EDUCATION RESOURCE GUIDE
PART VII. THE GREAT HOUSE ENDURES

This education resource guide is designed to augment the content included in Part VII of the NCBLA’s anthology Our White House: Looking In, Looking Out. Included on these pages are engaging activities, discussion questions, and recommendations for print and online resources regarding most of the content in Part VII of Our White House. We invite you to print and share these materials with young people at home and in the classroom. Education resource guides for the other parts of Our White House are available on OurWhiteHouse.org. All education guides are formatted to be printed double sided.

The Great House Endures (pages 182-183)
Contemporary Map Illustration of Washington, D.C. by Roxie Munro

ACTIVITY: Washington, D.C. Maps Past and Present
Compare and contrast the contemporary map of our nation’s capital Washington, D.C. drawn by Roxie Munro with the historical map of Washington City (the original name of our nation’s capital) drawn by Mike Reagan in “Part I. From the Foundation Up.”

If your students are unfamiliar with maps and lack map reading skills—map skills are essential life skills—you may want to first have them become familiar with the concept of maps then teach them how to read and interpret maps. Websites that might help you are:

- http://nationalgeographic.org/education/map-skills-elementary-students/
- http://teachinghistory.org/teaching-materials/ask-a-master-teacher/24966
- http://www.readingrockets.org/article/map-making
- http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/mapping/6430

Have your students compare and contrast both maps, locating the White House, the Capitol, Pennsylvania Avenue, and the Potomac River in both maps. Ask students:

- What geographical details that existed in 1800 still exist or do not exist in the contemporary map?
- What waterway appears in the 1800 map that does not appear in the contemporary map?
- Ask students to make educated guesses as to what happened to that waterway over the centuries. Then task them with finding out what really happened to the what was called in 1800 the Goose Creek, also referred to in maps and journals as Tiber Creek.
ACTIVITY: Discovering History Through Historical Maps:
What Happened to Tiber Creek, the Original Waterway Abutting the White House Grounds?

An interdisciplinary approach that uses historical maps, as well as primary and secondary sources, to expand students’ research skills, expanding students’ knowledge in history, cartography, geography, science, and art.

Share books with your students that contain Washington, D.C. historical maps, historical prints, and primary historical sources. Try and reserve the following highly pertinent books through your public library inter-community loan system:

- *Washington on View: The Nation’s Capital Since 1790* by John W. Rep

These sites may also be helpful:

- [https://worldmap.harvard.edu/maps/641](https://worldmap.harvard.edu/maps/641)
- [http://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/view/all/where/Washington+%28D.C.%29?sort=Pub_List_No_InitialSort%2CPub_Date%2CPub_List_No%2CSeries_No](http://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/view/all/where/Washington+%28D.C.%29?sort=Pub_List_No_InitialSort%2CPub_Date%2CPub_List_No%2CSeries_No)

Have your students chronologically track the Tiber/Goose Creek waterway, as well as the development of city, through the historical maps. Have them take a thoughtful and detailed look at historical prints of the Washington, D.C. area. Encourage them to read primary accounts describing the landscape of the area. They will find that the creek evolves into a canal, and eventually is driven underground, unseen, where it exists today. Ask students to research and discover:

- What happened to the creek?
- What was the creek’s relationship to the Potomac River and the transportation of people and goods?
- Why did its various stages of evolution unfold? What were the needs of the people of the area, as well as the government and civic needs, that determined those changes?
- What was the original biological and environmental state of the land along the creek banks? As the land changed from forest to farm to town to city, what effect did those changes have on the creek, and on the vegetation, shrubbery, and trees along the creek banks?
- Did the environmental evolution of the creek add or subtract to the health of the human and animal life that lived on the land abutting the creek, and later the canal, and underground waterway that the creek eventually became?
- How did transportation in Washington, D.C. change as the creek evolved?
- How was the course of history affected by the evolution of the Tiber/Goose Creek?
- Has there been an environmental evolution or shift in the geographic area you and your students live in that has had an effect on the history of your local area?
- The earth is currently undergoing not a minor, but a major change to the planet, with global warming. Using the evolution of the Tiber/Goose Creek as a simple example of geographic and environmental change, have your students thoughtfully share examples of how they think global warning may effect your own area, your state, our country, our world.
From *Christmas in Plains: Memories* (pages 184-187)  
by Jimmy Carter, illustrated by Don Powers

Be sure to visit this list of books for young people provided on the Carter Presidential Library website: [http://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/library/ChildrensLiterature.phtml](http://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/library/ChildrensLiterature.phtml)

Learn more about President Carter and his work during and after his presidency:
- [https://www.cartercenter.org/about/experts/jimmy_carter.html](https://www.cartercenter.org/about/experts/jimmy_carter.html)
- [http://millercenter.org/president/carter](http://millercenter.org/president/carter)

Lesson plans related to President Carter’s administration:
- [http://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/education/resources.phtml](http://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/education/resources.phtml)
- [https://www.nps.gov/jica/learn/education/classrooms/a-pathway-to-peace.htm](https://www.nps.gov/jica/learn/education/classrooms/a-pathway-to-peace.htm)

