

Introduction

In 1974, President Richard M. Nixon resigned before he could be impeached for his role in the Watergate scandal. This scandal involved the President and several members of his cabinet engaging in illegal activities and then trying to cover up their involvement. The Watergate scandal caused many Americans, and members of Congress, to ask the question, "What should the limits be on the powers of the President?"

In this WebQuest, you will learn about the Watergate scandal, research a person who was connected in some way to the scandal, create an interview with that person, participate in the construction and delivery of a newscast or a talk show, and answer the essential question. "What should the limits be on the powers of the President?"

Tasks

1. Conduct research with a partner on the Watergate scandal.
2. Design and deliver a presentation of your research findings to your class.
3. Conduct research with a partner on one significant Watergate-era figure.
4. Write a skit in which you conduct an "interview" with this person.
5. Create a newscast or talk show about Watergate.

The Process

1. Conduct online research using text, audio, and video resources that chronicle the Watergate scandal and respond to these prompts:
 - Identify where the Watergate hotel is located.
 - Summarize the events that happened there on June 17, 1972.
 - Identify the main players in the Watergate scandal and the role each played.
 - Explain why the President had recording devices installed in his office.
 - Identify some of the individuals President Nixon taped.
 - Determine if those being taped were aware of it.
 - Identify the members of the "Plumbers."
 - Explain why this group of men was called "The Plumbers."
 - List what the "Plumbers" did, for whom they worked, and two deeds these men stood accused of perpetrating.
2. Create a presentation in which you deliver your research findings to your class. Be sure to add and to respond fully to these questions in your presentation:
 - Why would a President authorize illegal activities?
 - Does a President have the constitutional authority to break the law?
 - Is there ever a time in which the President is justified in breaking the law or in authorizing others to break the law? Provide examples and explain your thinking.
 - Were the President to ask you to break the law, would you do it? Explain your answer and provide examples.
 - Should limits be placed on Presidential power? If so, what should such limitations be?
3. Conduct online research on one of the following Watergate figures: Richard Nixon, John Dean, H.R. Haldeman, Alexander Haig, Elliot Richardson, John Mitchell, John Ehrlichman, G. Gordon Liddy, L. Patrick Gray, Jeb Magruder,

Magruder's American Government 2009; Chapter 14 WebQuest

Daniel Ellsberg, Edmund Muskie, William Ruckelshaus, Richard Kleindienst, Sam Ervin, Peter Rodino, Archibald Cox, Leon Jaworski, James McCord, E. Howard Hunt, Robert Bork, Alexander Butterfield, Rosemary Woods, Bebe Rebozo. Seek answers to these questions:

- Who is this person? (Name/Title)
 - What was his/her role in the Watergate scandal? If he/she had no direct role, in what ways is this person linked to Watergate?
 - When did this person decide to support/not support the President? (if applicable) What actions did this person take in support of/not in support of the President? (If applicable)
 - What happened to this person as a result of the Watergate scandal?
 - Do you think this person would feel the President overstepped his authority? Use the person's biography, beliefs, actions during Watergate, and quotes to help you to answer this question.
4. Once you've finished, you and your partner must write a skit in which you "interview" the person you've researched. Use your research findings-and your creativity-to write answers to these interview questions:
- Were you involved in perpetrating illegal activities? If so, what motivated you to engage in illegal behavior?
 - Were you involved in investigating possible illegal activities? If so, why do you feel it is necessary for public officials to remain honest?
 - Were you involved in other illegal activities? (if applicable). If so, why did you choose to engage in these activities?
 - What does your family think about your illegal/or regulatory activities?
 - If you had the chance to go back in time, would you do it all again-investigate illegal activities or get involved in illegal activities?
 - What advice would you give to future "Plumbers"?
 - Do you think the President should have the power to break the law, or the power to direct others to break the law?
 - What do you think the limits should be on the President's powers?

Conclusion

1. With the rest of your class, combine all of the skits into a newscast or talk show.
2. Invite other classes to watch your performance.
3. Film your performance if you have the resources available!

Resources

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/rn37.html>

<http://www.nixonlibraryfoundation.org/>

http://www.ford.utexas.edu/museum/exhibits/watergate_files/content.php?section=1&page=b&person=2