

To me, this photo goes hard. It captures a future American president meeting the current one. On one side, a 16-year old, so excited...perhaps even inspired so much by this very moment that he one day hopes to be a president himself. On the other side, a tired and stressed out president who...just months later...would be assassinated.¹

In case you didn't know, the 16-year old in the picture was Bill Clinton, a future president, and the president was John F. Kennedy. Clinton's favorite president is John F. Kennedy, so that's pretty cool that he got to meet him as a kid.

Who am I? Well, I'm Mr. Beat, and you likely already know who my favorite American president is. It's William Henry Harrison. Just kidding, it's George Washington, remember? What you really thought it was William Henry Harrison? Who do you think I am?

Anyway, did you know that presidents are people, too? It's true.

One reason why American presidents fascinate me so much is the fact that so many of them were just ordinary people who rose up to the most powerful position in the world. Some of them really did have humble beginnings. And hey...also...did you know that they all used to be children? And many of them grew up idolizing presidents. Huh. How about that! Often, presidents have a big influence on our worldviews, so it should be no surprise that future presidents looked up to presidents.

So how do we know who the favorite president was of every president? Well, sometimes they just straight up said it.

Or if they didn't just straight up say it, we know their favorite president by whom they referenced all the time. Wait holy crap. Look at that typo. Anyway, we also saw who their favorite president was by how they decorated the Oval Office. Or just through their policies and political beliefs. Sometimes, though, we don't have much evidence to rely on at all, so...in those cases...I'm just gonna guess.

In this video, we're looking at every president's favorite president. Heck, maybe we'll even look at every president's favorite president favorite president...if you're lucky, that is.

But first, let's talk about how your personal information is being sold by data brokers, and it's messed up.

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Fortunately, there's a solution to this! DeleteMe, a service I trust to keep your personal information private. DeleteMe removes your personal info that's being sold online. Their privacy

¹ <https://www.biography.com/political-figures/john-f-kennedy-bill-clinton-handshake-1963>

²

<https://techpolicy.sanford.duke.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2023/11/Sherman-et-al-2023-Data-Brokers-and-the-Sale-of-Data-on-US-Military-Personnel.pdf>

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(Titlecard)

The first few presidents all pretty much just loved each other. I mean, there was a rough patch in the late 1790s, but otherwise yeah. Not one of them, of course, said they had a favorite president. That actually would have been a weird thing to say in 1804.

But George Washington often said many nice things about John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison, although as partisanship heated up in the 1790s he did begin to critique Jefferson and Madison, in particular. And Washington surely preferred John Adams over the other two since, ya know, he WAS his Vice President. Plus, Washington served in the Adams administration as Command-in-Chief of the armed forces.

So I guess George Washington's favorite president was...John Adams? That's a weird thing to say, though, especially since Adams was the only president Washington ever saw in office other than himself. And he only saw Adams as President for less than three years!

John Adams and Thomas Jefferson were famously best friends, then worst enemies, as mostly demonstrated in their presidential campaigns against each other, and then best friends again later in life. But despite them ultimately making up, all the evidence I've seen suggests that they would both say Washington was the best president if asked.³⁴ That said, Jefferson also greatly respected his buddy James Madison, the president who had very similar policies as him. In fact, the eight years Madison served as president after the eight years Jefferson served as president were strikingly similar. It was basically 16 years straight of one administration, man. And yep, Madison looked up to Jefferson, not just literally since he was nearly a foot taller than him, but because Jefferson had often been a mentor to him.⁵ For this reason, I'd argue Madison's favorite president was Jefferson.