*PBS American Experience* full video on President Carter and free, complementary lesson plans:
- [http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amERICANEXPERIENCE/features/teachers-resources/carter-teachersguide/](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amERICANEXPERIENCE/features/teachers-resources/carter-teachersguide/)

Learn about President Carter and the Iranian Hostage Crisis:
- [http://millercenter.org/president/biography/carter-foreign-affairs](http://millercenter.org/president/biography/carter-foreign-affairs)

Iranian Hostage Crisis primary sources:
- [http://www.archives.gov/historical-docs/todays-doc/?dod-date=1106](http://www.archives.gov/historical-docs/todays-doc/?dod-date=1106)
- [http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB21/](http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB21/)

Iranian Hostage Crisis lesson plans:
- [https://cmes.arizona.edu/sites/cmes.arizona.edu/files/Lesson%20Plan%20Title.pdf](https://cmes.arizona.edu/sites/cmes.arizona.edu/files/Lesson%20Plan%20Title.pdf)
Online Resources related to the history of Christmas at the White House and the national Christmas tree:

- “Grand Champions of the White House” on OurWhiteHouse.org
- “Our National Christmas Tree” on OurWhiteHouse.org
- https://www.whitehousehistory.org/christmas-traditions-at-the-white-house
- http://thenationaltree.org/event-history/
- http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/jfk-christmas-card-was-never-sent-180948006/?no-ist
- https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/president/holiday/whtree/

The White House (pages 188-189)
by Jon Scieszka, illustrated by Tony Fucile

ACTIVITY: Write a Limerick About the White House!
Jon Scieszka’s short, humorous poem about the White House is a limerick. A limerick is “a light or humorous verse form of five chiefly anapestic verses of which lines 1, 2, and 5 are of three feet and lines 3 and 4 are of two feet with a rhyme scheme of aabba” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary).

After your students have enjoyed reading Our White House: Looking In, Looking Out, have them write a humorous limerick about the White House or one of the Presidents.

These online sources may be of help to your lesson planning:
- http://www.powerpoetry.org/actions/5-tips-writing-limerick
- http://www.webexhibits.org/poetry/explore_famous_limerick_make.html
From Ronald Reagan’s Farewell Address to the Nation, January 11, 1989
(pages 190-191)

Photograph by Diana Walker

Learn more about President Reagan and his work during his presidency in these books and online resources.

Books
- *Up Close: Ronald Reagan* by James Sutherland
- *DK Biography: Ronald Reagan* by Michael Burgen

General Biography Links
- https://www.whitehouse.gov/1600/presidents/ronaldreagan
- http://millercenter.org/president/reagan
- https://reaganlibrary.gov/
- http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amERICANEXPERIENCE/films/reagan

Speeches
- http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=43130
- https://reaganlibrary.gov/archives/speeches

ACTIVITY: Be the President’s Speechwriter

Either assign a president to each individual student, or have students choose a president he or she is interested in, then have each student research that president’s administration, reading samples of the president’s speeches. After reading about a president and becoming familiar with his—or hopefully someday her—speeches, ask each of your students to be a speechwriter for his or her president, writing a farewell speech for that president.

Presidential library websites will provide a broad range of information about individual presidents. They will also have copies of that presidents’ notable speeches. A great website for information about all the presidents and their speeches is the Miller Center, at the University of Virginia, online resources at: http://millercenter.org/president

Lesson plan websites to help teaching students speech writing skills:
- https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/teaching-persuasive-speeches
- http://education.cu-portland.edu/blog/educator-tips/simple-steps-to-create-a-persuasive-speech-lesson-plan/
Letter to George, Jeb, Neil, Marvin, and Doro Bush from George H. W. Bush
(pages 192-195)

Photographs by Diana Walker

Learn more about President George H.W. Bush and his work during his presidency in these books and online resources.

Books

There are no children’s books currently published about President Bush that the NCBLA can recommend. However, we do recommend the following title regarding President George H.W. Bush’s letters:

All the Best, George Bush: My Life in Letters and Other Writings by George H. W. Bush

General Biography Links

- http://bush41.org/
- http://millercenter.org/president/bush
- http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amERICANEXPERIENCE/features/biography/presidents-bush/
- http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amERICANEXPERIENCE/films/bush/player/

President George H.W. Bush and the Persian Gulf War, the First Iraq War

- http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amERICANEXPERIENCE/features/general-article/bush-gulf-war/
- http://millercenter.org/president/biography/bush-foreign-affairs

Persian Gulf War Teaching Resources and Lesson Plans

- http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amERICANEXPERIENCE/features/teachers-resources/bush-teachers-guide/
ACTIVITY: Letters to the President and More

President George H.W. Bush was a prolific letter writer. Have students read the letter he wrote to his grown children a few months before the Persian Gulf War in Iraq began on page 192 in Our White House: Looking In, Looking Out. Then have students write one or more of the following letters:

- Letter Option 1: Write a Letter to the President (for all students)
- Letter Option 2: Write a Letter as the President (for older students)
- Letter Option 3: Write a Letter as the Outgoing President to the New Incoming President (for older students)

Letter Option 1 (for all students): Write a Letter to the President

1. Many children are no longer familiar with traditional letter formats. These websites may be of assistance in teaching young people how to write a traditional letter:
   - http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/mail-using-literature-promote-85.html

2. Once children are familiar with how to write a letter and address an envelope using a traditional format, suggest that they write a letter to the president sharing their feelings about a subject or an issue they feel strongly about. They may want to share details of their own lives and explain why they feel so strongly about their chosen interest or issue. They may also want to suggest a plan of action, or a solution, to the president. It would be wise to thank the president for his, or her, service and encourage the president in any area that the student feels the president has been successful. Children can also add a drawing to illustrate the content of their letter. Make sure the student’s full name and address is written in the letter’s heading.

