

# Election a benchmark election



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The United States survived this conflict under Abraham Lincoln, the Republican from Illinois. After the war ended, Abraham Lincoln and the Republican Party were viewed as heroes. They had ended slavery in the United States and won the war. Most importantly they were able to keep a nation, divided by a monumental issue such as slavery seen as creating irreconcilable differences, together. As a result of the viewed successes of the Republicans during this era, they were able to dominate the White House, even though Lincoln Vice President, Andrew Johnson, as a Democrat. Johnson would only serve one term in office after Lincoln assassination, due to the poor policies he would enact as president. The following US Presidents would be Ulysses S. Grant, a Republican war hero, and three more Republicans, Hayes, Garfield and Arthur, before another Democrat would become president. The most successful president of the era was Abraham Lincoln who is widely considered the greatest president in US history for his accomplishments during the Civil War. On the other hand Andrew Johnson is considered one of the worst, and is one of only two presidents to be impeached.

Lincoln achievements, coupled with the distrust of southern Democrats after the Civil War, paved the way for Republicans to control the White House for the latter half of the 19th century. SYSTEM OF 1896 (1897-1933) The System of 1896, also known as the Progressive Era, was another period of time that was dominated by the Republican Party, for all except an eight-year gap where a Democrat held the White House. The trend started under President McKinley as he expanded America's borders with the Spanish American War, trade in

China, and acquisitions of the Philippines and Hawaii, before he was assassinated.

Teddy Roosevelt, who followed McKinley, made many reforms that improved the food (meat packing factories in particular), built the Panama Canal, and built up American naval strength, both of which fostered the theme of American Imperialism set by McKinley. William Howard Taft continued the Progressive Era by reforming the American workplace at the time. Taft instituted the concept of an eight-hour workday as well as continuing to break up monopolies and trusts, such as American Standard Oil, more than Teddy Roosevelt had in his time as president. After the end of Taft's first term,

Roosevelt felt he hadn't done enough as president and ran against him under the Bull-Moose party. This led to Taft and Roosevelt splitting Republican votes and a moderate Democrat, Woodrow Wilson, winning the election. From 1892 to 1928 the Republicans were winning at or above 50% in all regions besides the south, a region Democrats considered their base at the time, the sole exception being in 1912 when Teddy Roosevelt ran against William Howard Taft under the Bull-Moose Party. This resulted in Taft and Teddy Roosevelt splitting the Republican vote.

This demonstrates how strong the Republicans were during the System of 1896 wrought the nation. Wilson would lead the nation through World War I and with it create a prosperous nation. But by the end of his presidency it was his failed ideas that would stick with him and the Democratic Party leading to Republicans controlling the White House for the next twelve years.

Willow's successes included creating the Federal Reserve, Federal Trade Commission and Clayton Antitrust Act. In addition he was president when the 19th amendment, woman's right to vote, was ratified.

However, what he'll always be remembered for was the idea of the League of Nations which would help dead to his party's losses in the next election. The next twelve years of Republican presidents were generally indistinct, remembered primarily for Herbert Hoover's inability to deal with the Great Depression, leading to the election of Democrat Franklin Delano Roosevelt as president. THE NEW DEAL AND THE GREAT SOCIETY (1933-1969) The Great Depression changed the way government operated in the United States. Under FED and the New Deal the US Government grew to the largest it has ever been .

Figure 1 Instead of the government being there to protect the people in times of crisis when Americans needed help, the New Deal dramatically changed the scope of government. The government changed from reactionary to precautionary, resulting in a larger, more involved federal government. FED and the New Deal helped guide the nation out of the Great Depression and through World War II, but not without changing the federal government forever. The effects of this change are still seen today with welfare, Social Security, and the Tennessee Valley Authority among other government programs created by the New Deal.

After FED came Truman and the Marshall Plan continuing the trend of the United States becoming a global power by offering aid to Europe to rebuild from the aftermath of World War II and the threat of Communism. Truman

also presided over the creation of the United Nations, establishment of Israel as a country, the Berlin the mold of Fad's ideologies. After 20 years of Democratic presidents, moderate Republican and war hero Dwight D. Eisenhower won the presidency. Eke oversaw the building of the interstate highway system, as well as the beginnings of the Space Race, and the Civil Rights Era.

These accomplishments were good, but did not signal a full shift from the important issues odd FED and Trauma's presidencies. Following Eisenhower presidency civil rights became a focus of national politics and focal points of both KEF and Lab's presidencies. Lyndon B. Johnson would represent the end of the Democratic hold on the presidency. Despite his role in the civil rights movement, ending all forms of segregation, and "The Great Society", he will be remembered for beginning involvement in the Vietnam War. American involvement in Vietnam would be critical in leading Richard Nixon and the Republicans to taking the presidency.