James Monroe's favorite president was likely Thomas Jefferson. Not only was he good friends with him, but he constantly sought his advice.⁶ Heck, at one point they were neighbors. Monroe

³ <https://www.mountvernon.org/george-washington/the-first-president/washington-vs-jefferson>

⁴ <https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/john-adams>

⁵ <https://www.monticello.org/exhibits-events/blog/a-dynamic-duo-jefferson-and-madison/>

⁶

<https://www.politico.com/story/2017/10/17/president-monroe-seeks-jeffersons-advice-oct-17-1823-243793>

once wrote to Jefferson, "I feel that whatever I am at present in the opinion of others or whatever I may be in (the) future has greatly arose from your friendship."⁷ Awwwww

John Quincy Adams clearly greatly respected and admired his father, John Adams. So...I know this seems clearly biased, but yeah, John Quincy Adams' favorite president was his dad. Duh! I mean, clearly JQ also loved George Washington, but everybody loved George just like everybody loves Raymond.

Andrew Jackson probably would have told you he didn't have a favorite president. But he was clearly a fan of Thomas Jefferson. The feeling wasn't mutual, I should say. Jefferson thought Jackson was terrifying and dangerous for the country.

Martin Van Buren grew up a fan of Thomas Jefferson, but many might argue that Andrew Jackson ultimately became his favorite president, mostly because Jackson listened to Van Buren. Seriously, Van Buren was one of Jackson's top advisors while he was president, and served under him as Secretary of State, Minister to the United Kingdom, and yep, Vice President. Heck, Van Buren helped start a brand new political party, the Democratic Party, completely built around Jackson's popularity. But I think people who say Jackson was Van Buren's favorite president are wrong. Van Buren used to not like Jackson, after all, and really just tried to mold Jackson into being like...him. Nah man, Van Buren's favorite president was Jefferson after all.

William Henry Harrison's favorite president was George Washington. At least, we can assume that since Washington was a family friend when Harrison was a kid.⁸⁹

John Tyler's favorite president was Thomas Jefferson. How do we know this? Well, THIS glowing letter he wrote to Jefferson on June 10, 1804 gives us pretty good insight. In it, Tyler kissed Jefferson's butt big time, saying stuff like "With a heart full of gratitude I declare to you how much delighted I am with the general Tenor of your Administration as the fruits of it are so productive of peace and Liberty at home and reputation abroad."¹⁰ Ok dude. Maybe you two should get a room.

James Polk was a huge fan of Andrew Jackson. He was one of Jackson's earliest political supporters, and he even advised Jackson on his presidential campaign in 1828. In the House of Representatives, Polk was arguably Jackson's most vocal supporter. As president, Polk seemingly went out of his way to govern like Jackson governed.

While we don't know for sure, my best guess is that Zachary Taylor's favorite president was George Washington. I mean, his dad had worked for Washington, and many of Taylor's political views echoed Washington's.

⁷ Monroe to Jefferson, September 9, 1780, in [PTJ](#), 9:622.

⁸ <https://www.loc.gov/resource/gdcmassbookdig.lifeofwilliamhenry00jackson/?st=gallery>

⁹ <https://encyclopediaofvirginia.org/entries/william-henry-harrison-1773-1841/>

¹⁰ <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-43-02-0461>

Millard Fillmore also loved George Washington, and we know this because he praised him on multiple occasions. We also know that he visited Washington's home of Mount Vernon and...heck...even signed a bill creating Washington Territory.

Franklin Pierce's favorite president was Andrew Jackson. In fact, Jackson was so influential on Pierce that he inspired HIM to first enter politics in 1828.¹¹

It's pretty clear that James Buchanan's favorite president was George Washington, and that's rooted in his mother's love of Washington. His mom even named Buchanan's brother George Washington...Buchanan. As president, Buchanan made multiple trips to Mount Vernon, once saying that Washington's time as president "was characterized by such wisdom and virtue that, after the strictest examination, it is now admitted to be the most proper guide."¹²

It's weird to me to think that the guy who most historians consider to be the GREATEST American president actually even had a favorite president. But he did.

As far as we can tell, Abraham Lincoln's favorite president was...you probably guessed it already...George Washington. In fact, Lincoln believed that Washington should be remembered as having no flaws whatsoever. "It makes human nature better to believe that one human being was perfect, that human perfection is possible," Lincoln once said of Washington.¹³

Andrew Johnson's favorite president was likely Andrew Jackson. According to the historian Annette Gordon-Reed, Jackson was Johnson's "hero" and he "admired him greatly."¹⁴

And now we get to all the Abraham Lincoln fanboys.

