

# presidents of the *United States of America*

"I was the 29th President of the United States and led America during the Roaring Twenties."



**Warren G. Harding**

# Become a Presidential Historian by Solving This Puzzle

In this magazine, you'll learn all sorts of facts about Warren G. Harding's amazing life and accomplishments. But there's still one last thing we need to know about him.

President Harding had a dog, but your task is to find out what his 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.

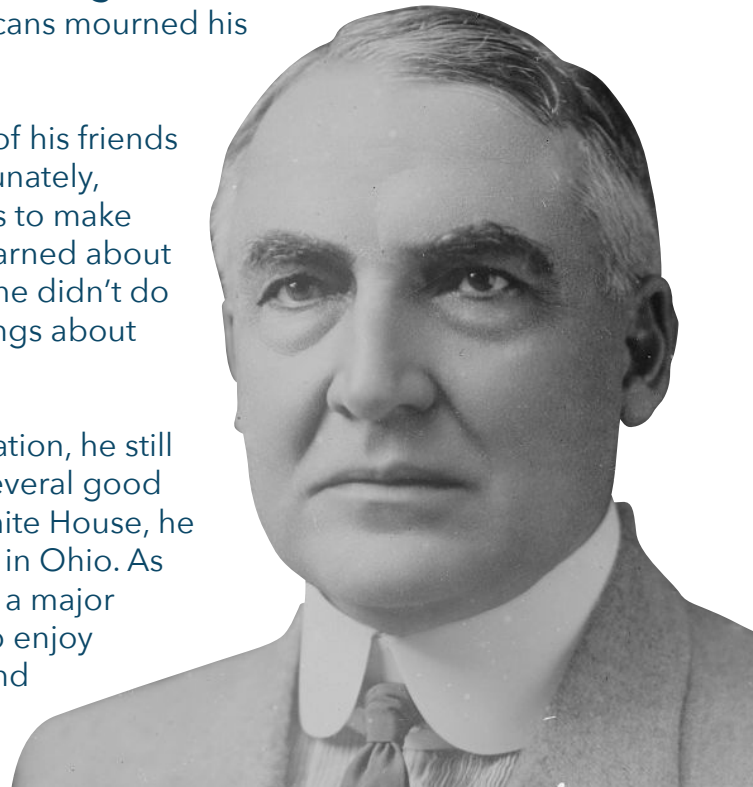
Once you've solved this puzzle, you'll be a true PragerU Kids presidential historian!

## Meet Warren G. Harding

Did you know that Warren G. Harding was one of America's most be**l**oved presidents? He was tall and considered quite handsome and **charismatic**. Wherever he went, people loved him. In 1920, the American people overwhelmingly elected him to the White House in one of the biggest landslide victories in U.S. history. As president, he cut taxes for the American people and reduced government spending, which helped spark the great **prosperity** of the 1920s, a decade known as the **Roaring Twenties**. When he died in office in 1923, millions of Americans mourned his passing.

During his presidency, **H**arding appointed many of his friends to important positions in the government. Unfortunately, several of these friends tried to use their positions to make money illegally. After Harding died, Americans learned about these scandals, and they were disappointed that he didn't do more to stop his corrupt friends. Their warm feelings about President Harding changed quickly.

Although the scandals damaged **H**arding's reputation, he still accomplished many things in his life and made several good decisions as president. Before his terms in the White House, he was a successful newspaper **e**ditor and politician in Ohio. As president, Harding helped pull the country out of a major depression. This enabled millions of Americans to enjoy more economic opportunities than ever before and improve their lives.



# Young Warren

Warren G. Harding was born on November 2, 1865 months after the end of the American Civil War. He was the oldest of George and Phoebe's eight children. Warren's father, George, served in the Union Army during the Civil War, as a musician. He played an instrument called the fife and was also a **d**rummer. At one point, he met President Abraham Lincoln while visiting the White House. George later became a teacher and a doctor. Warren's mother, Phoebe, was a **midwife**. Some historians believe that Phoebe predicted little Warren would one day become President of the United States. Warren grew up in a warm and loving household.



## Interesting Facts

- His full name was Warren Gamaliel Harding.
- He was a member of the Republican Party.
- He was the first president born after the American Civil War.
- He is the only president (as of 2023) to be elected to the White House on his birthday.
- He was the first U.S. senator to be directly elected to the presidency.
- He was elected during the first presidential election in which women could vote.
- He won the presidency by the widest popular vote percentage margin since 1820.

Warren Harding was elected during the first presidential election in which women could vote!

