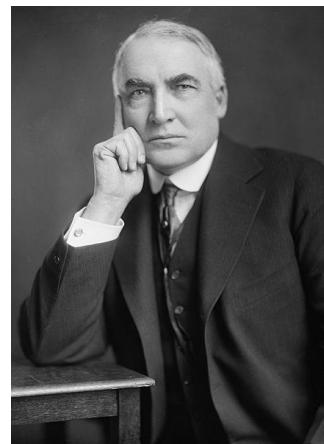


Warren G. Harding

Warren G. Harding was both a popular and controversial president. How did Harding become president? Why was he so controversial?

Warren G. Harding was born on November 2, 1865, in Blooming Grove, Ohio. From an early age, he showed a strong interest in journalism and the newspaper industry. He studied this field in college and managed to graduate at the young age of seventeen! After graduating, he held several different jobs including selling insurance and teaching. He eventually joined with others in purchasing a failing newspaper, the Marion Daily Star. By 1886, he was the sole owner of the paper and went on to make it a popular publication.

His first attempt at running for political office was a failed bid to become the Marion County Auditor. Just a few years later, in 1899, he was elected to the Ohio State Senate. In 1904, he was appointed Lt. Governor of Ohio, a position he held for two years. He continued to gain political recognition throughout the early years of the 1900s. In 1912, William Howard Taft selected Harding to deliver his nomination speech at the Republican National Convention. Two years later, Harding was elected to the United States Senate. He also delivered the keynote address at the 1916 Republican National Convention.



At the 1920 Republican National Convention, Harding was initially considered an outside shot for becoming the Republican nominee for president. However, the Republicans were heavily divided over who the candidate should be. Finally, after ten votes, Harding emerged as a “dark horse” and became the Republican nominee. He went on to win the general election against the Democrat candidate, Ohio governor James Cox.

Harding ran his campaign on the promise of a “Return to Normalcy”. This meant that he hoped to return the nation to the way it was prior to World War I. This would include adopting many of the Nativist philosophies that were becoming popular in regards to immigration, a renewed focus on returning to the isolationist policies of earlier eras, and bringing an end to the progressive approach to government that had become prominent.

During his years in office, one of Harding’s greatest successes was the creation of the Bureau of Veteran’s Affairs. He felt it was important to meet the needs of veterans who had returned from World War I. Harding also slashed government spending, cut tax rates, and took other measures that eventually helped to reduce the national debt significantly. He became the first president to address the nation over the radio, as well as the first president to visit Alaska.

However, his administration was plagued by scandals. From rumors of adulterous relationships to allegations of bribery, accusations of wrongdoing tormented the Harding White House. The most notorious of these incidents was the Tea Pot Dome Scandal, which involved the Secretary of the Interior, Albert Fall, accepting bribes from oil companies.

Words to watch for:
keynote dark horse
veteran allegation

Harding’s presidency was short-lived. Harding’s health began to deteriorate throughout late 1922 and into 1923. In the fall of 1923, Harding made a trip to the western half of the nation. While visiting San Francisco, he developed a respiratory illness. After struggling for several days, he seemed to be improving. Unfortunately, he died suddenly while speaking to his wife on August 2, 1923. At the time, the doctors suspected he had a stroke, but today it is believed he suffered from congestive heart failure.

A train brought the deceased president’s body back across the country. As it traveled, millions of citizens lined the tracks to pay their respects to the departed president.

Multiple Choice: *Select the choice that completes the statement or answers the question.*

1. _____ Which of the following best summarizes Warren G. Harding's career prior to entering politics?
 - a. He studied law for many years before joining a prestigious law firm.
 - b. He worked at several different jobs before purchasing a newspaper.
 - c. He made several attempts at opening restaurants which were all failures.
 - d. He owned a men's clothing store as well as a women's hat boutique.

2. _____ Which of the following best describes how Warren G. Harding became the Republican nominee for president in 1920?
 - a. He was unanimously selected as the nominee on the first vote at the Republican National Convention.
 - b. The previous Republican candidate had recommended that Harding be chosen as the nominee.
 - c. Harding was selected during the Republican primaries throughout the spring of 1920.
 - d. The heavily divided Republicans eventually chose him as their nominee after ten votes at their National Convention.

3. _____ Which of the following would *not* have been a part of the "Return to Normalcy" that Harding had promised during his campaign?
 - a. repealing all laws that had been passed by the previous president
 - b. adopting many of the Nativist philosophies towards immigration
 - c. a renewed focus on isolationist policies
 - d. bringing an end to the progressive approach to government

4. _____ Which of the following was not an accomplishment of the Harding administration?
 - a. He created the Bureau of Veteran's Affairs.
 - b. He reduced the national debt significantly.
 - c. He became the first president to visit Europe.
 - d. He became the first president to visit Alaska.