Ulysses Grant loved Abraham Lincoln. At his funeral, Grant said, "to know him personally was to love and respect him for his great qualities of heart and head, and for his patience and patriotism."¹⁵ Grant, of course, had worked closely with Lincoln as his leading general during the American Civil War. In fact, their partnership pretty much saved the Union.¹⁶

¹¹ <https://millercenter.org/president/pierce/life-before-the-presidency>

¹² <https://www.lancasterhistory.org/james-buchanan-george-washington-fanboy/>

¹³ Goodwin, Doris Kearns. *Team of Rivals : the Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*. New York :Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2006. Pg. 152

¹⁴ Gordon-Reed, Annette. *Andrew Johnson: The American Presidents Series: The 17th President, 1865-1869*. Times Books, 2011. Pgs. 35 & 40.

¹⁵

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Best_Writings_of_Ulysses_S_Grant/clFmCgAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=%E2%80%9CTo+know+him+personally+was+to+love+and+respect+him+for+his+great+qualities+of+heart+and+head,+and+for+his+patience+and+patriotism.%E2%80%9D&pg=PA142&printsec=frontcover

¹⁶

<https://www.abrahamlincolnsclassroom.org/abraham-lincolns-contemporaries/abraham-lincoln-and-ulysses-s-grant/>

The next two presidents were also Civil War heroes who also both greatly admired President Lincoln.

Rutherford Hayes also loved George Washington, but it's safe to say Lincoln's leadership during the Civil War deeply moved Hayes, which is why I'm going with HIM as his favorite president.¹⁷ James Garfield often spoke about the greatness of Lincoln. He even had Lincoln's oldest son, Robert Todd Lincoln, in his administration. Like Lincoln, Garfield was assassinated while serving. Crazy enough, Robert Todd Lincoln was with him when he got shot.¹⁸

It's unclear who Chester Arthur's favorite president was, but it's clear that he didn't like James Polk. As a young dude, he even got involved with a brawl against students who supported Polk in 1844.¹⁹ Still, there is at least some evidence that he liked Abraham Lincoln, especially since he kept Robert Todd Lincoln in his administration after Garfield was assassinated.

A loyal Democrat his entire life, Grover Cleveland's favorite president likely was Thomas Jefferson, although there's little evidence he brought him up much. However, he very much governed like Jefferson and had strikingly similar beliefs about government as Jefferson.²⁰

Benjamin Harrison is another Civil War veteran who loved Abraham Lincoln. As a young lawyer, he made more than 80 stump speeches for Lincoln during his presidential campaign in 1860.²¹ Harrison once wrote, "One should be very careful of his words when he attempts to say anything worthy of the illustrious Lincoln. I am sure if I were to attempt to write I should fall below the great theme."²²

William McKinley is yet another Civil War veteran who loved Lincoln. On February 12, 1896, he gave a speech in Chicago honoring Lincoln, saying "the Martyr of Liberty, the Emancipator of a Race, the Savior of the only free Government among men, may be buried from human sight, but his deeds will live in human gratitude forever."²³

And the next two presidents loved Lincoln, too.

On June 13, 1906, Theodore Roosevelt said, "I do not have to tell you that my great hero is Abraham Lincoln, and I have wanted while President to be the representative of the 'plain

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<https://www.shapell.org/manuscript/rutherford-b-hayes-on-abraham-lincoln-assassination-april-15-1865/#:~:text=Compelled%20by%20the%20date%20and,his%20was%20the%20very%20highest.>

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¹⁹ Reeves, Thomas C. (1975). *Gentleman Boss: The Life of Chester A. Arthur*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. ISBN 978-0-394-46095-6.