## Education, Family, and Early Career

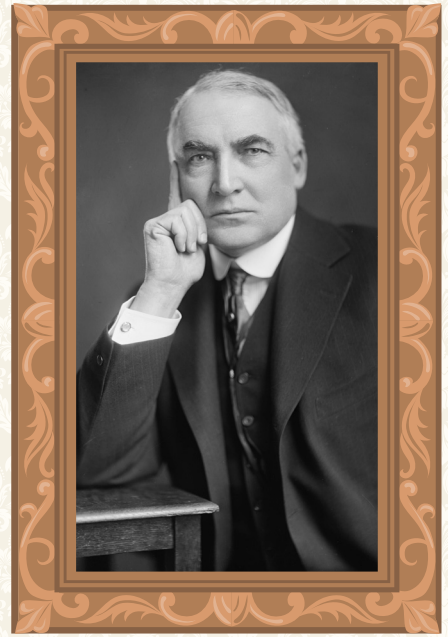
As a teenager, Warren found his calling: he wanted to work in the newspaper business. When he enrolled in Ohio Central College, he started a campus newspaper. After graduating in 1882, he moved to Marion, a small city in Ohio.

In 1884 when he was 18 years old, he and some friends bought a dying newspaper, the Marion Star. Thanks to Harding's hard work, the newspaper became popular again and attracted many readers. Harding became the Marion Star's editor and wrote many **editorials**, where he discussed the important political issues in Ohio and across the country.

Harding became more and more interested in politics. He and his family were loyal supporters of the Republican Party. The Harding family began supporting the Republican Party during the Civil War because it opposed slavery. Harding also believed that the Republican Party's conservative economic policies helped the United States prosper, providing millions of American jobs. Harding wrote editorials explaining his beliefs in conservative Republican policies. These editorials also helped Harding think through difficult political issues and learn how to communicate his ideas to the public.

As more people read his newspaper articles, Harding became well-known in Marion. He was asked to speak at important events, and he impressed people with his speeches. He soon was one of the most popular people in the town.

Harding also met someone special. He had fallen in love with a piano teacher named Florence Mabel Kling. She was a strong-willed, independent woman, while he was more relaxed. Together, they complemented each other. She nicknamed him "Sonny," and he nicknamed her "the boss" and "the duchess." They married in 1891.



### Quote

*"America's present need  
is not heroics, but  
healing; not nostrums,  
but normalcy."  
- May 1920*

# Rise to Power



Harding's popularity and speaking abilities led many people in Ohio to believe he could succeed in politics. In 1899, he ran for the Ohio state senate as a Republican and won. When he arrived in the state legislature, he won over many friends and became a rising star in Ohio politics.

At the time, the Republicans were divided between the progressives, who wanted new policies to deal with new, modern problems, and conservatives, who believed that traditional American policies would continue helping the country prosper. Although Harding was a conservative, he was one of the few who had friends on both sides. He rose further, getting elected Ohio's Lieutenant Governor in 1903, and then to represent the state in the U.S. Senate in 1914.

Mr. and Mrs. Harding moved to Washington, D.C., so that he could take up his seat in the Senate. As usual, Harding made many friends in the nation's capital. At the time, Democrat President Woodrow Wilson was in the White House and signing progressive policies into law. Harding opposed many of them, but he supported **women's suffrage**. He also began planning to run for president in 1920.

Under Wilson's leadership, the United States had entered World War I in Europe. Over 110,000 Americans had died fighting in Europe. The nation's economy was also in a depression by 1920. The American people were exhausted and yearned for the simpler life they had enjoyed before the war. Harding ran for president, promising a "return to **normalcy**," something the Americans desperately wanted.

In June 1920, Harding won the Republican nomination and became their candidate for president. That November, he and his running-mate, Calvin Coolidge, won the election by one of the greatest landslide victories in American history.

## Quote

*"All human ills are not curable by legislation. The problems of maintained civilization are not to be solved by a transfer of responsibility from citizenship to government."  
- May 1920*



