Has the Party Holding the Presidency Kept It?[a]

Elections with an Incumbent Candidate Running

Yes, Kept the Presidency (N = 21)	*No, Lost the Presidency (N = 10)*
1792 Washington	1800 J. Adams lost to Jefferson
1804 Jefferson	1828 J.Q. Adams lost to Jackson
1812 Madison	1840 Van Buren lost to W.H. Harrison
1820 Monroe	1888 Cleveland lost to B. Harrison
1832 Jackson	1892 B. Harrison lost to Cleveland
1864 Lincoln	1912 Taft lost to Wilson
1872 Grant	1932 Hoover lost to F.D. Roosevelt
1900 McKinley	1976 Ford lost to Carter
1904 T. Roosevelt	1980 Carter lost to Reagan
1916 Wilson	1992 G.H.W. Bush lost to Clinton
1924 Coolidge	
1936 F.D. Roosevelt	
1940 F. D. Roosevelt	
1944 F.D. Roosevelt	
1948 Truman	
1956 Eisenhower	
1964 L.B. Johnson	
1972 Nixon	
1984 Reagan	
1996 Clinton	
2004 G.W. Bush	

David Mayhew/Political Science Quarterly

Critical Analysis

1. When Presidents run for reelection do they usually win or lose?
2. Why do you think that is?
3. Make a claim, based solely on the data from the chart above, about the odds of President Trump being reelected.
4. Now make a claim, based NOT at all on the data from the chart above, but based on your knowledge of the current Presidential administration, public opinion, the economy, and the general mood of the country, about the odds of President Trump being reelected.
5. Compare the presidents from the reelected column (left) of the chart above to those who were not reelected (right). On which side do the most successful and positively judged presidents generally fall?
6. Congressional incumbents win at a much higher rate (almost 90%) than presidential incumbents. Why do you think that is?

7. In Federalist 70, Alexander Hamilton (Alexander Hamilton. My name is Alexander Hamilton
   And there's a million things I haven't done
   But just you wait, just you wait...) writes that “Energy in the Executive is a leading character in the definition of good government. It is essential to the protection of the community against foreign attacks; it is not less essential to the steady administration of the laws; to the protection of property against those irregular and high-handed combinations which sometimes interrupt the ordinary course of justice; to the security of liberty against the enterprises and assaults of ambition, of faction, and of anarchy.” In what way is the “energy” Hamilton writes about a good thing?
8. In Federalist No. 51 James Madison (James Freaking Madison. My names is James Freaking Madison. And there’s a second presidency I have won. Of United States, United States…) wrote that “ambition must be made to counteract ambition…In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself.” What system did Madison create to limit the government?
9. What are some powers Madison placed in the U.S. Constitution to check the Presidency and keep it from becoming too powerful.
10. Describe a formal power the President has that make them more likely to be reelected. And describe an informal power the President has that make them more likely to be reelected.
11. Although he could have been POTUS for life, **George Washington** presented his Farewell Address in a newspaper article September 17, 1796 announcing his decision not to seek a third term as President. Do you agree with this First President precedent?
12. In 1951 the **22nd** Amendment limited presidents to **two terms** in office. Considering that Barack Obama would probably be in the his third presidential term were it not for the 22nd Amendment, make a claim about whether this constitutional limit was a good idea.
13. Explain whether you would support a 28th Amendment limiting presidents to one term.
14. How do you think a second Trump term would impact the United States?

Learning Extension

Read this article on Presidential Incumbents by Yale University political science professor and professional juggler David Mayhew.

Action Extension

Register to vote. If you are not old enough to register to vote then register someone who is old enough. In the next presidential election vote or convince someone who is old enough to vote to do your bidding at the ballot box.

Visual Extension

