

Andrew Johnson essay



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Background Andrew Johnson, the 17th president, was born in Raleigh, North Carolina on December 29th, 1808. At the young age of three years old, Andrew's father, Jacob Johnson passed away while drowning in an attempt to save the life of Editor Henderson from the Raleigh Gazette in 1812. Andrew's mother, Mary Johnson, worked hard as a seamstress and washerwoman in order to support Andrew and his three brothers, and her; but she was unable to afford to send them to school. From the age of 14 until 16 he worked as an apprentice to a tailor but talked to his mother and stepfather about moving and starting a new life. He then opened a tailor shop in Greenville, Tennessee, married Eliza McCardle on May 17, 1827 and participated in debates at the local academy.

Eliza and Andrew had five children, including one son who was later killed serving as a Union soldier in the Civil War. Andrew impressed the townspeople in several ways and at the age of nineteen he was elected into the village council. In 1862, President Lincoln appointed him Military Governor of Tennessee and with this position he used the state as a laboratory for reconstruction. In 1864, the Republicans, contending that their National Union Party was for all loyal men, nominated Johnson, a Southerner and a Democrat, for Vice President.

Johnson was simple and direct in manner and sometimes seemed cold since he spoke so bluntly. He was a gifted orator and possessed a strong, clear voice. Andrew enjoyed playing checkers, putting in his vegetable garden, going to the circus and minstrel shows. Johnson was the first president to be impeached and was acquitted in the Senate by only a single vote. He was the only President without any schooling and didn't learn to read until his

wife taught him at the age of seventeen.” There are some who lack confidence in the integrity and capacity of the people to govern themselves. To all who entertain such fears I will most respectfully say that I entertain none. If man is not capable, and it not to be trusted with the government of himself, is he to be trusted with the government of others? Who, then, will govern? The answer must be, man – for we have no angels in the shape of men, as yet, who are willing to take charge of our political affairs.” Andrew Johnson in 1853 Election into Office In the 1840’s and 50’s, as a member of the House of Representatives and the Senate, he advocated a homestead bill to provide a free farm for the poor man. Congress passes the Tenure of the Office Act, which stripped the President of the power to remove federal officials without the Senate’s approval, and in 1867, established a military Reconstruction program to enforce political and social rights for southern blacks. Vice President Johnson took the oath of office for Vice President in March of 1865. Soon after, Lincoln was assassinated at the Ford theatre only a month after Johnson became Vice President. Johnson became president on April 15th, 1865. Lincoln didn’t speak a negative word about Johnson even when he arrived to the inauguration drunk while embarrassing himself, his family and friends, and most of all Lincoln. When people suggested to Lincoln about resigning Johnson as Vice President, Lincoln good-humoredly silenced them with the remark, “ I’ve known Andy a great many years and he ain’t no drunkard.” Cabinet Members Secretary of State: William H. Seward Secretary of War: Edwin Stanton, Ulysses Grant and John Schofield Postmaster General: William Dennison and Alexander Randall Secretary of the Interior: John Usher, James Harlan and Orville Browning Secretary of the Treasury: High McCulloch Attorney General: James Speed, Henry Stanbery and William

Secretary of the Navy: Gideon Welles
Role and Presidential Power
After President Lincoln's death, President Johnson continued to reconstruct the former Confederate States while Congress was not in session. He pardoned all who would take an oath of allegiance but required leaders and men of wealth to obtain special Presidential pardons. By the time Congress met in December, most southern states were reconstructed and slavery was being abolished.

John didn't waste any time when he got into the White House, he had specific goals to accomplish and he wasn't going to let anything stand in his way. The circumstances that presented his opportunity would be the Civil War, some sort of resolution had to come out of it and Johnson tried to make that happen. The use of the Presidential Power was a big issue, it seems as though Congress and President Johnson were sort of going back and forth with cheap shots. Whenever Johnson would have a novel idea, Congress would find a way to put it down. I believe it impacted the Country in a positive way because if Congress wouldn't have made various laws or amendments, Johnson would have been able to do whatever his heart desired which wasn't the entire right thing.

Three Major Achievements
The most valuable achievement of President Johnson was the acquisition of Alaska on March 30th of 1867. Secretary of the State, William Seward bought Alaska from Russia for seven million dollars. This negotiation with Russia wasn't easy and took a lot of effort, time and money.

Another major achievement that Johnson performed was the Reconstruction after the Civil War and abolishing slavery in the south. He added to our Constitution, the 13th amendment which would abolish slavery and the 14th amendment for equal protection of all citizens. Andrew Johnson didn't have too many major achievements during his term although he was dedicated to the Reconstruction after our country faced four long years of hardship with the Civil War. Controversy Of course there were many controversies while Johnson was in office but the major one would have to be when he got impeached. While leading the House of Representatives to impeach him in 1868, he became the first President to be impeached. He was subsequently acquitted by a single vote in Senate. Wide differences arising between the President and the Congress, a resolution for his impeachment passed the House of Representatives February 24, 1868.

On March 5th, 1868 a court of impeachment was organized in the United States Senate to hear charges against the President. Eleven articles were set out in the resolution and the trial before the Senate lasted for three months, the conclusion of which he was acquitted by a vote of thirty-five for conviction to nineteen for acquittal, the necessary two-thirds vote for impeachment not having been obtained.

I think the impeachment had an effect on President Johnson but he didn't let it get to him nor did he resign before his term was over. He carried out the rest of his term in an orderly manner. He was unsuccessful as a candidate for election to the U. S. Senate in 1869, and also to the House of Representatives in 1872. He was elected as a democrat to the United States Senate and served seven months until his death.

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Quotes“ There are no good laws but such as repeal other laws” Andrew Johnson in 1835“ If the rabble were lopped off at one end and the aristocrat at the other, all would be well with the country” Andrew Johnson in 1835“ There are some who lack confidence in the integrity and capacity of the people to govern themselves. To all who entertain such fears I will most respectfully say that I entertain none If man is not capable, and it not to be trusted with the government of himself, is he to be trusted with the government of others Who, then, will govern? The answer must be, man – for we have no angels in the shape of men, as yet, who are willing to take charge of our political affairs.” Andrew Johnson in 1853“ Let peace and prosperity be restored to the land. May God bless this people: may God save the Constitution.” Andrew Johnson in 1875“ The times we live in are not without instruction. The American people must be taught — if they do not already feel — that treason is a crime and must be punished; that the Government will not always bear with its enemies; that it is strong not only to protect but to punish.” Andrew JohnsonWorks Cited“ Andrew Johnson” 24 April 2004 [www. whitehouse. gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)“ Andrew Johnson” 24 April 2004 [www. wordiq. com](http://www.wordiq.com)DeGregorio, William A. The Complete Book of American Presidents. NewYork, New York: Red Sembner Enterprises Corporation, 1984. Douglas, Paul Senator. American Roulette. Canada: Holt, Rinehart andWinston, 1965.

“ The Impeachment of Andrew Johnson.” 24 April 2004[www. impeach- andrewjohnson. com](http://www.impeach-andrewjohnson.com)Whitney, David. The American Presidents. Garden City: Doublebay andCompany Incorporated, 1965