

# presidents of the *United States of America*



"I was America's 30th President and led the country during a time of great prosperity."

**Calvin Coolidge**



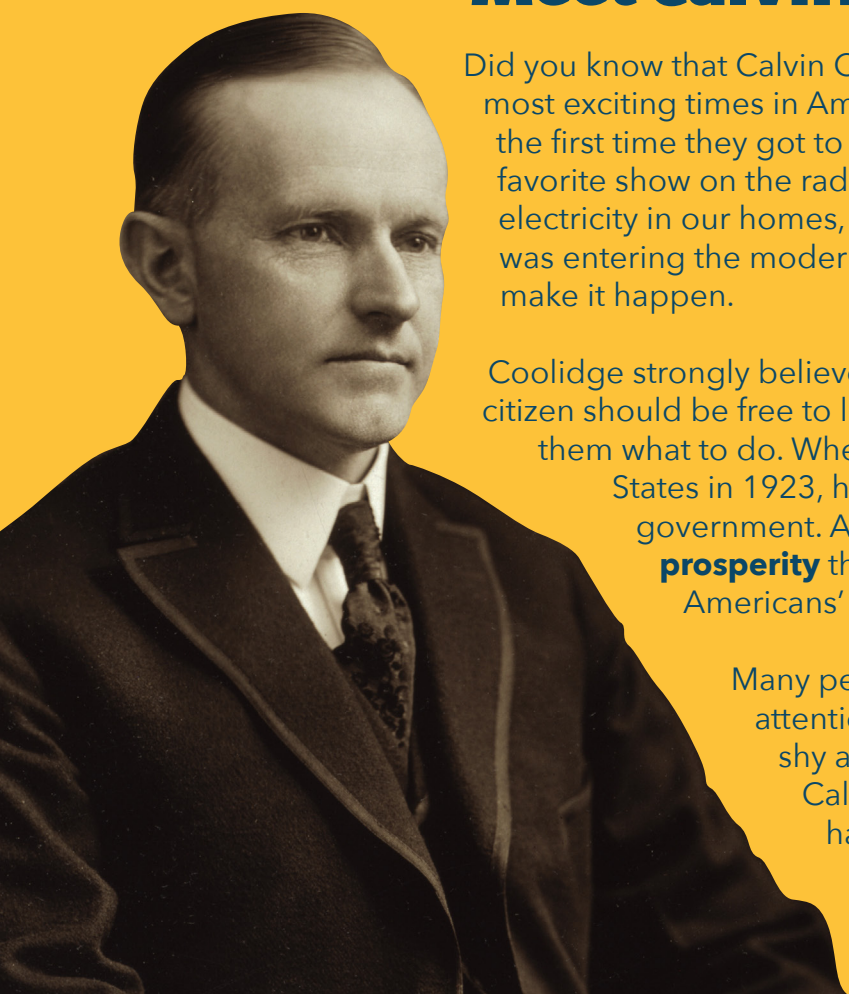
# Become a Presidential Historian by Solving This Puzzle

In this magazine, you'll learn all sorts of facts about Calvin Coolidge's amazing life and accomplishments. But there's still one last thing we need to know about him.  
We need your help to figure it out!

President Coolidge had a pet raccoon, but we need to find out what her name was. You can help us uncover the answer! Hidden in the text are bolded letters. Read this magazine carefully to find them, and fill the letters into the blanks below in the order they appear.

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Once you've solved this puzzle, you'll be a true PragerU Kids presidential historian!

## Meet Calvin Coolidge



Did you know that Calvin Coolidge served as **p**resident during one of the most exciting times in American history? For millions of people, it was the first time they got to drive a car, see an airplane fly, or listen to their favorite show on the radio. Many of the things we enjoy today, like electricity in our homes, became commonplace in the 1920s. America was entering the modern world, and Coolidge's leadership helped make it happen.

