contest to design the White House?

TELL Students

Construction began on October 13, 1792, with the laying of the cornerstone. A **cornerstone** is an important stone that forms part of a corner or angle in a wall. It was a big project!



Washington D.C., Canva Pro



James Hoban, Wikipedia

Lesson

TELL Students (continued)

Land had to be cleared, roads built, trees cut down, bridges constructed, and materials gathered. Bricks for the inside of the White House were made nearby, and trees were cut in Maryland and Virginia for floors and roof timbers. Many workers were involved in this hard work.

ASK Students

Do you think the White House was easy to build?

TELL Students

The White House was not easy to build. And, it was rebuilt after it burned down in a war with Great Britain called the War of 1812. It has also been updated over time, just like in the Star Spangled Adventures episode.



War of 1812, Canva Pro

Lesson

ASK Students

What happened to the White House in the War of 1812?

TELL Students

In 1902, President Theodore Roosevelt made some big changes to the White House. He brought the house into the modern age with electric lights and added a whole new section called the West Wing. This is a really important part of the White House because it is where the president works and meets with his top advisors. The West Wing contains the Oval Office, the Cabinet Room, the Situation Room, and the Roosevelt Room. Originally, President Theodore Roosevelt worked in a temporary space in the West Wing. It wasn't until President William Howard Taft came along that the Oval Office was created. Taft was the first president to use the Oval Office.



West Wing, Canva Pro



Oval Office, Canva Pro

Lesson

ASK Students

Where does the president work and meet with his top advisors?

TELL Students

The **Oval Office** is a very special room in the White House, which is where the President of the United States works. Imagine a big, oval-shaped room—like an egg—filled with a large desk, comfy chairs, and a lot of pictures and flags. This room is important because it is where the president makes big decisions, meets with other leaders from around the world, and talks to people who help run the country.

ASK Students

What is the Oval Office?

TELL Students

There is a famous desk inside the Oval Office called the **Resolute Desk** where the president sits to do his work. This desk has a cool history—it was made from the wood of a British ship and has been used by many presidents. The room also has special decorations chosen by each president, so it changes a little bit every time a new president comes in.

ASK Students

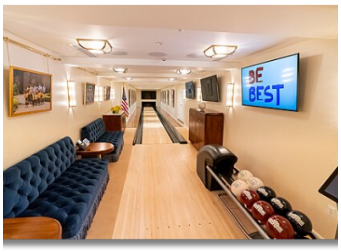
How would you decorate the Oval Office if you were the President of the United States?

Lesson

TELL Students

Today, the White House is a huge building with a lot of interesting features! It is about 55,000 square feet big. That is like having many school gymnasiums all in one place! Over the years, presidents have added rooms and features to the White House. President Franklin D. Roosevelt had an indoor swimming pool installed. And, President Gerald R. Ford added an outdoor pool. There is also a bowling alley, putting green, movie theater, tennis court, and running track.









White House Areas, Wikipedia

ASK Students

What would you add to the White House if you were the President of the United States?

TELL Students

The White House is not just for fun, it is the place where the President works and lives. Important decisions are made in the White House. Visiting the White House is a special experience. You can learn about our country's history and the leaders who helped shape it. Maybe one day, you could even live and work there too!

WATCH

Learn More With Liberty: White House Fun Facts

Presidential Adventure

Objectives
Introduce students to the White House as the home and office of the President of the United States. Learn about the roles and responsibilities of the President. Foster teamwork and communication skills.

Teacher Note
This interactive activity provides a comprehensive exploration of the White House and the presidency in a fun, engaging manner. We recommend putting these activities in centers that students can rotate through in groups. By involving students in hands-on activities, dressing up, crafting, and performing tasks, students will gain a better understanding and interest in the executive branch of the United States government.

Materials Needed
- Large printed pictures or digital images of the White House, the Oval Office, the Presidential Seal, and various presidents.
- Fact cards with interesting but simple facts about the White House and presidents (e.g., pets, fun historical facts).
- A mock Oval Office setup (optional) – a desk, a chair, a toy phone, and some flags can create a playful learning environment.
- Costume box with items like blazers, glasses, and ties for dressing up as the president.
- "Presidential Challenges" – simple tasks or quiz questions based on the White House or presidents.
- Craft materials for creating a Presidential Seal or White House drawing.

Presidential Adventure

Dress Like a President

- Provide a costume box for students to dress up as the president. This can include props like blazers, toy glasses, and ties. Have a mirror available so they can see themselves as the president.
- Encourage students to act out being the president, making decisions, and greeting visitors.

White House Discovery Station

- Set up a station with images of the White House and its rooms, especially the Oval Office.
- Include fact cards with easy-to-understand information about the White House's history, its importance, and fun facts (like pets of the presidents).

Craft Your Own Presidential Seal

- Provide materials for students to craft their own version of the Presidential Seal.
- Encourage creativity and individual expression, allowing students to use colors and materials freely.

Mock Oval Office

- If possible, set up a mock Oval Office where students can sit behind the desk, make decisions, and discuss important matters. Use a toy phone for them to "call" other leaders or advisors.
- This can be a great photo opportunity for them to remember their Presidential Adventure.

Presidential Adventure

Wrap-up Discussion

- Gather students and discuss what they learned about the White House and the president.
- Ask students to share their favorite part of the activity and what they found most interesting.

The White House

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The White House





Resources

- https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/new-york-historic/
- https://www.archives.gov/exhibits/treasures_of_congress/text/page2_text.html
- https://history.house.gov/Historical-Highlights/1700s/The-first-inauguration-at-Federal-Hall-in-New-York-City/
- https://constitutioncenter.org/blog/how-philadelphia-lost-the-nations-capital-to-washington
- https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/presidential-residency-in-new-york/
- https://guides.loc.gov/residence-act
- https://www.mountvernon.org/george-washington/the-first-president/building-the-new-nations-capital/
- https://www.history.com/news/how-did-washington-d-c-get-its-name
- https://www.nps.gov/inde/learn/historyculture/places-presidentshousesite.htm
- https://www.nps.gov/inde/learn/historyculture/the-presidents-house-washington-and-adams.htm
- https://www.whitehousehistory.org/photos/fotoware?id=5E1FCB3066744273%2097AC1F8FB685754A
- https://www.whitehousehistory.org/questions/how-did-the-white-house-get-its-name
- https://www.history.com/topics/landmarks/white-house
- https://www.whitehousehistory.org/building-the-white-house
- https://www.history.com/news/white-house-history-facts-presidents
- https://www.whitehousehistory.org/construction-of-the-white-house
- https://www.history.com/topics/landmarks/white-house
- https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/british-troops-set-fire-to-the-white-house

Resources

- https://www.foxnews.com/lifestyle/this-day-history-august-24-british-troops-ransack-torch-white-house-capitol
- https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/british-troops-set-fire-to-the-white-house
- https://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/white-house-renovations-timeline
- https://www.whitehousehistory.org/questions/has-the-white-house-ever-been-renovated-or-changed
- https://www.whitehousehistory.org/questions/why-is-the-oval-office-oval
- https://www.whitehousehistory.org/questions/how-big-is-the-white-house
- https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/the-grounds/the-white-house/#:~:text=Our%20first%20president%2C%20George%20Washington,architect%20James%20Hoban%20was%20chosen
- https://www.whitehousehistory.org/questions/does-the-white-house-have-a-pool

Notes