# President

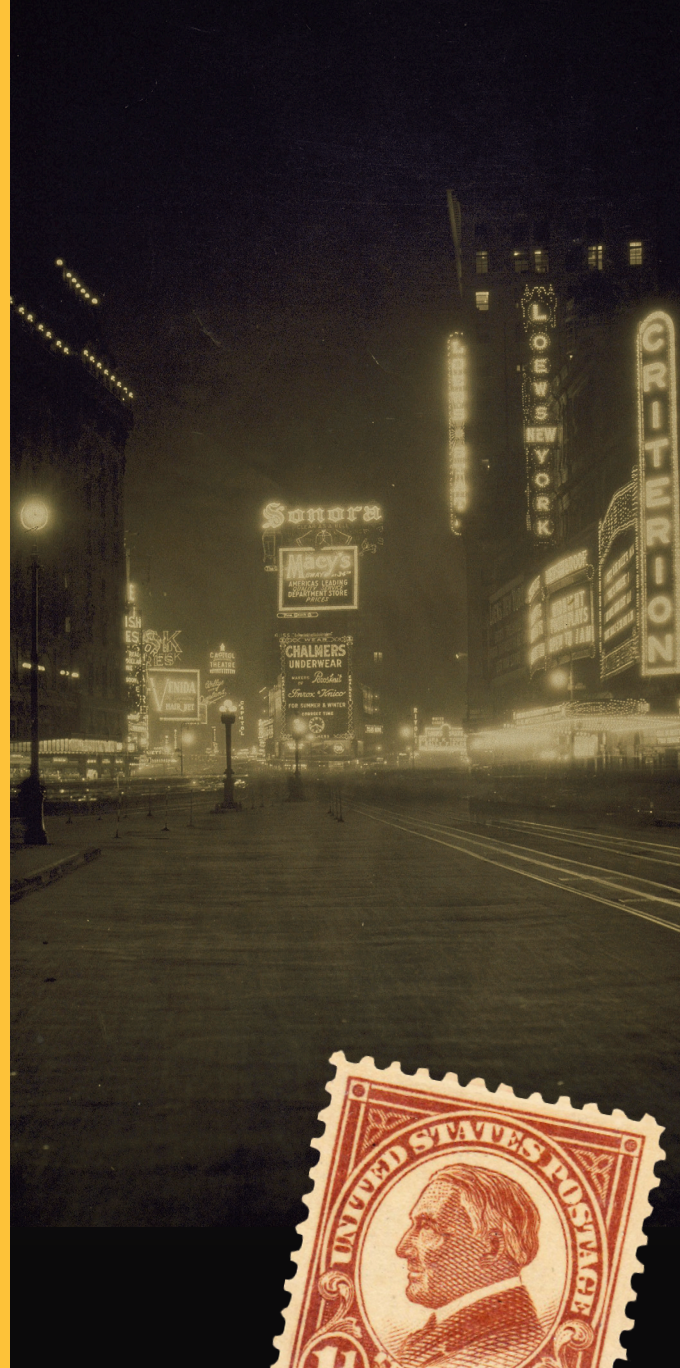
Harding's first priority as president was to revive the economy. Harding believed the depression was caused, in part, because President Wilson had increased government spending and raised taxes on the American people. This took money away from individual Americans, preventing them from buying homes and starting businesses.

Harding worked very hard to cut taxes and government spending, which allowed Americans to keep more of the money they earned. Soon, they could buy new products and build a better life. A few months into his presidency, the depression ended, and the country, as a whole, prospered for the rest of the 1920s.

Harding wanted to make sure that he kept a close eye on government spending, so in his first year as president, he signed a law creating the Bureau of the Budget. This helped the federal government better plan how much money to spend. Harding used the Bureau to reduce waste in the government. Today, the Bureau still exists and is called the Office of Management and Budget.

Harding also worked to prevent another world war. He organized the Washington Naval Conference from November 1921 to February 1922, where the world's most powerful countries agreed to limit how many warships they could have. By building fewer ships, the American government saved more money.

Unfortunately, during this whole time, many of Harding's advisors were corrupt and making money illegally through their positions in government. One of them, Secretary of Interior Albert Fall, took **bribes** from oil businessmen in exchange for access to a government oil field called Teapot Dome. Harding became very worried when he heard rumors of these scandals. His health declined, and he died of a heart attack on August 2, 1923, in San Francisco, California at the age of 57. His Vice President, Calvin Coolidge, became the new president.



## Quote

*"Our most dangerous tendency is to expect too much of government, and at the same time do for it too little."  
- March 1921*