²⁰ Senik, Troy. *A Man of Iron: The Turbulent Life and Improbably Presidency of Grover Cleveland*. Threshold Editions.

²¹ <https://www.shapell.org/manuscript/young-benjamin-harrison-writes-lincoln-about-spoils-due-indiana/>

²² <https://www.shapell.org/manuscript/benjamin-harrison-on-abraham-lincoln/#transcripts>

²³ <https://archive.org/details/abrahamlincolnad01mcki/page/26/mode/2up>

people' in the sense that he was - not, of course, with the genius and power that he was, but according to my lights, along the same lines."²⁴ Yep, Teddy got all humble all of sudden when referring to Honest Abe.

And Teddy's protege, William Taft, equally praised Lincoln.²⁵ On February 11, 1911, he signed a bill into law approving of the building of the now iconic Lincoln Memorial. And then later as Chief Justice, on May 30, 1922 he dedicated it. "The American people have waited fifty-seven years for a national memorial to Abraham Lincoln. Those years have faded the figures of his contemporaries and he stands grandly alone. His life and character in the calmer and juster vista of half a century inspire a higher conception of what is suitable to commemorate him."²⁶

Dang, it just seemed like everybody loves Raymond, I mean Lincoln. That is, until THIS guy (looking over with scowl) showed up.

Woodrow Wilson wasn't so much a Lincoln fan. HIS favorite president was Thomas Jefferson. On April 13, 1916, he said, "The immortality of Thomas Jefferson does not lie in any one of his achievements, or in the series of his achievements, but in his attitude towards mankind and the conception which he sought to realize in action of the service owed by America to the rest of the world...Thomas Jefferson was a great leader of men because he understood and interpreted the spirits of men."²⁷

Alright, back to Lincoln.

Warren Harding's favorite president was Lincoln. On February 20, 1923, he said of Lincoln, "It was the moral intensity of this one man which, more than anything else, made the men of his time appear to us as giants."²⁸

While Calvin Coolidge often spoke highly of Lincoln as well^{29,30}, I'd argue his favorite president was actually George Washington.³¹ On Washington's 199th birthday in 1931....oh, in case you were wondering, Washington was dead by then...newspapers published this little bit of wisdom by Coolidge. "His public life was characterized by complete unselfishness. Indifferent to his own

²⁴ <https://www.shapell.org/manuscript/president-theodore-roosevelt-on-abraham-lincoln/>

²⁵ <https://www.shapell.org/manuscript/william-howard-taft-on-abraham-lincoln/>

²⁶ <https://www.rrauction.com/auctions/lot-detail/345835406350018-william-h-taft-signed-lincoln-memorial-speech>

²⁷ <https://www.monticello.org/research-education/thomas-jefferson-encyclopedia/notable-comments-jefferson-20th-century/>

²⁸ <https://www.shapell.org/manuscript/president-harding-declares-abraham-lincoln-pinnacle-of-golden-age-american-statesmans/>

²⁹ <https://coolidgefoundation.org/resources/the-place-of-lincoln/#:~:text=In%20the%20greatness%20of%20Lincoln,they%20beheld%20their%20better%20selves.>

³⁰ <https://www.shapell.org/manuscript/president-calvin-coolidge-interest-in-abraham-lincoln/>

³¹ <https://coolidgefoundation.org/resources/calvin-coolidge-says-february-20-1931/>

fortunes, his only concern was for his country. He needed no pretense and no art. He was simply and naturally great. From every avenue of approach we find a complete man. In all his actions he was precise, accurate, methodical.”³² Coolidge was famously a man of few words, but boy did he say a lot with those few words you just heard, didn't he?

Herbert Hoover's favorite president, believe it or not, appeared to be Theodore Roosevelt. He was a big supporter of his even when he ran on the third-party, "Bull Moose" Progressive Party presidential ticket in 1912.³³ On October 26, 1929, Hoover honored Roosevelt by saying he was a man with "stalwart character and vigorous ideals."³⁴

Franklin Roosevelt's favorite president was Roosevelt. Oh, uh...THEODORE Roosevelt...his fifth cousin!