3. Examples of children’s letters to various presidents:
   - https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2015/03/16/asked-and-answered-matthews-letter-president

4. If students mail each of their letters separately, as opposed to an adult mailing them as a class grouping in one large envelope, the chances of your student receiving an individual response from the White House increase. The White House recommends using an 8½ by 11-inch sheet of paper and placing that letter in a regular letter size envelope. They recommend the use of an ink pen instead of a pencil, and writing in a legible handwriting, or hand printing. Students can also use a word processor and print their letters, though a hand written letter is far more personal and charming, when legible. The White House
Our White House Education Resource Guide: Part VII

asks that a return address be placed in the upper left corner of the envelope. Have each student use the correct postage for their envelopes.

Address the envelope to:

President (the president’s first and last name here)
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Letter Option 2 (for older students): Write a Letter as the President!

1. If your students are unfamiliar with the traditional format for personal letters, use the suggestions in Letter Option 1, step 1, to teach them how to write a personal letter and address an envelope.

2. Have students read President Bush’s letter (reprinted in Our White House: Looking In, Looking Out) that he wrote to his grown children a few months before the Persian Gulf War in Iraq began. Also have them familiarize themselves with the events of the Persian Gulf War. Discuss President Bush’s letter to his children in the context of what was about to unfold in 1990 related to those events. Website links on page 6 provide pertinent information related to the Persian Gulf War.

3. Discussion questions:
   - Who is the letter intended for? Is it written in a familiar or formal style? Does the tone of the letter reflect his audience? Do you think that President Bush might have had any other broader audience in mind? If so, who?
   - Does the president foresee the long range repercussions of the Iraq dictator Saddam Hussein’s decisions and actions? What does the president foresee?
   - What priorities and ethical values does the president express? Does he do so by inference, or with blunt expression?
   - Is he speaking as President? As father? Both? On what evidence in the letter do you base your answer?

4. After reading Our White House: Looking In, Looking Out discuss other presidents and the specific national and international challenges and crises each faced, for example: George Washington and the creation of a nation and its capital; Thomas Jefferson and slavery; James Madison and the War of 1812; Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War; Franklin Roosevelt and the Great Depression; Harry Truman and the use of the atom bomb in wartime.

5. Have students choose a president and a particular crisis that the president had to address during his administration. Then have students write a letter as that president, to the president’s family members, describing his feelings related to his chosen course of action, using President Bush’s letter as an example. Your students will probably have to visit their school and local library to find out more about their chosen president, as well as conduct research on the Internet, to be able to have enough background information on a particular event or issue, in order to write an informed letter. Students will also want to familiarize themselves with samples of their chosen president’s written letters and writing style.
Letter Option 3 (for older students): Write a Letter as the Outgoing President to the New Incoming President!

There is a relatively new presidential tradition of an outgoing president leaving a note or letter to the new incoming president either in or on the president’s Oval Office desk. As reported by CBS News:

“During his last moments in the Oval Office, former President Ronald Reagan scribbled a note for his successor on a notepad with a turkey insignia that said "Don't let the turkeys get you down." He, too, slipped the note in the presidential desk for his successor, President George H.W. Bush.

Four years after that, the elder Bush left a note for President Bill Clinton. And eight years after that, Clinton wrote a note for Mr. Bush, and included a copy of the message he had received from Mr. Bush's father.”

The contents of the last presidential note from President George W. Bush to President Barack Obama have not been publicly revealed, but the letter his father President George H. W. Bush wrote to President Bill Clinton when he left the White House was revealed by ABC News:

January 20, 1993
Dear Bill,
When I walked into this office just now I felt the same sense of wonder and respect that I felt four years ago. I know you will feel that too.
I wish you great happiness here. I never felt the loneliness some Presidents have described.
There will be very tough times, made even more difficult by criticism you may not think is fair. I’m not a very good one to give advice; but just don’t let the critics discourage you or push you off course.
You will be our President when you read this note. I wish you well. I wish your family well.
Your success now is our country’s success. I am rooting hard for you.
Good luck –
George

1. Share the above stated tradition and letter with your students.
2. If your students are unfamiliar with the traditional format for personal letters, use the suggestions in Letter Option 1, step 1, to teach them how to write a personal letter.
3. Have your students choose a president who interests them, then have them research that president’s administration and its challenges and accomplishments. Also, have them find samples of their chosen president’s written letters.
4. Have your students find out who the person was who succeeded their president in office. They should also investigate the relationship that their outgoing president had with the president who succeeded them, if a relationship existed at all, and the tone of that relationship.
5. Then have your students write a letter pretending to be the president they chose, writing a letter to the next incoming president. They can use President George H. W. Bush’s letter to President Bill Clinton as an inspiration.