Coolidge strongly believed in America's founding principles—that every citizen should be free to live their lives without the government telling them what to do. When he became the 30th President of the United States in 1923, he worked to reduce the power of the government. As a result, the country enjoyed great **prosperity** throughout the 1920s, and millions of Americans' lives improved.

Many people in politics love to be the center of attention, but Coolidge was different. **H**e was a very shy and quiet man. He was even nicknamed "Silent Cal." The voters, however, admired him for his hard work and honesty, so they elected him to many positions in government. He overcame his shyness to become one of the most popular presidents in American history.

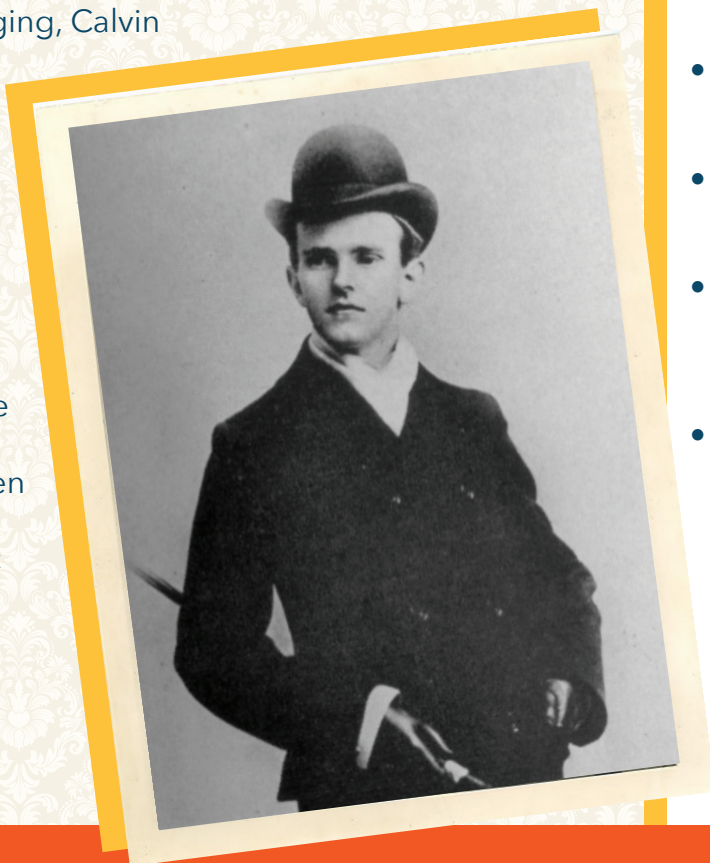
# Young Calvin

Calvin Coolidge was born on July 4, 1872, in Plymouth Notch, Vermont. He was the oldest son of John and Victoria Coolidge. He had a younger sister named Abigail, who he called "Abbie." His father was a hardworking farmer and store owner and even served in politics for the state of Vermont.

Young Calvin helped his family out by doing chores. At first, he didn't seem to stand out from his peers. He was very shy and an average student at school. He did, however, love to read and while in high school, developed an interest in public speaking. He was even chosen to give a speech during his high school graduation.