So yeah, perhaps he was biased, too. But Teddy was a mentor to FDR and was a HUGE inspiration to him. On January 8, 1938, FDR gave a speech about political parties and loyalty, saying, "My father and grandfather were Democrats and I was born and brought up as a Democrat, but in 1904, when I cast my first vote for a President, I voted for the Republican candidate, Theodore Roosevelt, because I thought he was a better Democrat than the Democratic candidate."³⁵ I should say that FDR also loved Thomas Jefferson, and he was a big reason why the Jefferson Memorial got built.

It's safe to say that Harry Truman's favorite president was Andrew Jackson. He once said of him, "He wanted sincerely to look after the little fellow who had no pull, and that's what a president is supposed to do."³⁶ On December 26, 1949, he dedicated a statue of Andrew Jackson on the lawn of the Jackson County Courthouse in Independence, Missouri, Truman's hometown.³⁷ Yeah the county of Truman's hometown was named after Andrew Jackson.

We really don't know for sure Dwight Eisenhower's favorite president, but I can make a pretty safe guess. George Washington. It's clear Washington had a significant influence on him, and their lives as well as philosophical and political views were pretty similar. There's evidence that Ike enjoyed reading about Washington growing up and his portrait was the only presidential one near his desk in the Oval Office. Oh, and HE painted a portrait of him. Well, I should say that he also painted a portrait of Abraham Lincoln.

³²

<https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/february-22-1927-address-regarding-washingtons-birthday>

³³

<https://hoover.blogs.archives.gov/2018/08/22/herbert-hoover-and-american-presidents-of-the-20th-century/>

³⁴

<https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/message-the-birthday-theodore-roosevelt-and-its-celebration-navy-day>

³⁵ <http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/daybyday/resource/january-1938-3/>

³⁶ <https://time.com/3656271/old-hickory-in-a-new-century/>

³⁷ <https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/photograph-records/60-413-09>

John F. Kennedy is unique in that he likely had several favorite presidents. It's probably because he read so much American history as a young man. There's evidence he loved both John Quincy Adams³⁸ and Franklin Roosevelt, despite there being tensions between the Roosevelt family and Kennedy family. However, I think his FAVORITE favorite was Thomas Jefferson. JFK famously said at a dinner honoring Nobel Prize winners on April 29, 1962: "I think this is the most extraordinary collection of talent, of human knowledge, that has ever been gathered together at the White House, with the possible exception of when Thomas Jefferson dined alone."³⁹

Lyndon Johnson's favorite president was Franklin Roosevelt. On January 31, 1967, he accepted a portrait of FDR, saying, "For me, and for millions of others, any likeness of this man is an inspiration."⁴⁰

Richard Nixon's favorite prez was likely Woodrow Wilson. Wilson's foreign policy, in particular, had a big influence on Tricky Dick. Nixon proudly hung a big picture of Wilson in his office.⁴¹ Nixon even returned Wilson's desk to the Oval Office when he was president.⁴²⁴³

Gerald Ford? Yeah, look at Gerald Ford there affectionately staring at his favorite president there. Well, a statue of his favorite president.⁴⁴ Yep, Ford's favorite president was likely Dwight Eisenhower. "Eisenhower...had a tremendous impact on my life and my career," Ford said right before that picture was taken. "By his actions, as well as his words, Ike epitomized everything good about a military leader and a politician. For me, Ike was a role model."

Jimmy Carter's favorite president is Harry Truman. Yeah, but how do we freaking KNOW this? Well, he once said, and I quote "My favorite president, and the one I admired most, was Harry Truman."⁴⁵ Ok then. We believe you I guess.

