

PRESIDENTIAL POWERS

Article II of the Constitution outlines the powers of the president. The checks and balances of the other branches of government limit them. The power of the modern presidency comes from the men who have held the office and have shaped the use of these powers. Historians have often rated presidents as strong or weak. After the 1960s and 1970s, it was argued that the presidency had become so powerful that an "imperial presidency" existed, applying the term to Richard Nixon and his administration in particular. Others contend that the president's powers lie in the ability to persuade others through negotiation, influence, and compromise.

Presidential powers can be categorized into the following six groups:

| | |
|--|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><i>EXECUTIVE POWERS</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforces laws, treaties, and court decisions • Issues executive orders to carry out policies • Appoints officials, removes officials • Assumes emergency powers • Presides over the cabinet and executive branch | <p style="text-align: center;"><i>LEGISLATIVE POWERS</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives annual State of the Union message (constitutionally required) identifying problems, recommending policies, and submitting specific proposals (president's legislative agenda). Expectations are that the president will propose a comprehensive legislative program to deal with national problems (the Budget and Accounting Act of 1921 requires the president to prepare and propose a federal budget). • Issues annual budget and economic reports • Signs or vetoes bills • Proposes legislation and uses influence to get it passed • Calls for special sessions of Congress |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><i>MILITARY POWERS</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commander-in-chief of the armed forces • Final decision-making authority in matters of national and foreign defense • Provides for domestic order | <p style="text-align: center;"><i>DIPLOMATIC POWERS</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoints ambassadors and other diplomats • Negotiates treaties and executive agreements • Meets with foreign leaders in international conferences • Accords diplomatic recognition to foreign governments • Receives foreign dignitaries |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><i>JUDICIAL POWERS</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoints members of the federal judiciary • Grants reprieves, pardons, and amnesty | <p style="text-align: center;"><i>PARTY POWERS</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognized leader of the party • Chooses vice-presidential nominee • Strengthens the party by helping members get elected (coattails) • Appoints party members to government positions (patronage) • Influences policies and platform of the party |