

# Characteristics of a leader: president bill clinton essay sample



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## Introduction

William Jefferson Clinton despite a few shortcomings possessed the real qualities of a leader championing the country to great achievements while displaying a strong ability to deal with criticism. He significantly contributed to American development when he became the 42nd president of the United States between 1993 and 2001. Bill Clinton as he is known by many was born in Arkansas in 1946 . He went to Georgetown University in 1968, Oxford University between 1968 and 1970 and attended Yale Law School in 1973 (Clinton, 2004). He started his political career early in life and managed to become the youngest governor in Arkansas at only 32 years (Clinton, 2004). As a democrat, Clinton's life as a leader has been surrounded by achievements, failures and criticisms as will be discussed in this paper.

## Discussion

Like any other leader, Clinton had to deal with opposition given that America is a democratic nation. He often went at loggerheads with the republicans whose goals on Medicare, education and economic development did not always match (Harris, 2006). For example, his proposal for significant changes in healthcare that would ensure that most Americans were provided with health insurance was rejected when he first tabled it. The republican party often found many ways of attacking his personal life and criticised his policies and strategies although this was mostly due to political differences. As an effective leader, Clinton had to overcome challenges that he faced as well as listen to the rest of the congress to ensure national

development. As Nahavandi (2008) notes, a good leader does not only lead but also follows.

An effective leader according to Nahavandi (2008) is one who drives change. Clinton all through his life as a leader has demonstrated this. His intentions to change America were evident during his presidential campaign in 1993. He advocated for tax reforms, equal employment, environment protection, income redistribution and generally catering for the needs of the middle class group. Nahavandi (2008) also differentiates between a leader who has a passion to do good and to ensure the welfare of his subjects from one who is self centred and power hungry. Clinton is known for his publications ' Putting People First', ' Giving: How Each of Us Can Change the World' and ' Between Hope and History' (Harris, 2006). The contents of these publications are just but a reflection of the fact that Clinton had the interest of the American citizens and the world at large. Campaigns geared towards creation of employment, reduction of poverty and elimination of discrimination are an indication of his desire for the good welfare of his people.

Bill Clinton recorded many achievements in his two terms in presidency. The deficit in the country when Clinton became president was very high but he managed to bring it down from \$350 billion to only \$10 billion by 1998 through tax and spending policies (Clinton, 2004). Among the major achievements are employment creation, reduction of the crime rates and reduction in racism. Clinton became popular among the African Americans for advocating on the end against discrimination. He is also known for his fight against terrorism and the attempt to capture Osama bin Laden. Many <https://assignbuster.com/characteristics-of-a-leader-president-bill-clinton-essay-sample/>

bills were made law during his tenure for example signing of the Family and Medical Leave act, Communications Decency Act, Minimum Wage Act and Tax Payers relief Act. All these acts were meant to improve the welfare of Americans meaning that Clinton as a good leader should was sensitive about his follower's needs (Nahavandi, 2008).

Clinton's leadership role was however questioned occasionally by the various official as well as personal scandals that befell him. The most popular personal scandal that faced Clinton is the Monica Lewinsky scandal in which President Clinton was said to have had sexual relations with the former statehouse intern (Harris, 2006). This led the U. S senate to subject him to an impeachment trial for lying under oath about his affair with Monica Lewinsky. Clinton had denied the charges when he was brought to court. This scandal did not bring out a good characteristic of a leader because according to Nahavandi (2008), a good leader leads by example. It was indeed a demonstration of a careless and a leader who did not care for the image of the white house. Paula Jones sexual harassment scandal and other affairs between Clinton and Jennifer Flowers, Sally Perdue and Dolly Browning brought even more embarrassment to Clinton as a president.

Cases of presidential abuse of power by Clinton reduced his credibility as good leader. Clinton is said to have signed international treaties which had not been ratified by the house representatives which requires that two thirds majority vote for a bill (Harris, 2006). An example is the North American Free Trade Agreement. He also erased the tenth amendment and altered a policy on export of sensitive technology that had been terminated by the congress.

Clinton used his powers to influence statehouse officials who would testify <https://assignbuster.com/characteristics-of-a-leader-president-bill-clinton-essay-sample/>

for Monica Lewinsky case. He is also said to have used his power to stop Dolly Browning from publishing a book she had written about her relationship with him (Harris, 2006).

## Conclusion

President Bill Clinton has portrayed both positive and negative leadership characteristics. However, there is no doubt that Clinton was a good leader (Harris, 2006). The leader's proficiency can be quantified by the fact that Clinton was voted twice as an American president which not many presidents so far have been able to achieve. Clinton was still popular in America despite the scandals that befell him. He left the office with a 68% approval rating by the public which was a high figure for any president leaving the office (Clinton, 2004). This shows that the citizens believed in his ability and leadership. Clinton also displays another good quality of a leader in that he has continued to serve the citizens of America. Even after leaving presidency he is highly involved in public concern issues. He set up a foundation known as The Clinton Presidential Foundation which aims at reducing HIV/AIDS, eliminating racism and ethnicity for better co-existence of Americans, Empowering low income earners economically and environmental preservation.

## References

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