6. The letter can be of any length. It can be serious or humorous or both; warm or reserved; personal or professional. Your students should be able to support their content, style, and tone choices with their research.

7. When finished have students share their letters with the class, as well as the reasoning behind their content, tone, and style choices.

ACTIVITY: Students Use Smart Phones and Writing Skills to Become Photojournalists! (for older students)

In *Our White House: Looking In, Looking Out*, President Ronald Reagan’s speech and President George H. W. Bush’s letter are illustrated by professional White House photographer and photojournalist Diana Walker. Photojournalists use both writing skills and visual skills to tell stories. Give your students the assignment of becoming photojournalists and ask them to document the people, places, things, and issues they care about in their lives and your community.

1. You and your students can find out more about Diana Walker and her work, and the general topic of photojournalism using the web links on the next page.

2. Students will need a notebook and a camera for this activity. Many students have access to smart phones that can take photos; some students have access to digital cameras. If your students do not have access to cameras, they can become sketch artists and draw people, scenes, and objects in sketchpads.

3. Work with students to come up with a photojournalist assignment that tells a story about someone or something they care about. Perhaps a student has a grandmother in a senior care facility whom they love and they would like to document the story of the elderly at the facility. Maybe one student loves politics and can gain permission to follow a local councilperson or mayor for part of their professional day, documenting his or her activities. Perhaps a student is concerned about animals and documents the activities at your local pet shelter. The assignment you both agree on needs not only to be appropriate to each student’s age and abilities; it should be pragmatically possible.

4. Once you and a student decide on a subject for the assignment, your student will need to contact their subject—the person or place they want to document—and get written permission to take photographs. If their assignment would benefit from interviewing a specific person, your students will need to contact that person to make an appointment for the interview. Even if the person is family member, it will be a learning experience in itself for your students to make these arrangements formally.

5. You will want to limit the length of your students’ written work, as real reporters and photojournalists have limits on their published pieces.

6. Have your students make a timeline plan of their assignment addressing the particular needs of their challenge. They may need to make appointments for interviews and photographs. They should draw a list of possible questions before their interview. If they are photographing at a specific location, they may want to visit the location before their official appointment on a “scouting expedition” to plan out their photo opportunities. They should set goals as to what they hope to accomplish with their work.
7. Talk to your students about the need for care and courtesy photographing and interviewing people and places.

8. Your students will need to rewrite and edit their interviews and articles, as well as edit their photographs, choosing the best photos from amongst the many they take during their appointments.

9. Your students can “publish” their work as part of class project, a school newspaper, or an online community forum. Students with access to computers can use appropriate software to aid in their publication. Students without access to computers and/or appropriate software can publish their reports using paper and notebooks.

10. When published and shared with the class, a class discussion should ensue, discussing what worked and what did not work in each piece. Individual students should honestly assess whether or not he or she feels the original goals were achieved.

11. The links below will help you and your students with this activity.

Learn more about Diana Walker and her work at:


Video interviews of Diana Walker, White House photographer at:
https://www.c-span.org/person/?dianawalker

Information and ideas on how students can become photojournalists at:

- https://www.theguardian.com/education/teacher-blog/2013/nov/04/photography-amnesty-international

Information on how students can take better photos at:

- https://www.icp.org/school/teacher-family-resources
Information on how students can write objective, fact-based stories:

The Secret Service (pages 196-197)
Dialogue imagined by Jess M. Brallier, illustrated by David Small

Find out more information about the Secret Service and the CIA at:

- [http://www.secretservice.gov/about/faqs/](http://www.secretservice.gov/about/faqs/) (end of page FAQs from kids)
- [https://www.cia.gov/index.html](https://www.cia.gov/index.html)
- [https://www.cia.gov/kids-page](https://www.cia.gov/kids-page)

Find information about Secret Service Code Names at:

ACTIVITY: Discover what it is like being a Secret Service Agent
The National Parks System has created an online project for kids to role play being a Secret Service agent. Use the following links:

- [https://www.nps.gov/eise/learn/kidsyouth/secret.htm](https://www.nps.gov/eise/learn/kidsyouth/secret.htm)
- [https://www.nps.gov/features/eise/jrranger/secret5.htm](https://www.nps.gov/features/eise/jrranger/secret5.htm)

I Live in the White House (pages 198-199)
by Jack Prelutsky, illustrated by Jim LaMarche

Learn more about President William Jefferson Clinton and his work during his presidency in these online resources. There are no children’s books currently published about President Clinton that the NCBLA can recommend at this time.

General Biography Links

- [https://www.clintonlibrary.gov/](https://www.clintonlibrary.gov/)
- [https://www.whitehouse.gov/1600/presidents/williamjclinton](https://www.whitehouse.gov/1600/presidents/williamjclinton)
- [http://millercenter.org/president/clinton](http://millercenter.org/president/clinton)

President Clinton and His Administration Teaching Resources and Lesson Plans

- [https://www.clintonlibrary.gov/education/educators/](https://www.clintonlibrary.gov/education/educators/)

Read MORE
Check out “Lions and Tigers and Bears, Oh My! Wild Animals at the White House” by Heather Lang on OurWhiteHouse.org.
From *Meet the Press with Time Russert*: Interview with Vice President Dick Cheney, September 16, 2001 (pages 200-202)

*Editor’s Note:* Discussion questions regarding the interview with Vice President Dick Cheney, as well as *The 9/11 Commission Report*, will be added to this education resource guide soon.