REAGAN REVOLUTION (1981-???? ) Ronald Reagan is one of the most popularizing presidents in our nation's history and was the father of the last era of presidencies in the United States. Ronald Reagan defeated sitting president Jimmy Carter in the 1980 election. Carter will be remembered for the oil crisis and gas shortage, the recession, the Iran hostage crisis, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. This propelled the American people to elect Ronald Reagan, and not by a small margin. In 1980 Ronald Reagan won 489 electoral votes and 50.8% of the popular vote to Carter's 49 votes and 41%. In 1984 Reagan would win 525 votes and 58.0% of the vote to Walter Module's 13 votes and 40.6%. It was unprecedented to see a Republican to do so

<https://assignbuster.com/election-a-benchmark-election/>

well nationally, as the South had been a Democratic lock. In the lead up to the 1980 election the South had been moving towards the Republican stronghold it has become. In the 1950 midterms, Republicans had won just two seats in the House from the South. In 1980 Republicans won around 40% of seats. As president, Reagan would oversee economic growth through lowering taxes and using supply side economics, the pushing back of the Soviets and thawing of the Cold War, and progress of his goal to hiring the federal government (see figure 1).

Reggae's view of conservatism has been evident from then until now. George H. W. Bush, Reggae's Vice President, would continue following Reggae's beliefs while president. In 1982 approximately 35% of the nation identified themselves as Republicans, by 1994 it had increased to 43%. George Bush as president oversaw the fall of both the Soviet Union and Berlin Wall, led a successful Persian Gulf War, and would institute the Americans with Disabilities Act. President Bush would lose reelection when he raised taxes, against his promise of "read my lips: no new taxes".

This provided the opportunity for a moderate Democrat from Arkansas, Bill Clinton, to win the 1992 Presidential election. Clinton continued to strengthen the economy, but in a different way than Reagan. Clinton balanced the federal budget by raising taxes and reforming the welfare systems put in place by FED in the New Deal. In line with Reggae's policies he ensured that there was free trade between North American countries with NAFTA. Following Clinton, George W. Bush was elected President based on many of his that would dictate his presidency (Afghanistan and Iraq).

In addition to the wars, the ND of Bush's presidency saw the beginning of another major recession, leading to the election of liberal democrat, Barack Obama. Has the Reagan Revolution ended? We may not know for another 5-10 years. Despite Obama, a liberal Democrat, being elected president, many of Reggae's ideas are still championed by Tea Party Republicans. This faction of the Republican Party seeks a smaller federal government, smaller federal budget, and more rights being returned to the states, as opposed to being federal issues.

WHAT HAS CAUSED THIS PATTERN TO EXIST The past 150 years can be divided into four distinct eras. The first two marked by Republican presidencies, the third, and longest of the periods, a Democratic era, and finally a return to Republican control of the presidency with the Reagan Revolution. When looking at each era, a few things are evident; one or two great presidents define every one of these time periods, those presidents' party is the dominant party of the era, one bad presidency or event can end the era, and that in between each era there is some form of realignment.

It is these conditions meshed together that create a pattern of presidential dynasties to exist in America. The top 10 presidents in history are (in order) FED, Teddy Roosevelt, Lincoln, Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Wilson, Truman and Eisenhower. Outside of the founding fathers each of these presidents were part of one of these eras, either as the one whose ideologies defined the era or as the moderate of the other party who followed these ideologies, but with their party's themes.

The only president whose policies defined an era not on this list was Reagan. According to a 2012 Gallup Poll 19% of Americans, the most common answer, thought Ronald Reagan is the Greatest in US history. Callus's top 10 consists of Reagan, Lincoln, Clinton, Kennedy, Washington, FED, Obama, Teddy Roosevelt, Truman, and George W. Bush. When broken down by party the results are similar. Figure 2 A great president defines an era, but how does the era end? These presidential dynasties end via a realignment of political issues in the United States.

This can be caused by a single event in history, for example The Great Depression, or a bad president who brings forth a need for change, such as Herbert Hoover or, potentially, George W Bush, who impact is not yet known. The era of Lincoln ended when a trio of Republican presidents (Hayes, Garfield and Arthur) did nothing to move the country forward. The System of 1896 ended under Hoover when the US entered the Great Depression allowing FED to win the presidency for the Democrats. The era of the New Deal and the Great Society ended when LB] entered the Vietnam War.

Finally the Reagan Revolution may have ended after the George W. Bush saddled the country with two wars and an economic crisis. While not all these presidents are historically bad, Lyndon B Johnson is historically remembered as an above average president due to the policies enacted during the Great Society, the majority of these presidents are remember for the harm they caused to America rather than any good they may have provided. For example George W. Bush led us through the worst terrorist attack in American history, 9/1 1, but his failures outweighed his successes and have cost the Republican Party in Republican dominance.



A different issue has defined each era, so what causes the changes in issues?

