

# Impeachment In American History

## Worksheet Answer Key

### ANSWER KEY

#### Johnson's Impeachment

Directions: Fill in the chart below.

What is Impeachment
Congress can remove a president by using a process called impeachment.
Steps of Impeachment
During an impeachment, Congress holds a trial to see if a president is guilty of wrongdoing. If the Senate finds a president guilty, they can remove him from office. The first phase of the impeachment process involves the House of Representatives writing and reading a document called Articles of Impeachment. After the House begins the impeachment process, the Senate holds a trial. The members of Congress then vote to remove or keep the president in office.
Why Johnson was Impeached
Congress impeached Johnson for violating the Tenure of Office Act which was only recently passed by Congress. The Tenure of Office Act stated that the President needed approval from the Senate to remove certain people from positions in the Executive Branch. Congress held that Johnson violated the Act by removing his secretary of war, Edwin Stanton.
Outcome of Johnson's Impeachment
Johnson was saved from being convicted and removed from office by just one vote. The impeachment of Johnson showed how it was important for Congress not to try to remove a president just because they disagreed with him politically.

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Impeachment in American history worksheet answer key provides a comprehensive overview of a crucial aspect of the American political system. Impeachment is a process by which a sitting president, vice president, or other federal officials can be removed from office for misconduct. Understanding the history and nuances of impeachment is essential for grasping how the U.S. government holds its officials accountable. This article will delve into the historical context, the impeachment process, notable cases, and the implications of impeachment in American history.

## Historical Context of Impeachment

Impeachment is rooted in English common law and was included in the U.S. Constitution to ensure that no public official could escape accountability for their actions. The framers of the Constitution aimed to balance the need for a strong executive with the necessity of checks and balances.

## The Constitutional Framework

The Constitution outlines the impeachment process in Article II, Section 4:

1. Grounds for Impeachment: The president, vice president, and all civil officers can be impeached for "Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors."
2. Impeachment Process:
  - The House of Representatives has the sole power to impeach an official.

- A simple majority vote is required in the House to impeach.
- The Senate conducts the trial and requires a two-thirds majority vote to convict and remove the official.

## **Notable Impeachment Cases in American History**

Throughout American history, there have been several significant impeachment cases that have shaped the political landscape.

### **Andrew Johnson (1868)**

Andrew Johnson, who succeeded Abraham Lincoln, faced impeachment primarily due to his violation of the Tenure of Office Act. The act was designed to restrict the president's power to remove certain officeholders without the Senate's approval.

- Articles of Impeachment:
- Violation of the Tenure of Office Act.
- Allegations of bringing disrepute to the office.

Johnson was acquitted by just one vote in the Senate, setting a precedent for the limits of impeachment.

### **Richard Nixon (1974)**

Richard Nixon's presidency was marred by the Watergate scandal, which ultimately led to his resignation to avoid impeachment. The House Judiciary Committee approved three articles of impeachment against him:

1. Obstruction of justice.
2. Abuse of power.
3. Contempt of Congress.

Nixon's resignation marked the first time a sitting president voluntarily left office amidst an impeachment crisis, emphasizing the gravity of the situation.

### **Bill Clinton (1998–1999)**

Bill Clinton was impeached by the House on charges of perjury and obstruction of justice related to his extramarital affair with Monica Lewinsky. The impeachment proceedings were contentious and highlighted the polarized political climate of the time.

- Key Points:
- The impeachment process was seen by many as politically motivated.
- Clinton was acquitted by the Senate, and his approval ratings remained high during and after the scandal.

## Donald Trump (2019 and 2021)

Donald Trump became the first president in U.S. history to be impeached twice. The first impeachment in 2019 was related to allegations that he solicited foreign interference in the 2020 election. The second impeachment in 2021 followed the January 6 Capitol riot, where he was accused of inciting insurrection.

- First Impeachment:
  - Abuse of power and obstruction of Congress.
  - Acquitted by the Senate.
- Second Impeachment:
  - Incitement of insurrection.
  - Also acquitted by the Senate.

## The Impeachment Process Explained

Understanding the impeachment process is crucial for comprehending its implications in American governance.

### Step-by-Step Process

1. Investigation: The process often begins with an investigation, typically led by the House Judiciary Committee.
2. Articles of Impeachment: If sufficient evidence is found, articles of impeachment are drafted.
3. House Vote: The full House votes on the articles. A simple majority is needed to impeach.
4. Senate Trial: The Senate holds a trial, with the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court presiding over presidential impeachment trials.
5. Senate Vote: A two-thirds majority is required for conviction and removal from office.

### Implications of Impeachment

Impeachment is a powerful political tool with significant implications:

- Political Consequences:
  - Impeachment can lead to a shift in power dynamics within the government.
  - It often exacerbates partisan divides, affecting the political landscape for years.
- Historical Precedents:
  - Each impeachment case sets a precedent for future actions. For example, the Nixon case underscored the principle that no one is above the law.
- Public Perception:
  - Impeachment proceedings can impact public trust in government institutions. High-profile cases, like those of Nixon and Clinton, have had lasting effects on public opinion.

# Conclusion

The impeachment in American history worksheet answer key serves as a vital educational tool for understanding the complexities of the impeachment process and its historical significance. By examining the constitutional framework, notable impeachment cases, and the implications of such actions, students and citizens can gain a deeper appreciation for the checks and balances that define the American political system. As history continues to unfold, the lessons learned from past impeachments will remain relevant for current and future generations, emphasizing the importance of accountability in governance.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What are the key steps in the impeachment process outlined in American history?**

The impeachment process involves the House of Representatives initiating the process by drafting articles of impeachment, which are then voted on. If a majority votes in favor, the articles are sent to the Senate, which conducts a trial. A two-thirds majority in the Senate is required to convict and remove the official from office.

### **Which U.S. presidents have been impeached and what were the reasons?**

Three U.S. presidents have been impeached: Andrew Johnson in 1868 for violating the Tenure of Office Act, Bill Clinton in 1998 for perjury and obstruction of justice related to the Monica Lewinsky scandal, and Donald Trump, who was impeached twice, first in 2019 for abuse of power and obstruction of Congress, and again in 2021 for incitement of insurrection.

### **How does impeachment differ from removal from office?**

Impeachment is the formal process of charging a government official with misconduct, while removal from office is the outcome of a successful impeachment trial in the Senate. An official can be impeached but not removed if the Senate does not reach the required two-thirds majority for conviction.

### **What role does the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court play during an impeachment trial?**

The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court presides over impeachment trials in the Senate when the president is being impeached. This role is to ensure that the trial is conducted fairly and according to the rules, although the Chief Justice does not have a vote in the proceedings.

### **What historical significance did the impeachment of Andrew Johnson have on the balance of power in the U.S. government?**

The impeachment of Andrew Johnson marked a significant moment in defining the limits of presidential power and the authority of Congress. It set a

precedent for the separation of powers and clarified that the president could not unilaterally dismiss Cabinet members without congressional approval.

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