Path to the Presidency

Trace the rules for entering, holding, and leaving office

USG.C.4.2.A "Identify the constitutional qualifications, term of office, and impeachment process for the President of the United States of America, including the impact of the 12th, 20th, 22nd, and 25th Amendments."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the three constitutional qualifications and the limits on presidential elections. Circle the four amendment numbers, then number the two impeachment steps in order.

Rules for the Presidency

1. Imagine a candidate filing paperwork for a presidential election. Article II sets three eligibility rules: the person must be a natural-born U.S. citizen, at least 35 years old, and a U.S. resident for at least 14 years. These are constitutional qualifications, not campaign promises or requirements to have held office before. The president serves a four-year term. Under the 22nd Amendment, no one may be elected president more than twice. A person who held or acted in the presidency for more than two years of another person's term may be elected only once.

2. After voters cast ballots, electors cast separate votes for president and vice president under the 12th Amendment. If no presidential candidate wins a majority of electoral votes, the House chooses the president from the top three presidential vote-getters, with each state delegation receiving one vote. The 12th Amendment also says a person constitutionally ineligible to be president cannot be vice president. The 20th Amendment sets the start and end of presidential terms at noon on January 20. If the president-elect dies before the term begins, the vice president-elect becomes president. These rules matter when an election leaves uncertainty.

3. Once a president takes office, a crisis can raise two different questions: Who can perform presidential duties, and can the president be removed for misconduct? Under the 25th Amendment, the vice president becomes president if the president dies, resigns, or is removed. If a president declares in writing an inability to serve, the vice president becomes acting president until the president declares an ability to resume duties. Impeachment follows another path: the House votes on charges, and the Senate holds a trial. Conviction requires two-thirds of senators present and removes the president from office.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. A natural-born U.S. citizen is 34 and has lived in the United States for 20 years. Does this person meet all three constitutional qualifications to be president? Explain.

2. No presidential candidate wins a majority of electoral votes. Which amendment directs the next step, and who chooses from which candidates?

3. A president declares in writing that they cannot perform presidential duties. Who takes over, in what role, and under which amendment?

4. If the House impeaches a president, has that president been removed? Identify the next step and the vote needed for removal.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A president resigns one year into a term that began January 20. Write a brief advice note explaining who takes office, when that term ends, and how many later presidential elections that person may win. Assume the vice president has never been president, and name the amendments that apply.

ANSWER KEY

Path to the Presidency

HIGH SCHOOL · USG.C.4.2.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the three constitutional qualifications and the limits on presidential elections. Circle the four amendment numbers, then number the two impeachment steps in order. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	A natural-born U.S. citizen is 34 and has lived in the United States for 20 years. Does this person meet all three constitutional qualifications to be president? Explain.	**No. The person meets the citizenship and residency requirements but must be at least 35 years old.**
2	No presidential candidate wins a majority of electoral votes. Which amendment directs the next step, and who chooses from which candidates?	**Under the 12th Amendment, the House chooses the president from the top three presidential vote-getters. Each state delegation gets one vote.**
3	A president declares in writing that they cannot perform presidential duties. Who takes over, in what role, and under which amendment?	**Under the 25th Amendment, the vice president takes over as acting president.**
4	If the House impeaches a president, has that president been removed? Identify the next step and the vote needed for removal.	**No. The Senate holds a trial, and conviction by two-thirds of senators present removes the president.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Under the 25th Amendment, the vice president becomes president when the president resigns. The term still ends at noon on January 20, four years after it began, as set by the 20th Amendment. Because the successor serves three years of another person's term, the 22nd Amendment allows that person to be elected president only once later.

Accept wording that distinguishes becoming president after a resignation from serving as acting president during an inability. For Your Turn, the successor serves more than two years of another person's term, so the limit is one later election.