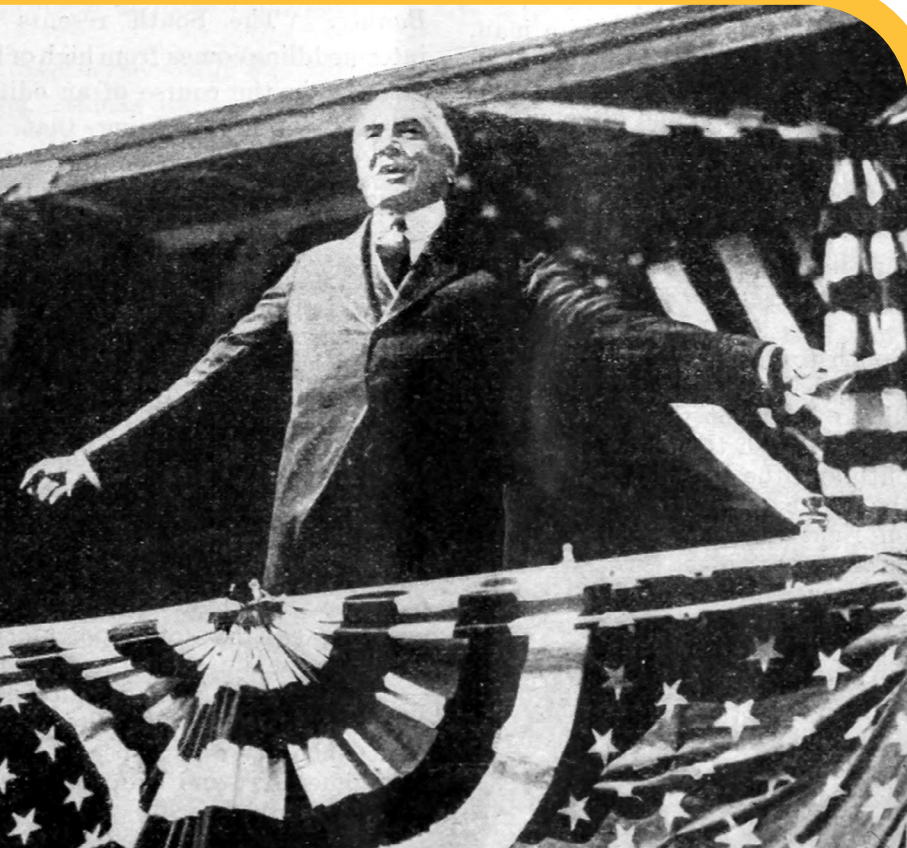
# Roaring Twenties

President Harding led America during one of its most colorful and exciting decades: the Roaring Twenties. It was an era of great change—when cars, radios, and movies became a part of everyday life. Americans began buying new consumer goods and appliances for their household, such as telephones. They were also excited by the new trends in popular culture, like the increasing popularity of jazz, dancing, and baseball. They waited in line to listen to Jazz legend Louis Armstrong, went to nightclubs to dance the Charleston, and paid money to watch baseball superstar Babe Ruth break records.



## Harding Speaks Out for Civil Rights

Although black American slaves were freed during the Civil War, many laws in the South continued to treat them unfairly. These laws restricted black Americans' right to vote and **segregated** them from white Americans. In October of 1921, Harding gave a courageous speech in the southern city of Birmingham, Alabama, in front of both black and white people, where he called for racial equality and protections for black Americans' right to vote. He also appointed many black people to important positions in his administration.





## Legacy

The American people were shocked and saddened at Harding's death. Afterwards, however, they learned about many scandals involving his administration, such as the Teapot Dome **scandal**. Although Harding wasn't the original cause of the scandals, Americans felt disappointed that he didn't stop all of the **corruption**. Ever since then, historians have been very harsh with Harding, calling him one of the least successful American presidents.

Although Harding did fail to discipline his advisors, it is often forgotten that Harding's actual policies ended a major depression and helped improve millions of Americans' lives. He also successfully cut government spending and the national debt. Few presidents in American history have ever so effectively led America through an economic crisis. Although Harding deserves criticism for how he managed his administration, he also deserves more credit for his successful policies.

## Quote

*"We meant to have less of government in business as well as more business in government."*