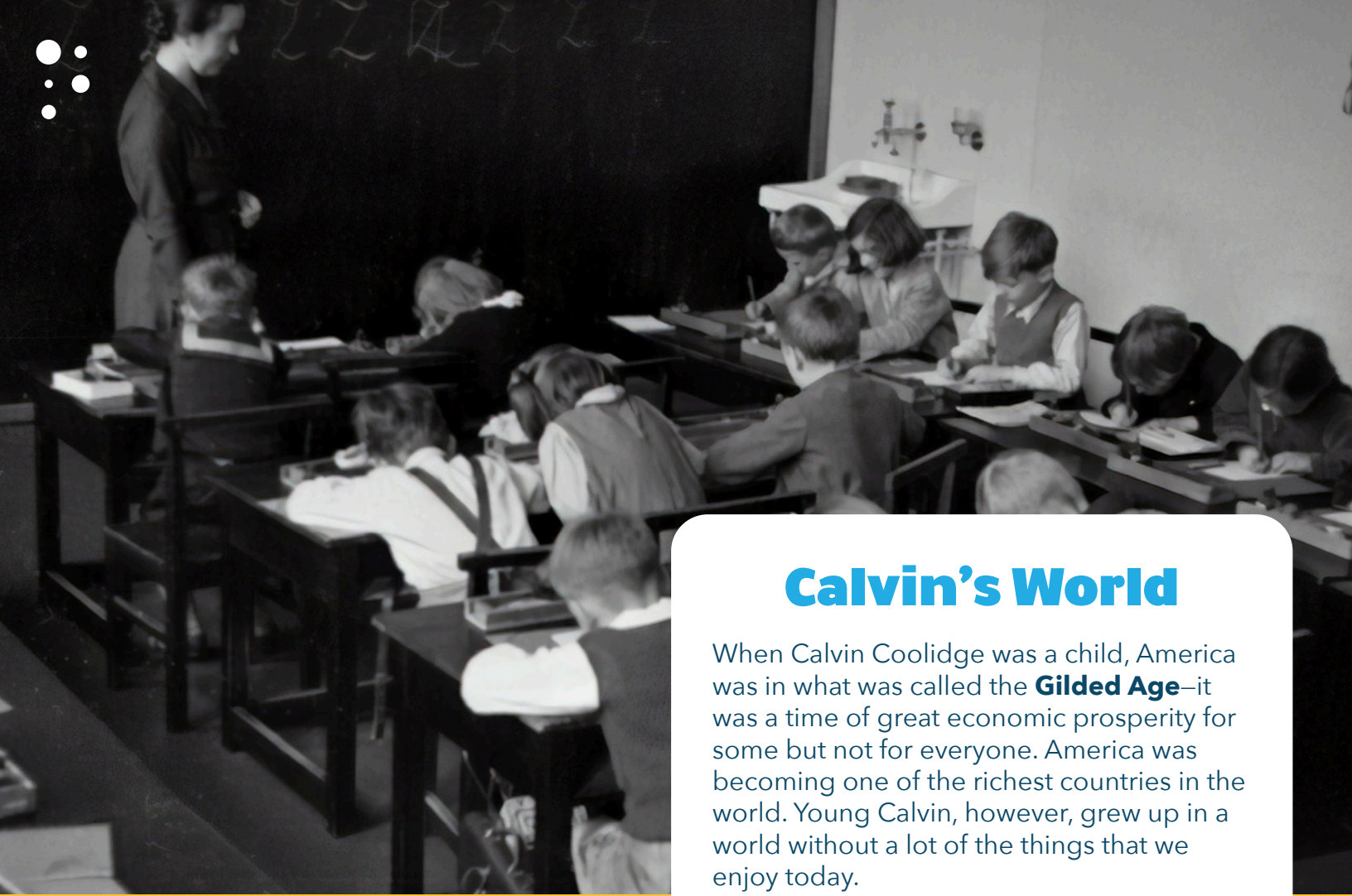
Like many families in the 19th century, the Coolidges experienced their share of tragedies. When Calvin was just 12 years old, his mother died of what some believe was tuberculosis. About five years later, Calvin lost his sister Abbie from what may have been appendicitis. Calvin was very sad about their deaths. While he was away at school in Ludlow, Vermont, he wrote to his father, "it is lonely here without Abbie."

From his upbringing, Calvin learned the importance of working hard and spending money wisely. He believed that one should live within their means and not get into **debt**. He would apply these values when he grew up and became a public official.