**Backstairs at the White House: A More or Less On-the-Spot Sketch Journal**  
(pages 206-211)  
by David Small

**ACTIVITY: Writing Exercise Comparing and Contrasting Historical and Contemporary White House Staff Positions**

1. After enjoying David Small’s behind-the-scenes sketchbook, brainstorm with students exploring all the possible behind-the-scenes jobs at the White House. Have students list them on the board.

2. Ask students to think about what it would be like to be the White House caretakers of the president and his or her family in 1810, and then in 1941 when America entered World War II, as opposed to now. Ask them to consider thoughtfully all the work entailed in taking care of the mansion itself during those time periods. Have them discuss what the country was like in 1810 and 1941 compared to now. More than likely, especially with elementary school students, some may be able to make educated guesses, but most will not know. You may want to have a general discussion about the time periods related to transportation, energy use, domestic facilities, food availability, clothing options, and the roles of men and women in society. For most students, at this point in the conversation, it will be pure conjecture, but it will get them thinking.

3. Have students research, in the library and online, what was going on in 1810 and 1941 in the United States. Have them look into what was available in the way of work conveniences and household appliances; transportation; energy usage related to homes and kitchens; professional positions for men and women; food availability; and basics such as cleaning and food preparation conveniences. Discovering the work that went into the simple need for washing clothes can be an eye-opening experience for students.

4. Ask students to pick one job and then research what it would be like to do that job at the White House now, and what it would have been like to that job in 1810 and then in 1941, when America entered World War II. Students can then write an article comparing and contrasting the different time periods and how difficult or easy it would be to execute the job that they chose. For example: what challenges would a chef or cook have working in the White House kitchens in 1810, in 1941, compared to now? Your students may want to share in their pieces, what era they would prefer to work in—1810, 1941, or the 21st century?

5. There are a number of adult books available through your local library system related to the topic of White House domestic staff, but there are no books for young people currently that address this topic except for *Our White House: Looking In, Looking Out* and *The White House: An Illustrated History* by Catherine O’Neill Grace.
6. The following websites may help you and your students with this activity:
   - https://www.whitehousehistory.org/live-in-white-house-staff
   - https://www.whitehousehistory.org/white-house-workers-timeline
   - https://www.whitehousehistory.org/under-this-roof
**The Green House** (pages 212-214)  
imagined by Megan McDonald

**ACTIVITY: Help the White House Turn Greener!**

Author Megan McDonald’s piece features fictional letters to the president from fictional children, highlighting White House and national environmental issues.

You can have your students write letters to the president, making their own suggestions on how the White House can become more energy efficient—“greener.” Their letters will be an expression of civic activism demonstrating how we can all take actions combating global warming.

1. Many children are no longer familiar with traditional letter formats. These websites may be of assistance in teaching young people how to write a traditional letter:
   - [http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/mail-using-literature-promote-85.html](http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/mail-using-literature-promote-85.html)

2. Share the information on the next page related to the history of “greening” of the White House with your students. Also share the Internet information concerning ideas and actions to take that prevent global warming. Discuss all the information in class with your students, make a list of student questions and concerns, and together investigate answers.

3. Have your students write a letter to the president sharing their concerns related to energy conservation and global warning. Ask them to also share what they think the president needs to do to combat global warming and make the White House itself “greener.”

4. If students mail each of their letters separately, as opposed to an adult mailing them as a class grouping in one large envelope, the chances of your student receiving an individual response from the White House increase. The White House recommends using an 8 ½ by 11-inch sheet of paper and placing that letter in a regular letter size envelope. They recommend the use of an ink pen instead of a pencil, and writing in a legible handwriting or hand printing. Students can also use a word processor and print their letters, though a hand-written letter is far more personal and charming, when legible. The White House asks that a return address be placed in the upper-left corner of the envelope. Have each student use the correct postage for their envelopes.

5. Address the envelope to:

   **President (the president’s first and last name here)**

   **The White House**  
   **1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW**  
   **Washington, DC 20500**
For more information about the history of the “greening” of the White House, check out these web links:


Information for you and your students on ways to combat global warming and increase energy efficiency is available at the following links:

- [http://climatekids.nasa.gov/how-to-help/](http://climatekids.nasa.gov/how-to-help/)
- [http://www.amnh.org/ology/features/askascientist/question05.php](http://www.amnh.org/ology/features/askascientist/question05.php)
- [http://www.habitat.org/magazine/article/how-make-your-house-more-energy-efficient](http://www.habitat.org/magazine/article/how-make-your-house-more-energy-efficient)
The First Pitch (pages 212-214)  
by Stephanie True Peters, illustrated by Matt Tavares  
Learn more about President George W. Bush and his work during his presidency using the following online resources. There are no children’s books currently published about President Bush that the NCBLA can recommend.

