

Suggested Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our web site at www.LibraryVideo.com

- www.lib.berkeley.edu/MRC/watergate.html
The University of California, Berkeley's Media Resources Center has transcripts and audio of the Watergate Tapes.
- www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/print.php?pid=3996
The American Presidency Project at the UC Santa Barbara offers the full text of President Nixon's 1973 State of the Union message to Congress.
- millercenter.virginia.edu/scripps/exhibits/nixon/resignation/index.html
The University of Virginia's Miller Center of Public Affairs provides text and audio of President Nixon's 1974 Resignation Speech.

Suggested Print Resources

- Gellman, Irwin F. *The Contender: Richard M. Nixon, the Congress Years (1946-1952)*. Free Press, New York, NY; 1999.
- Nixon, Richard. *Challenges We Face, Edited and Compiled from the Speeches and Papers of Richard M. Nixon*. McGraw Hill, New York, NY; 1960.
- Price, Raymond K. *Speeches*. Random House, New York, NY; 1998.

TEACHER'S GUIDE

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TITLES

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| • WINSTON CHURCHILL | • RICHARD NIXON |
| • DAVID LLOYD GEORGE:
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THE MODERN WELFARE STATE | • EMMELINE PANKHURST:
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GREATEST SPEECHES OF THE 20TH CENTURY™

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Historical Overview

With the Republican Party poised to reclaim the White House in the 1952 general election, the political future of vice presidential candidate Richard Nixon was in jeopardy. Facing charges of financial corruption which threatened to derail his promising career, Nixon turned his political fortunes around with his nationally televised “Checkers” speech. In it, Nixon offered a blueprint of his anti-communist ideology and espoused the basic principles of morality, patriotism and the American Dream — principles that continued to form the foundation of his platform on his long personal journey to the presidency. Ironically, 22 years later, Nixon faced similar charges of corruption that involved the questionable use of large slush funds which ultimately led to his final, humiliating downfall.

Time Line

1913 — Richard Nixon is born in Yorba Linda, California.

1945 — The Alger Hiss Case launches Nixon into national prominence.

1946 — Richard Nixon is elected to Congress.

1952 — The Republican Party selects Nixon as Dwight Eisenhower’s running mate.

1952 — The “Checkers” speech is broadcast to a national television audience.

1968 — Nixon is elected the 37th president of the United States.

1974 — Nixon announces his resignation to the nation.

1994 — Richard Nixon dies in New York.

Vocabulary

Watergate — A scandal that involved an illegal break-in at the Democratic National Committee headquarters in 1972, which eventually led to President Nixon’s resignation in 1974.

impeachment — An accusation of misconduct or criminality by a legislative body against an elected official, which can result in a trial, conviction and removal from office.

Checkers Speech — A nationally televised speech delivered by Richard Nixon that refuted allegations of corruption and helped salvage the 1952 vice-presidential candidate’s political career.

communist — One who advocates an economic system in which all property and the means of production are owned jointly.

House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) — An investigative body formed in 1937 to identify and prosecute those guilty of participating in subversive activities in the United States, especially individuals suspected of holding communist views.

Alger Hiss Case — A major mid-century federal court case in which U.S. government official Alger Hiss was charged with communist espionage. In a case marred by prosecutorial misconduct and falsified evidence, Hiss was convicted of perjury in 1950.

Red Menace — A term used to describe the threat of communist influence in the United States in the post-World War II era.

Discussion Questions

1. Why did Richard Nixon resign the presidency?
2. Why did the Republican Party want Richard Nixon to be Dwight Eisenhower’s running mate in 1952?
3. What charges did Whittaker Chambers allege against Alger Hiss?
4. Under what circumstances did Richard Nixon acquire the nickname “Tricky Dick”?
5. In what way did Richard Nixon defend himself against allegations of corruption in his “Checkers” speech?
6. How was Adlai Stevenson portrayed in Richard Nixon’s “Checkers” speech?

Discussion Questions and Activities

- In 1960, John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon met in the first televised debates in American history between two candidates running for president. While a majority of the 70 million viewers judged the smooth, tanned and well-rested Kennedy the winner over the tired and haggard-looking Nixon, many radio listeners pronounced Nixon the winner. Ask students to listen to portions of the first in this series of four debates held in Chicago, summarize the domestic and foreign policy issues discussed and evaluate the performances of both candidates. As a follow-up, ask students to analyze the extent that television changes the process of debate and political campaigning. Selected moments from the first Nixon/Kennedy debate may be heard at the following web site: news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/september/26/newsid_3104000/3104393.stm
- Richard Nixon was reelected president in 1972 in a landslide victory over democratic challenger George McGovern in a campaign waged on the issues of the Vietnam War and civil rights. Ask students to read President Nixon’s second Inaugural Address and evaluate the tone, use of language and message of his speech. Students may summarize Nixon’s thoughts on peace, the role of government, and freedom and responsibility. The complete text of Nixon’s second Inaugural Address may be found at the following web site: www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/presiden/inaug/nixon2.htm
- Following years of poor relations with the world’s largest communist country, President Nixon embarked on an unprecedented trip to China in 1972. Students may research and list causes of Cold War tensions with China, a country Nixon once said “is the basic cause of all our troubles in Asia,” and evaluate Nixon’s remark of his trip, “This was the week that changed the world.” As an extension, ask students to analyze the political and economic relationship between the United States and China today.