## Interesting Facts

- His full name was John Calvin Coolidge, Jr., but he went by Calvin.
- He was a member of the Republican Party.
- He is the only president (as of 2023) to share a birthday with the United States.
- He is the only president (as of 2023) to be sworn into office by his father.
- He had many pets: cats named Climber and Tiger, lion cubs named Budget Bureau and Tax Reduction, and a collie named Rob Roy. Later, he had a pet raccoon! Have you discovered her name?
- He balanced the budget every year he was president.
- He was the first president to visit Cuba while president.
- He granted citizenship to all Native Americans in the United States.
- During his presidency, Calvin Coolidge had his son, Calvin Jr., work at a tobacco farm. One of Calvin Jr.'s coworkers said, "If the president was my father, I wouldn't be working here." Calvin Jr. replied, "If my father were your father, you would."



## Calvin's World

When Calvin Coolidge was a child, America was in what was called the **Gilded Age**—it was a time of great economic prosperity for some but not for everyone. America was becoming one of the richest countries in the world. Young Calvin, however, grew up in a world without a lot of the things that we enjoy today.

People didn't have cell phones or laptops. There was no such thing as the Internet, social media, or video games. Many families didn't even have running water or electricity in their homes. They had to use gas or kerosene lamps for lighting. Nowadays, most families have cars. That wasn't the case back then. People had to walk or ride on horses and mules to get to work. Kids who lived on farms often had to walk several miles to school.

Schools sometimes were held in just one room. Kids spent a lot of time not just at school and doing homework but also helping out on the farm. They would help plow and plant crops, tend the farm animals, help preserve food, churn butter, do the laundry, and help raise young siblings.

## The Bookshelf

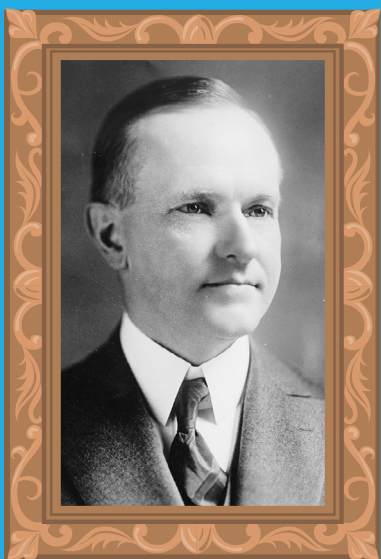
In the late 1800s, kids didn't have movies or TV shows to watch, but they enjoyed books like *Gulliver's Travels*, *Swiss Family Robinson*, *Treasure Island*, and *Heidi*.



# Education, Family, and Early Career

After Calvin graduated from high school, he enrolled in Amherst College in Massachusetts in 1891. At Amherst College, Calvin learned more about politics. His family supported the Republican Party, and his studies only confirmed his **conservative** beliefs. Again, he was shy toward his classmates, earned a reputation for being a very good public speaker, and was chosen to speak at the graduation ceremony.

After finishing college, Calvin became a lawyer. In 1903, he met a woman named Grace Goodhue, who was a teacher at a local school for the deaf. They met when they were neighbors, and Grace accidentally spotted him through a window at his house while he was shaving. They married in 1905 and would eventually have two children, John and Calvin Jr.



## Quote

*"For almost a quarter of a century she has borne with my infirmities, and I have rejoiced in her graces."  
- Coolidge referring to his wife, Grace Coolidge, November 1929*

## Rise to Power

Eventually, Coolidge entered politics, just like his father. He became the mayor of his hometown, Northampton, Massachusetts. As mayor, he focused on cutting spending and went through the **city's budget** line by line to get rid of waste. The people of his city were grateful when he lowered their **taxes**. When he was elected to the Massachusetts state legislature, he supported several pieces of modern legislation, such as giving women the right to vote, but he opposed the **radical** parts of the **progressive** movement. He felt that many labor groups, like the Industrial Workers of the World, were trying to transform America into a **socialist** country.

In 1915, Coolidge became a top leader in Massachusetts when he was elected as the lieutenant governor. He was so popular in the state that three years later, he ran for governor and won.