General Biography Links
- https://www.georgewbushlibrary.smu.edu/
- https://www.whitehouse.gov/1600/presidents/georgewbush
- http://millercenter.org/president/gwbush
- http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amERICANEXPERIENCE/features/biography/presidents-gwbush/

President George W. Bush and His Administration Teaching Resources and Lesson Plans
- https://www.georgewbushlibrary.smu.edu/Teachers.aspx
- http://millercenter.org/debates/iraq/research/lessonplans
- http://nationalgeographic.org/media/a-nation-goes-to-war/

Presidents and the World of Sports
- http://www.si.com/more-sports/photos/2014/02/17/u-s-presidents-playing-sports

President’s Council on Physical Fitness, Sports, and Nutrition
http://www.fitness.gov/
ACTIVITY: What Sports Fields and Opportunities Would You Add to the White House and Its Grounds?

Presidents and their families can enjoy a number of recreational and athletic facilities at the White House and on the grounds, including: a tennis court, jogging track, swimming pool, movie theater, billiard room, and a bowling lane. Ask your students to write a recommendation to the White House suggesting how they would increase the sports and recreational opportunities at the White House and the grounds.

1. Have your students read the article “Stress Relief: Exercise and Relaxation at the White House” on OurWhiteHouse.org.
2. And take a look at the White House lawns and park at:
   - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/President%27s_Park#/media/File:Aerial_view_of_White_House_and_the_Ellipse.jpg
3. Ask students to write an essay on how they would improve the White House sports and recreational facilities. Would they add a soccer field? Have a trampoline area for kids and grandkids? Create a horse trail and add a barn for horses and ponies? Should the White House build a giant sand pit for beach volleyball? Or add a horseshoe pit on the back lawn? What about an ice skating rink? Students should be able to include a rationale for their ideas in their essay, as well as show where the facility or venue should be built in the house, lawns, or grounds.
4. Have students draw a plan for the facility or venue in the place it should be built.
5. You may want to add a math quotient to this activity by having students research and include the cost of building the facility or venue.
6. Students can share their essays and plan with their classmates, and perhaps send to the president at the White House.
Wanted: Magnanimous, Exquisite Woman! (pages 219-220)
Dialogue between Gigi Amateau and her daughter, Judith, age 13

CLASS DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITY: Discuss Reasons Why a Woman Has Not Been President of the United States and Create a Campaign to Elect the First Woman Candidate!

1. Share information from the following two categories of web sources with your students.
   History of women candidates for President of the United States:
   - [http://origins.osu.edu/article/madame-president-history-women-who-ran-hillary](http://origins.osu.edu/article/madame-president-history-women-who-ran-hillary)
   Possible reasons why a woman has never been elected president of the United States:
   - [http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2015/01/14/women-and-leadership/](http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2015/01/14/women-and-leadership/)
   - [www.bostonglobe.com/magazine/2015/10/20/the-real-reasons-never-had-woman-president/fAHLOzDXYD8Fp7GEn38wkO/story.html](http://www.bostonglobe.com/magazine/2015/10/20/the-real-reasons-never-had-woman-president/fAHLOzDXYD8Fp7GEn38wkO/story.html)

2. Conduct a class discussion sharing information about past women presidential candidates. Ask your students why they think a woman has never been elected to the presidency in America. After they have expressed and discussed their thoughts, share with them the reasons stated in the above articles, as well as the attitudes expressed in the Pew poll. Ask your students if they agree with the reasons, and why or why not they agree or disagree.

3. Have your students create a campaign for a woman candidate of their choice. They should write out a rationale as to why their choice would be a great candidate. They should also think out an approach for a presidential campaign that would highlight their candidates’ assets and at the same time combat the reasons and concerns discussed as to why America has not elected a woman president. They should write out their campaign mission and goals. They can design bumper stickers, signs, commercial storyboards, and buttons. They can then share their campaign with their classmates and the class can critique it as to the overall effectiveness of their plans and designs.
4. The following links will give you ideas of how to help your students with the rationale and designs of their campaigns:


**Mrs. Bush Inspires a National Book Festival** (pages 221-223)

_by John Y. Cole, poster by Carol Dyer_

Take your children and teens to the The Library of Congress National Book Festival!

It is a day of celebration of reading and books—and it is great fun! Thank you Mrs. Bush for inspiring this amazing event!

Learn more about the Library of Congress and the National Book Festival at these websites:

- The Library of Congress website: [https://www.loc.gov/](https://www.loc.gov/)
- Library of Congress Educator Resources and Lesson Plans: [https://www.loc.gov/education/](https://www.loc.gov/education/)
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.: Who’s in the House? (pages 224-227)
Created by Bob Kolar

ACTIVITY: Create a Presidential Board Game for Your Class!

It’s simple! Make copies of Bob Kolar’s presidential game board illustration in Our White House: Looking In, Looking Out and have students make their own game pieces to play a game of “Who Is in the White House?”

Supplies
- Our White House: Looking In, Looking Out
- White Cardstock
- Scissors for Each Student
- Crayons, Markers, or Colored Pencils for Each Student
- Tape
- One Die for Each Group of Four Students

Preparation
1. Take the Our White House book to your local copy shop and make several enlarged copies of Bob Kolar’s double-page spread (pages 224-225). You may want to have each copy laminated. Make enough copies of the game board to ensure you can divide your class into groups of four players.