*- April 1921*



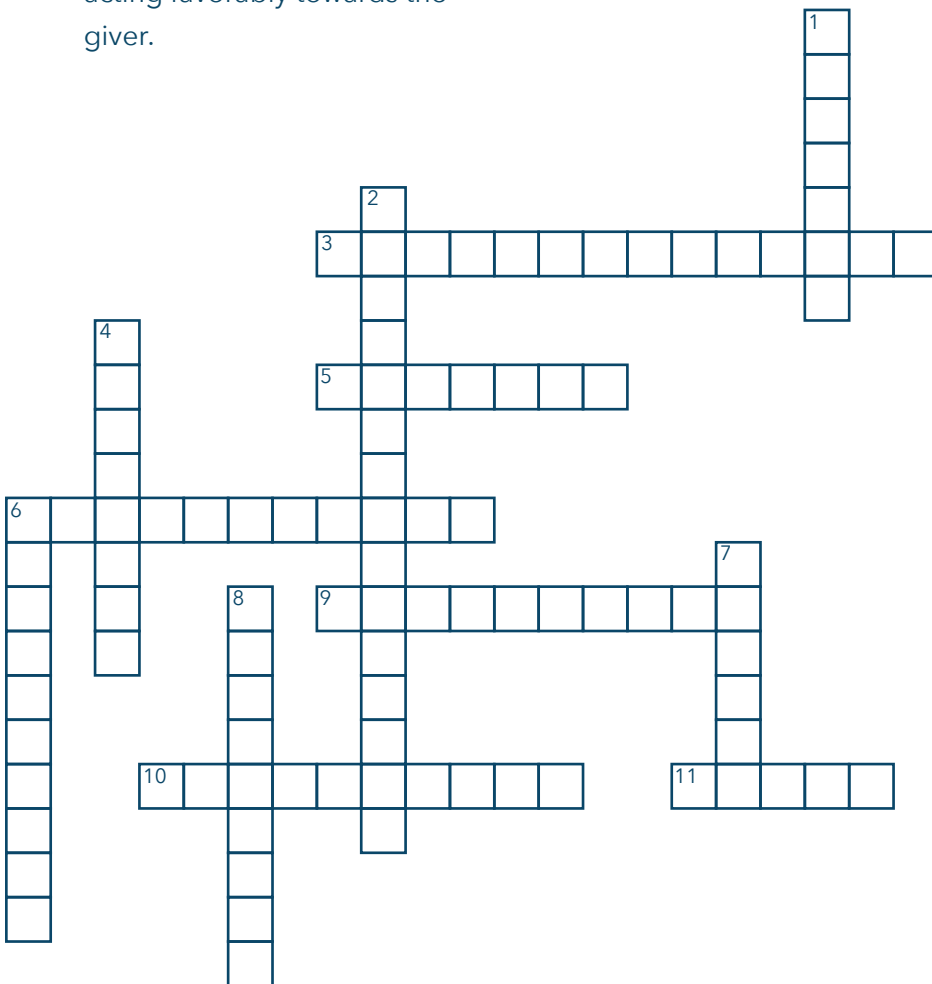
# Crossword

## ACROSS:

3. The right of women to vote.
5. A person who assists women during childbirth.
6. Having attractiveness or charm that inspires admiration and devotion from others.
9. When people are separated by race.
10. A period of time when the economy is strong, and people have a lot of money and good jobs.
11. A gift of money given to influence someone, usually illegally or dishonestly, into acting favorably towards the giver.

## DOWN:

1. An event involving dishonest and/or illegal activity that provokes outrage.
2. The nickname for the decade from 1920 to 1929.
4. A situation that is normal or predictable.
6. Dishonest, often illegal, activity where an individual seeks selfish gain.
7. A person who decides what is published in a newspaper, book, or magazine.
8. An article in a newspaper that expresses an opinion.



# Writing Activity

What modern-day inventions (such as cars, radios, and electronics) are you most grateful for and why?

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# Glossary

**Charismatic:** Having attractiveness or charm that inspires admiration and devotion from others.

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

**Roaring Twenties:** The nickname for the decade from 1920 to 1929. The Roaring Twenties are remembered for the great prosperity that began in the aftermath of World War I.

**Editor:** A person who decides what is published in a newspaper, book, or magazine.

**Midwife:** A person who assists women during childbirth.

**Editorial:** An article in a newspaper that expresses an opinion.

**Women's Suffrage:** The right of women to vote.

**Normalcy:** A situation that is normal or predictable.

**Bribe:** A gift of money given to influence someone, usually illegally or dishonestly, into acting favorably towards the giver.

**Scandal:** An event involving dishonest and/or illegal activity that provokes outrage.

**Corruption:** Dishonest, often illegal, activity where an individual seeks selfish gain.

**Segregated:** When people are separated by race.

# Sources

"America's Wars." Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Public Affairs, [https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/factsheets/fs\\_americas\\_wars.pdf/](https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/factsheets/fs_americas_wars.pdf/). Accessed 17 May 2022.

Anthony, Carl Sferrazza. *Florence Harding: The First Lady, the Jazz Age, and the Death of America's Most Scandalous President*. William Morrow & Co, 1998.

Trani, Eugene P. and David L. Wilson. *The Presidency of Warren G. Harding*. University Press of Kansas, 1977.

Images: Getty Images, WikiCommons

## Answers

CROSSWORD:

HARDING'S DOG:  
LADDIE BOY



President Harding and his dog, Laddie Boy