# National Figure

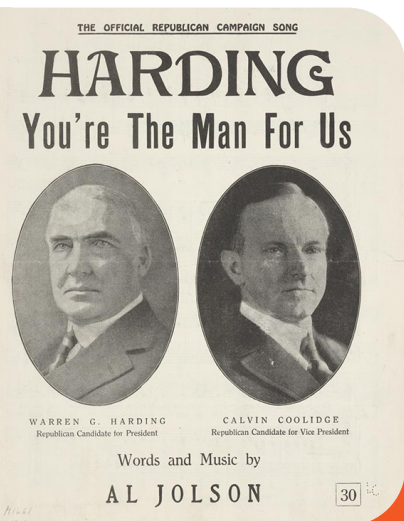
During Coolidge's time as governor, the United States was going through a lot of problems. Radical progressives were trying to stir up violence and destroy the country. In 1917, radicals called Bolsheviks took over Russia, the biggest country in the world, and turned it into a **communist state**. Some feared that this same thing was happening in America. In 1919, radicals convinced workers in Seattle to go on strike, which paralyzed the city.

As governor, Coolidge remained calm and acted decisively. He wrote a message announcing, "There is no right to strike against the public safety by anybody, anywhere, any time," and sent in the state militia to restore order. Many Americans were scared by all of the violence but impressed by Coolidge's leadership.

The Republican Party was also impressed and chose Coolidge to be its vice presidential candidate in 1920, alongside its presidential candidate Warren G. Harding. That November, Harding and Coolidge were elected in a **landslide**.

As vice president, Coolidge was very loyal to President Harding and supported his policies. Unfortunately, Harding died of a heart attack on August 2, 1923.

Next, they encouraged Boston police officers to strike; they did in September 1919. This left the city of Boston unprotected against robbers and crooks. Violence broke out, and several innocent Bostonians were killed.



## Civil Rights for All

During Coolidge's presidency, the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) grew and even held a march in Washington, D.C. in 1925. Coolidge opposed the racism that the KKK represented and spoke out in favor of civil rights, especially for black Americans. He praised black servicemembers in World War I, saying, "The black man showed himself the same kind of citizen, moved by the same kind of patriotism, as the white man."

## Quote

"The chief business of the American people is business. They are profoundly concerned with producing, buying, selling, investing, and prospering in the world."  
- January 1925



# President

In 1923, Calvin Coolidge became the President of the United States. He had a lot of problems to solve. President Woodrow Wilson had spent a lot of money during World War I, and the country was in massive debt. Coolidge felt it was unfair to build up debt because future generations would have to pay for it.

He and his top budget officer, Herbert Lord, went through the government's budget line by line and cut everything that was wasteful and unnecessary. They found that there was a lot to cut. He even got mad at the White House housekeeper for spending too much money on ham for a formal dinner. It showed that Coolidge was willing to make the same sacrifices in his own home that he asked others to make.

Coolidge also felt the government was taking too much of the people's money in taxes. He cut taxes in 1924 and again in 1926. Since people were able to keep more of the money they worked hard to earn, they were able to buy more things. This meant that people making things had more money, too. Everyone had more money, and the economy boomed.

The American people were very happy. They elected Coolidge president in a landslide in 1924. They felt confident about their country. They were proud when a young pilot named Charles Lindbergh amazed the world in 1927 and became the first person to fly across the Atlantic Ocean by himself. Lindbergh's feat seemed to show that Americans could achieve anything they wanted.

Coolidge was so popular that many people hoped he would run for re-election in 1928, but he shocked everyone when he announced that he would not be a candidate for president again. One of Coolidge's Cabinet members, Herbert Hoover, was elected president to replace him. Even though they came from the same party, Coolidge worried Hoover might raise taxes and ruin the strong economy.



## Tragedy in the White House

In 1924, the Coolidges suffered a devastating tragedy when their 16-year-old son, Calvin Jr., died. He suffered blood poisoning after playing tennis at the White House and getting a blister on his foot. President Coolidge later wrote, "When he went, the power and the glory of the presidency went with him."

### Quote

*"The appropriation of public money always is perfectly lovely until someone is asked to pay the bill."  
- August 1930*



Charles Lindbergh, the first person to fly across the Atlantic Ocean alone.