2. Make the same number of copies of the 2-page presidential fact sheet, which follows Bob Kolar’s game board in the book on pages 226-227.

3. Give each student a rectangular piece of cardstock that is no more than 4-inches high and 2-inches wide. Inspired by Bob Kolar’s clean and simple design, have students draw and color a stylized, self-portrait on the cardstock to serve as their own game pieces. Once they have finished drawing and coloring their “mini-me’s,” ask the students to cut them out, being sure to keep a flat edge on the bottom.

4. To enable the game pieces to stand up, have students also cut out a skinny rectangle from the cardstock (approximately 2-inches wide by 1-inch long) to serve as the platform for the game piece. Ask the students to fold about ½-inch of the very bottom of their game piece and tape it to the center of the platform to attach it. Then tell the students to bend up the game piece so it now stands tall on its platform. Their “mini-me” game pieces can now stand on the game boards.

How to Win

Identify as many presidents and their significant objects/actions as illustrated on the game board as possible to be the first player to reach the end of the board game.
How to Play the Game

1. Divide the class into groups of four. Give each group a board, a fact sheet, and one die. Be sure each player has the game pieces they created. Three students are players, and the fourth student serves as the referee. The referee uses the fact sheet to verify players’ answers. The referee should keep the fact sheet hidden from the players and should not tell players the correct answer if a player provides an incorrect answer.

2. To determine who goes first, each player rolls the die. The player with the lowest number goes first, the second lowest goes second, the highest goes last.

3. To start the game, the player who rolled the lowest number rolls the die and places his or her game piece on the square that reflects the roll. For example, if a player rolls 3 on the die, he or she places his or her game piece on the third square of the game board. As play continues, each player moves his or her game piece according to the number rolled on the die. Play moves clockwise from player to player.

4. As each player rolls the die and moves his or her game piece to a square, he or she needs to name the president on the square. The referee verifies the answer using the fact sheet but does not tell the correct answer if someone does not know the correct answer.

   - **If the player’s answer is CORRECT,** the player must then guess the importance, meaning, or significance of the object the president holds, and/or the action the president is taking. The referee again checks the fact sheet and lets the player know if the answer is correct. If the player has correctly identified both the president and the significance or meaning of the president’s object and/or action, the player can roll again and take another turn.

   - **If the player’s answer is INCORRECT,** the player stays on the square and waits until his or her next turn to roll the die and move again. The next player rolls the die to take his or her turn.

5. The game is won by the player who gets to the last square first. The player must correctly identify the president on square 44 to be declared the winner even if his or her roll exceeds square 44.

For younger students, or students totally unfamiliar with American presidents and presidential history, the game can be simplified by only asking students to identify each president on the first couple of rounds. Once students are able to identify all the presidents in the game, they can then play by the original rules.

**Extra Challenge!** Have students design and create a First Ladies game modeling it after Bob Kolar’s President’s game. Hopefully, some day a First Gentleman will be added to the game board!
Inaugural Morning

*Editor’s Note:* This poem and illustration are included in the 2010 paperback edition of the book on pages 228-229.

by Nikki Grimes, illustrated by A. G. Ford

Learn more about President Barack Obama and his work during his presidency in the following books and online resources.

**Young People’s Books about President Obama**

- *Barack Obama: Son of Promise, Child of Hope* by Nikki Grimes, illustrated by Bryan Collier
- *Barack by Jonah Winter*, illustrated by AG Ford
- *National Geographic Readers: Barack Obama* by Caroline Crosson Gilpin
- *Barack Obama: Out of Many, One* by Shana Corey

**General Biography Links**

- [http://millercenter.org/president/obama](http://millercenter.org/president/obama)
- [https://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/president-obama](https://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/president-obama)
- [https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/national/obama-legacy/](https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/national/obama-legacy/)

**President Obama and His Administration Teaching Resources and Lesson Plans**

- [http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/calendar-activities/president-barack-obama-born-20726.html](http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/calendar-activities/president-barack-obama-born-20726.html)
- [https://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plan/election-barack-obama-44th-president-united-states](https://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plan/election-barack-obama-44th-president-united-states)

**President Obama’s Inaugural Address**

[https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2009/01/21/president-barack-obamas-inaugural-address](https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2009/01/21/president-barack-obamas-inaugural-address)

**Our White House Inauguration Celebration Kit for Kids!**

This all-in-one resource created by the NCBLA includes exclusive articles covering such topics as why presidential inaugurations are held on January 20th, the oath of office, and inaugural parades; hands-on activities, such as ideas for designing a parade float, hosting an inaugural ball for kids, and writing poetry; games to engage kids in the inauguration, such as “Inaugural I Spy” and “Pin the President on the Presidential Timeline;” and discussion questions. [Click here](https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2009/01/21/president-barack-obamas-inaugural-address) to visit the kit.

**Find a list of presidents who have had poets speak at their inaugurations, the poets who spoke, and the poems that were shared:**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poems_at_United_States_presidential_inaugurations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poems_at_United_States_presidential_inaugurations)
More Information About Poets Speaking at Presidential Inaugurations


Lesson Plan on Inaugural Poems


ACTIVITY: Presidential Poetry Slam!

