Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

The Presidency

Section 1

MAIN IDEA
The Constitution gives only a brief description of the president's qualifications and powers. Yet the job is vast and complex, as the president must fulfill many roles.

Key Terms and People

chief executive the role the president plays when executing, or carrying out, the nation's laws

commander in chief the role the president plays when ordering troops into action and calling them back home

foreign policy a nation's plans and procedures for dealing with other countries

diplomacy the art of negotiating with foreign governments

chief of state the role the president plays when acting as the symbolic figurehead of the United States

succession the process of succeeding, or coming after someone

Taking Notes

As you read, take notes on the duties and qualifications of the president.
Record your notes in the graphic organizer below.

The President	
Formal	Informal

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Section Summary

ROLES OF THE PRESIDENT

Article II of the Constitution outlines five official roles for the president. First, the president is **chief executive**, meaning he or she has the power to execute, or carry out, the nation's laws, both by running government programs and implementing laws passed by Congress. Next, the president is chief administrator, managing the executive departments that advise him or her. Third, the president acts as **commander in chief** of the military, holding the power to send troops into action and call them back home. Fourth, the president is the country's foreign policy leader. In this role, the president negotiates treaties, receives foreign ambassadors, and directs all efforts toward **diplomacy**—the art of negotiating with foreign governments. Through each of these activities, the president shapes the country's **foreign policy**, the United States' plans and procedures for dealing with other countries. Finally, the president acts as chief agenda setter when giving the annual State of the Union address and helping Congress with the budget.

Unofficially, the president is the **chief of state** when playing the role of symbolic figurehead of the United States. Although not stated in the Constitution, the president is also considered the head of his or her political party and, along with the vice president, the chief citizen—a representative of all American people.

Name the president's five official roles.

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FORMAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PRESIDENCY

Article II of the Constitution also briefly outlines qualifications, terms of office, election, succession, and benefits. There are three formal qualifications. The president must be at least 35 years old, have lived in the country for 14 years, and be a natural-born citizen, meaning he or she was born a U.S. citizen. In recent years, this third qualification has come under much scrutiny, with critics claiming that it may block qualified candidates.

As for terms of office, the Constitution originally only stated that the president would serve a four-year term with the opportunity for re-election. After first president George Washington chose to serve two

Could a 45-year old woman who was born a French citizen become president? Explain.

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terms, a pattern was established and no president served more than two terms until the 1940s, when Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected to a third and then a fourth term. Partially in response to this break in tradition, the Twenty-second Amendment was added to the Constitution in 1951, limiting the president to two full terms and no more than 10 years in office.

As described in Chapter 3, the president and vice-president are chosen by the electoral college. The Constitution gives states the power to decide how to pick these electors. The electoral college remains the focus of much criticism, since states only receive the same number of electors as it has members of Congress. Therefore, small states receive disproportionate representation in the election process.

Article II is unclear as to who formally succeeds the president. For years, it was assumed that the vice president would be next in the line of **succession**, the process of succeeding or coming after someone. This tradition became law when the Twenty-fifth Amendment was passed in 1967. The Presidential Succession Act of 1947 further extended the line of succession, naming the Speaker of the House next in line after the vice president.

Why were the Twenty-fifth Amendment and the Presidential Succession Act necessary?

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The Constitution also prevents Congress from changing a president's salary while he or she is in office. The president also has a personal staff, access to air and ground transportation, health and retirement benefits, tax deductions, and permission to live in the White House for the duration of his or her term.

INFORMAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE PRESIDENCY

Some qualifications for the presidency are not listed within the Constitution but still play a major role in the selection of the president. Although people of both genders and many different ethnic and religious backgrounds have run for president, with the exception of Barack Obama, who made history as the first African American president, every president as been a white, well-educated male belonging to a Christian denomination. Most have had some military experience. Personality traits, like dignity, confidence, and poise are also important to voters.

What have most past presidents had in common?

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