# Retirement

Calvin Coolidge left the presidency in March 1929. His concerns about Hoover became evident after the stock market crashed in October 1929, and Hoover raised taxes and spent a lot of government money. This took money away from the American people. This and several other decisions ended up destroying the economy and causing the **Great Depression**. Millions of Americans lost their jobs and their homes. They remembered the days of Coolidge's presidency when they had great prosperity.

In 1932, the American people rejected Hoover and elected Franklin D. Roosevelt as president. He had promised to cut government spending but would eventually change his mind. Meanwhile, Coolidge remained active and even wrote articles for a newspaper. He was sad that America had ruined its economy by abandoning his policies. On January 5, 1933, Calvin Coolidge died at the age of 60 at his home in Northampton.

## Quote

*"To live under the American Constitution is the greatest political privilege that was ever accorded to the human race."  
- December 1924*

## Legacy

Thanks to Calvin Coolidge, America had more economic opportunities than ever before. Millions of Americans had good jobs and could support their families. For the first time, many of them could afford to buy cars and homes. Businessmen and inventors had the freedom to create new products that Americans could enjoy.

A few months after Coolidge retired from the presidency, the **Stock Market** crashed. After that, Americans were in the worst economic depression in their country's history. Some argue that Coolidge's policies led to the Great Depression and that he should have used the government to prevent it. Others point to government actions after Coolidge left office that made the Depression so devastating. Coolidge's defenders say that had his successors followed his example, millions of Americans would not have lost their jobs and suffered through so much.

Even though people have different opinions about Calvin Coolidge, it is clear that he had great faith in the American people to make their own decisions. To this day, millions of Americans celebrate the 1920s as a time of great excitement and opportunity.





# Consider

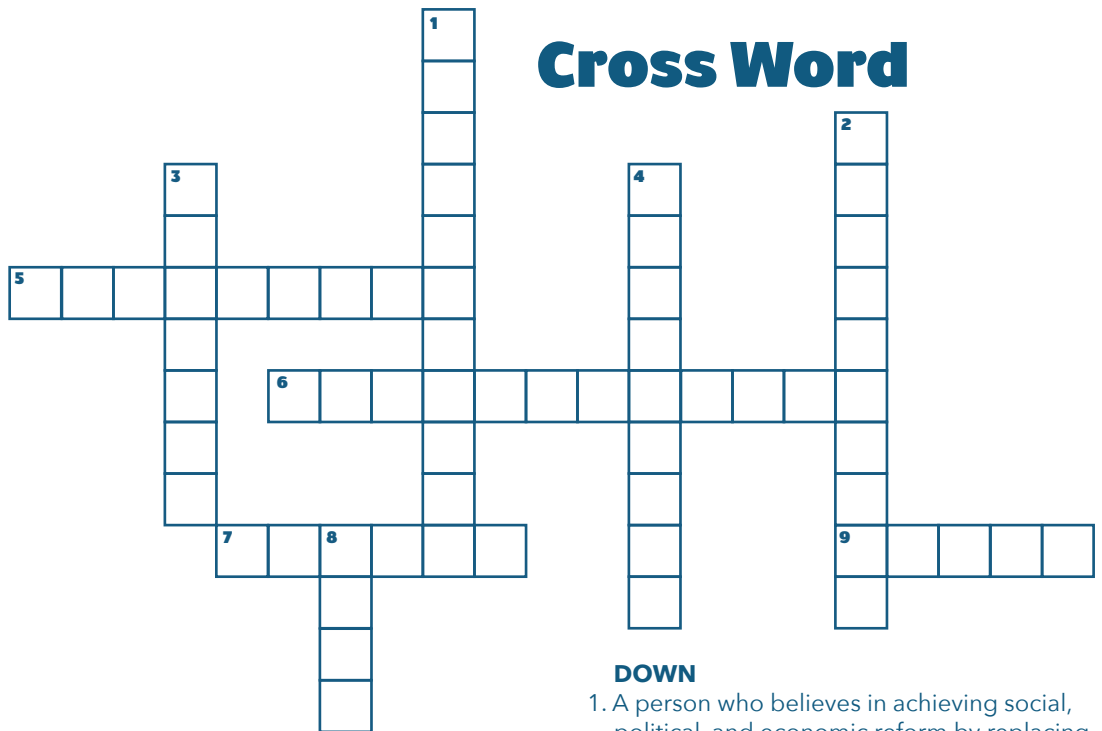
Coolidge believed that every citizen should be free to live their lives without the government telling them what to do. What do you think? Should the government tell citizens how to live their lives? Give three specific examples to back up your argument.