Have students research the poets who have shared their work at presidential inaugurations, choosing three poems that interested them from each poet. Then celebrate these poets and their work with a classroom poetry slam.
The White House by Moonlight
(pages 228-229 in hardcover edition and pages 230-231 in paperback edition)

by Walt Whitman, illustrated by James Ransome

More than a year into what Northerners commonly referred to as the War of Rebellion—America’s Civil War—poet Walt Whitman traveled south to Washington, D.C. to nurse his brother George Washington Whitman who had been wounded in the Battle of Fredericksburg. His brother’s injuries were not serious, but after seeing first hand the army hospitals and conditions, and the horrific injuries of other soldiers, Walt Whitman stayed in the capital, working in a government office by day, nursing the sick and wounded in his spare time. In March 20, 1863 Whitman wrote to a friend, “The Potomac, very fine, nothing pretty about it—the Washington monument, not half finished—the public grounds around it filled with ten thousand beeves, on the hoof—to the left the Smithsonian with its brown turrets—to the right, far across, Arlington Heights, the forts, eight or ten of them—then the long bridge.”

During his time in Washington, Whitman kept a journal, recording his experiences. In Our White House: Looking In, Looking Out we have published his haunting description and reflection on the White House.

February 24th.—A SPELL of fine soft weather. I wander about a good deal, sometimes at night under the moon. To-night took a long look at the President’s house. The white portico—the palace-like, tall, round columns, spotless as snow—the walls also—the tender and soft moonlight, flooding the pale marble, and making peculiar faint languishing shades, not shadows—everywhere a soft transparent hazy, thin, blue moon-lace, hanging in the air—the brilliant and extra-plentiful clusters of gas, on and around the facade, columns, portico, &c.—everything so white, so marbly pure and dazzling, yet soft—the White House of future poems, and of dreams and dramas, there in the soft and copious moon—the gorgeous front, in the trees, under the lustrous flooding moon, full of reality, full of illusion—the forms of the trees, leafless, silent, in trunk and myriad-angles of branches, under the stars and sky—the White House of the land, and of beauty and night—sentries at the gates, and by the portico, silent, pacing there in blue overcoats—stopping you not at all, but eyeing you with sharp eyes, whichever way you move.

Walt Whitman’s poetry can be the springboard to many educational opportunities for students of all ages. His rich descriptive writing can be used as both a model and inspiration for students to explore the art of writing description, articulating both the visual and atmospheric world that surrounds them.
ACTIVITY: Draw and Describe Your Home in the Night

Use Whitman’s description of the White House and James Ransome’s painting as a model and inspiration for your students. Students will need dark pencils and a sketchbook or notebook which they can hold comfortably as they draw and write.

1. Ask your students to draw their home in the night. Preferably, students would execute their drawing “plein air,” that is painting in the open air, outside. Depending on the safety aspects of some students’ neighborhoods, this may not be possible, or possible only with adult supervision. If that is the case, ask your students to imagine what their home building would look like at night.

2. After students have drawn their home, ask them to turn the page in their sketchbooks or notebooks, and using all five senses, write a descriptive paragraph that expresses the emotional atmosphere of their home in the night. Hopefully, studying and drawing their home first will have heightened students’ sensory awareness.

3. Students can share their drawings and written descriptions with the rest of the class comparing, contrasting, and celebrating the variety.

Find Out More About Walt Whitman

- [https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/walt-whitman](https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/walt-whitman)
- [http://www.whitmanarchive.org/](http://www.whitmanarchive.org/)
- [http://www.waltwhitman.org/about/about-whitman](http://www.waltwhitman.org/about/about-whitman)

Teacher Guides and Lesson Plans Related to Walt Whitman and His Work

- [http://www.nj.gov/dep/parksandforests/historic/whitman/docs/civil.pdf](http://www.nj.gov/dep/parksandforests/historic/whitman/docs/civil.pdf)
- [http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/whitman/tguide/activities.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/whitman/tguide/activities.html)
The White House Easter Egg Roll, 2003
(page 241 in hardcover edition and page 242 in paperback edition)

Painting by Eric Carle

Learn about the White House Easter Egg Roll at these websites:

- [https://www.whitehousehistory.org/origins-of-the-white-house-easter-egg-roll](https://www.whitehousehistory.org/origins-of-the-white-house-easter-egg-roll)
- [https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/easter/history.html](https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/easter/history.html)

ACTIVITY: Presidential Egg Roll

After sharing the history of the White House Easter Egg Roll, have kids design and color hard boiled eggs to look like our presidents! Students will need hard boiled eggs, crayons, and/or markers. Egg dye is optional.

1. Using *Our White House* and other books and websites that have pictures or photos of all the presidents and first ladies for reference, have students design and color eggs to resemble the presidents and their spouses.

2. Perhaps a class artist could draw and cut out a paper illustration of the White House to attach to a large wicker basket filled with straw where all the presidential and first lady eggs can be put on display for the whole school.

3. During recess or gym sponsor a presidential egg rolling contest in the school yard, nearby park, or gym. Kids can use large spoons, brooms, or sticks to roll, or push the eggs over your finish line.