Realignment is a dramatic change in an era of politics. This includes a change in the dominating issues, dominant party and even changes to the party bases. The signs of realignment include a flurry of political activity not normal to U. S. Politics (I. E. Progressive Era, New Deal, Great Society, Ergonomics), a single party controlling the House, Senate, and White House, and the emergence of a third party. " To bring about a realignment, the new issue must be one that cuts across the existing line of party cleavage. -James Conduits . Each of these eras had a cross cutting issue that divided the country, and therefore needed someone to unify them. Lincoln had to deal with slavery, both the System of 1896 and the New Deal had to deal with economic hardship. The Great Society had to face the issue of race in America once again. Each of these issues divided the existing parties forcing individuals to realign based on new party beliefs. The issue can't be a small issue, such as a setting a national driving age, it must be popularizing that everyone must pick a side, like the issue of slavery during the Civil War.

Realignment causes old cleavage issues to fade away. This can be seen today because the New Deal is no longer a dividing issue among people, while in the sass's and sass's it divided Republicans and Democrats across the country. A third party arises when both major parties in power straddle the issue. The third party forces one of the two major parties to adopt the issue and if not the third party rises power (e. G. Republicans and slavery during the sass's). The New Deal era is the best example of a realigning election. Franklin Roosevelt won 472 electoral votes and 57. 4% of the vote .

In addition to the presidential election, the Democrats made big strides in Congressional elections. Democrats gained 90 seats in the House and nine in the Senate, signaling a major shift in issues for the At-enact people. WILL WE ENTER A NEW PRESIDENTIAL ERA OR HAVE WE REACHED THE END?

Barack Obama is not a disciple of the Reagan Revolution, if anything he is a disciple of the New Deal. Does this mean the Reagan Revolution is over? Is Obama the beginning of a new era, dominated by Democrats? Or have we reached the point where the patterns are over and there will no longer be a dominant party in America?

If you look solely at history it points towards the emergence of "The Obama Era" of the American presidency. Obama was president when the United States exited the recession, much like FED and McKinley. When he was first elected in 2008 it was the highest percentage of voter turnout since 1968, signaling the potential of it being a realignment election. The beginning of Beam's first term was filled with active legislating, including the passing of the Affordable Care Act. All of these events fit into James Squint's Theory of Partisan Realignment. What about today's current political conditions?

Yes, many of the conditions that existed during Beam's first term are similar to the pattern of other presidential eras, faction of the conservative right. The Tea Party fits in line with the small government beliefs of the Reagan Revolution and not Beam's belief in a large, active federal government. If the Tea Party does rise to power its ideologies would be a shift from Beam's. In addition to the third party not aligning with Beam's views, their influence has been steadily decreasing over time. Secondly, there is no outbreak of political activity.

The opposite is true as both the House and Senate find themselves gridlocked, unable to pass any legislation. Figure 3 The most recent Congress has been the least productive of the past 32 congresses . This is in part due to straight line partisan voting by members of Congress when both the House and Senate are almost evenly split in membership as is. During the previous presidential eras either members of Congress were able to work with each other to pass legislation or one party dominated the government so it was possible force any legislation through Congress.

These conditions no longer exist as the United States Government becomes more and more popularized. Where does all of these leave the future America? It is always safe to look back because history does have a tendency to repeat itself, but with the current conditions it isn't likely that Democrats will hold the White House for a long time. Since Gallup began monitoring presidential approval ratings, starting with Harry Truman, the two presidents who have defined their respective eras, Reagan and Johnson, have both had average approval ratings above 50%, 52. 8% and 55. 1% respectively. Beam's current average its below 50% at 48% .

A president with an approval rating less than 50% isn't going to set the tone for future presidents if less than half the nation approves of him. Another strike against an " Obama Era" is following the 2008 election there was potential for realignment, but it never actually happened. Movements such as Occupy Wall Street faded away while the Tea Party's voice only got stronger. The Democrats had a chance to grab hold of the government but didn't take it. In the following 2010 midterm elections the Republicans picked

up a net of 63 seats to gain back control of the House and a net of six seats in the Senate.

This isn't to say that it is impossible for President Obama can't be the start of a new era of Democratic presidents but given recent history it is unlikely.

CONCLUSION As President of the United States one has the potential to shape the nation. The electorate rewards these presidents (Lincoln, both Roosevelt, LB], and Reagan) by electing presidents who emulate those same positive ideologies. This led to the creation of eras of dominance by a single party. These eras produced some of most prosperous times in American history. However, the time of single party dominance has ended.

The government has become more popularized, which has led to partisan gridlock. The people have been losing faith in the government to actually get anything done, which seems to be a result of new popularization, illustrated by the " Do- nothing Congress". As a result the electorate changes its views and votes for the other party hoping they will actually be able to break the gridlock in government. This is not to say there will never be another great president like Lincoln or Roosevelt again, but the time of presidential eras is reaching its end, unless the federal government becomes less popularized.