Lined writing area for the 'Consider' section.

## Silent but Funny

Although Coolidge was known for being a man of few words, he made the most of them. According to a famous anecdote, during a dinner party, a woman sitting next to him said she made a bet that she could get more than two words out of him. His response: "You lose."

## Cross Word



### ACROSS

- 5. An election where the winner wins by a large number of votes.
- 6. A person who believes in the Founding Fathers' principles that government should be limited and should focus on protecting citizens' freedoms.
- 7. The plan or record of the amount of money that a person or organization spends and receives.
- 9. Money that the government takes from the people so that it can function.

### DOWN

- 1. A person who believes in achieving social, political, and economic reform by replacing the Founding Fathers' principles with new ideas and a more powerful government.
- 2. A period of time when the economy is strong, and people have a lot of money and good jobs.
- 3. A person who wants to transform the political, economic, and social system of the country through extreme policies.
- 4. A person who believes that no one should be able to own anything individually and the government should control the economy.
- 8. The total amount of money that a person or organization has borrowed from others.

# Glossary

**Prosperity:** A period of time when the economy is strong, and people have a lot of money and good jobs.

**Debt:** The total amount of money that a person or organization has borrowed from others.

**Gilded Age:** The time in American history after the Civil War when the nation enjoyed great prosperity; gilded refers to something cheap being covered in a thin gold coating, which some felt was symbolic of America at the time, where great wealth masked many problems.

**Conservative:** A person who believes that government should be limited and allow people to freely live their lives.

**Budget:** The plan or record of the amount of money that a person or organization spends and receives.

**Taxes:** Money that the government takes from the people so that it can function.

**Radical:** A person who wants to transform the political, economic, and social system of the country through extreme policies.

**Progressive:** A person who believes in achieving social, political, and economic reform by replacing the Founding Fathers' principles with new ideas and a more powerful government.

**Socialist:** A person who believes that no one should be able to own anything individually and the government should control the economy.

**Communist State:** A country where the government controls every aspect of the people's lives and where individuals cannot own anything by themselves.

**Landslide:** An election where the winner wins by a large number of votes.

**Great Depression:** The time in American history, starting 1929 and continuing throughout the 1930s, when the economy had collapsed and millions of people didn't have jobs.

**Stock Market:** The part of the economy where people can invest and own parts of companies to make money.

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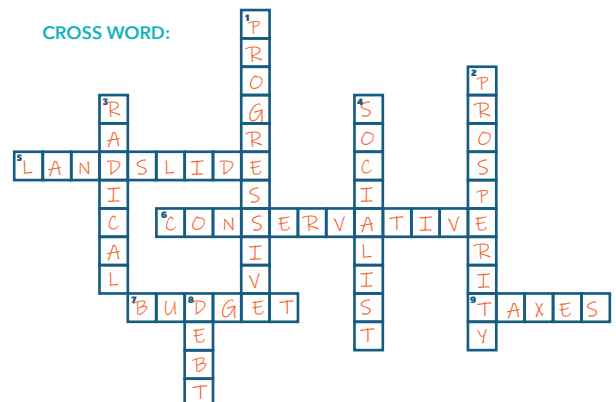
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## Answers

CROSS WORD:



COOLIDGE'S PET RACCOON:  
REBECCA