Ronald Reagan's favorite president was famously Calvin Coolidge. Reagan prominently placed Coolidge's portrait in the Cabinet Room when he was president.⁴⁶

<https://youtu.be/x7kZQLCmPa0?si=Y8D9ymNiDtfQuePJ&t=64>

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⁴⁰ <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-upon-accepting-portrait-franklin-delano-roosevelt>

⁴¹ <https://ourwhitehouse.org/richard-m-nixon-1969-1974/>

⁴² <https://millercenter.org/president/wilson/impact-and-legacy>

⁴³ <https://www.theamericanconservative.com/the-ghost-of-woodrow-wilson/>

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<https://www.dwighteisenhowersociety.org/des/history/eisenhower-society/one-president-commemorate-s-another/>

⁴⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/sep/11/president-jimmy-carter-interview>

⁴⁶ <https://coolidgefoundation.org/blog/calvin-coolidge-and-ronald-reagan/>

George H.W. Bush's favorite president was probably Abraham Lincoln. Oh we got some pretty good evidence for that. Roll that beautiful bean footage.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AsETQBvuiUA> See?

As I mentioned at the beginning of this video, Bill Clinton's favorite president is John F. Kennedy, and it likely goes back to this moment. (pointing) As president, Clinton gave a speech at the dedication of the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum on October 29, 1993. "He was our President for only a thousand days, but as has been said so eloquently by members of his family, he changed the way we think about our country, our world, and our own obligations to the future. He dared Americans to join him on an adventure he called the New Frontier."

Well obviously George Bush Jr.'s favorite president is his dad, George H.W. Bush. I understand the bias.

Obviously, Bush Jr. loves his father very much and had a wonderful relationship with him. One of the most beautiful eulogies I've ever seen was the one Bush Jr. gave at his father's funeral.

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rs7SzK75tBc>)

But since his favorite president was his dad, I should also mention his favorite president who WASN'T his dad, Ronald Reagan. But come on, his dad was his Vice President so that's biased, too.

As I referenced at the beginning of this video, Barack Obama's favorite president is Abraham Lincoln. Hey boring! (long, awkward pause) Just kidding. Yeah, but...no joke, Obama once called Lincoln his "homeboy." And he even wrote a handwritten essay praising Lincoln marking the 150th anniversary of the Gettysburg Address. Impressive.⁴⁷

As I ALSO referenced at the beginning of this video, Donald Trump's favorite president is Andrew Jackson. He's made no secret of the fact that he considers him a hero. Early in his presidency, Trump visited Jackson's home, the Hermitage, located near Nashville, Tennessee. And of course, he prominently placed Jackson's portrait in the Oval Office.⁴⁸⁴⁹

And this last one is a bit of a surprise, but I think Joe Biden's favorite president is Franklin Roosevelt. According to multiple sources, Biden has modeled his presidency after FDR.⁵⁰⁵¹⁵²

And I think that's an accurate assessment actually. Biden has definitely gone after corporations way more than Obama or Clinton, the last two Democrat presidents, ever did. That said, I'm basing this mostly on his actions, not his words.

⁴⁷ <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/share/gettysburg-address>

⁴⁸

<https://www.salon.com/2019/10/02/donald-trumps-favorite-president-andrew-jackson-as-father-of-the-white-republic/>

⁴⁹ <https://time.com/4649081/andrew-jackson-donald-trump-portrait/>

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<https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2021/03/24/joe-biden-first-news-conference-presidential-test-column/6964568002/>

⁵¹ <https://www.salon.com/2023/01/20/biden-as-great/>

⁵² <https://www.thenation.com/article/politics/joe-biden-capitalism-fdr/>

Hey that's it, that's every president's favorite president.

If you're keeping score, congratulations Abraham Lincoln and George Washington, not only do most historians say you're the two best presidents in American history, but most PRESIDENTS say you're the two best presidents in American history, which probably means even more, don't ya think?

But hey, what DO you think? Huh? What was the most surprising favorite president of a president? Do you think I got any of these wrong? Sources, as always, are in the description, by the way. Not that most of you will check that out anyway because ya know, we have to eat nachos and stuff. Anyway, I'd still love to read your comments so comment below, and thanks for watching, you future president you.

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