

THE WHITE HOUSE

Learning Objectives: Students will:

1. Understand the significance of the White House as a symbol of our country and how it contributes to our national identity.
2. Identify who lives in the White House.
3. Demonstrate their knowledge of the White House through the creation of a poem.
4. Listen attentively and communicate their thoughts by contributing to group discussion.

TEKS: SS K.14B, 1.14A, 17B, 18B, 2.1B, 17B, 18B; LA K.14B; 1.18B, 2.18B

Materials: A teacher-selected book about the White House (See Suggested Resources at the end of this activity.)

Vocabulary: cornerstone, White House, president

Teaching Strategy:

1. To introduce the lesson ask students if they know what has 132 rooms, 35 bathrooms, 3 elevators, a tennis court, a swimming pool, a movie theatre, and a bowling lane. If no one guesses the correct answer, tell them it is the White House.
2. Ask students what they already know about the White House and the person who lives there. Responses should be recorded on chart paper or an overhead transparency. Ask students what additional things they would like to know about the White House and record their responses on a new piece of chart paper or overhead transparency.
3. Inform students that the cornerstone for the White House was laid on October 13, 1792, but it took 8 years to complete the building. Read students a teacher-selected book about the White House or use an internet resource such as Spotty's White House Tour, which is presented by the President's English Springer Spaniel at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/kids/tour/>. A video tour of the oval office presented by President George W. Bush can also be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/kids/tours/>.
4. The teacher should direct student's attention back to the brainstormed list of things that students wanted to know about the White House. Have them recall the new information they now know

about the White House and record responses on another piece of chart paper or overhead transparency.

5. Lead a discussion concerning the importance of the White House, its history, and the people who have lived there. Explain that the White House is more than just the home and office of the President of the United States. It is an American symbol that represents freedom and our government (democracy).
6. Tell students that they are going to write “two-word” poems about the White House. The poems do not have to rhyme, and the only requirement is that each line contains just two words. The first line of the poem should contain the two words, “White House,” and students should then describe the topic until they are finished. Students may refer to the brainstormed class list for ideas. (Younger students might each create a two-word line along with an illustration and then the pages can be compiled into a class book.)

Example: White House
 132 Rooms
 142 Windows
 412 Doors
 Oval Office
 Family Quarters
 Green Room
 Blue Room
 Red Room
 East Room
 President’s Home

7. After students have finished their poems, have them share their poems with the class. Post poems on the bulletin board for everyone to enjoy.

Extension for Gifted/Talented: Have students investigate various “first pets” that have lived in the White House. They should share the most interesting facts about the pets through the creation of a poster or newspaper article.

Suggested Resources:

- *O, Say Can You See* by Shelia Keenan (New York: Scholastic, Inc.), 2004. (Pages 10-13)
- *Woodrow, the White House Mouse* by Peter W. Barnes and Cheryl Shaw Barnes (Alexandria, VA: Rosebud Books), 1995.
- *The White House* by Lloyd G. Douglas (Children’s Press.), 2003.