5. _____ Which of the following statements is inaccurate?
 - a. Harding became the first president to address the nation over the radio.
 - b. The Harding administration was plagued by scandals.
 - c. The Secretary of the Interior, Albert Fall, accepted bribes from oil companies.
 - d. President Harding was assassinated by a disgruntled World War I veteran.

Vocabulary: *Match each word with its correct definition. Consider how the word is used in the lesson. This might help you define each term. Use a dictionary to help if necessary.*

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| a. keynote | d. allegation |
| b. dark horse | e. respiratory |
| c. veteran | |
6. _____ a competitor who unexpectedly wins a race or competition
 7. _____ a person who has served in the military
 8. _____ related to the lungs or the process of breathing
 9. _____ an accusation made against another
 10. _____ the most important part, or central idea

Guided Reading: *Fill in the blanks below to create complete sentences.*

1. From an early age, Warren G. Harding showed a strong interest in _____ and the newspaper industry.

2. In 1912, William Howard Taft selected Harding to deliver his _____ speech at the Republican National Convention.

3. Harding delivered the keynote address at the 1916 _____ National Convention.

4. At the 1920 Republican National Convention, Harding was initially considered an outside shot for becoming the Republican nominee for _____.

5. Harding hoped to return the nation to the way it was prior to _____.

6. One of Harding's greatest successes was the creation of the Bureau of _____.

7. Harding felt it was important to meet the _____ of veterans who had returned from World War I.

8. Harding slashed government _____ and cut tax rates.

9. Harding _____ suddenly while speaking to his wife on August 2, 1923.

10. As the deceased president's body traveled across country, _____ of citizens lined the tracks to pay their respects.

Summarize: *Answer the following questions in the space provided. Attempt to respond in a complete sentence for each question. Be sure to use correct capitalization and punctuation!*

1. Who asked Warren G. Harding to deliver his nomination speech in 1912?
2. What did Harding promise during his 1920 campaign?
3. When did Warren G. Harding die?
4. Where was President Harding at the time of his death?
5. Why did President Harding create the Bureau of Veteran's Affairs?
6. How did President Harding reduce the national debt so significantly?

Student Response: *Write a paragraph addressing the questions raised below. A thorough response should consist of three to five complete sentences.*

7. Why do you suppose President Harding was so popular amongst the people, even though his presidency was plagued by scandals? If Harding were president in the modern era, how do you feel he would be perceived by the public? Make your answer as thorough as possible.

Tea Pot Dome, The Ohio Gang, & Other Scandals

Warren G. Harding's presidency was plagued with a series of scandals. What were some of these scandals? Did Harding know about them?

From the earliest days of his administration, Warren G. Harding was no stranger to scandal. There were many rumors circulating that Harding had engaged in multiple adulterous relationships with no less than four different women. One rumor even claimed that he had fathered a child with one of these women.

However, most of the scandals involving the Harding administration did not involve Harding himself, but others in his administration. Harding appointed several of his longtime political supporters to key government positions. These were posts that allowed these men to control, manipulate, and pilfer large sums of government money and resources. This group of men became known as the "Ohio Gang" because of their close ties to that state.



The most notable scandal associated with the Harding presidency has become known as the Tea Pot Dome Scandal. Tea Pot Dome was a rock formation in Wyoming. Under this rock formation was the US Navy's petroleum reserves. In 1922, Secretary of the Interior, Albert Fall, leased the rights to produce oil on this land (as well as two other locations in California) to the Sinclair Oil Corporation and the Pan-American Petroleum and Transport Company. He made this decision without allowing other companies to competitively bid for the contracts. This was legal at the time, but seen as unethical. As the US Senate investigated the scandal, it was discovered that Fall had also become instantly wealthy following the lease agreement. It was eventually revealed that Fall had accepted bribes from the two companies in exchange for the production rights. Fall was jailed for one year, becoming the first presidential cabinet member to be sentenced to prison due to misconduct in office.

Tea Pot Dome was not the only scandal associated with the Harding administration. The Attorney General, Harry Daugherty, and his personal aide, Jess W. Smith, were embroiled in their own scandal. Pharmacies were legally allowed to buy and sell alcohol if they acquired the appropriate permits from the government. It was discovered that Smith was selling these permits illegally to bootleggers who were purchasing and selling alcohol under the guise of owning a pharmacy. Smith was reaping large profits from these illegal permits.

Words to watch for:

*pilfer unethical
embroiled tainted*

The director of the Veteran's Bureau, Charles Forbes, was also accused of wrongdoing. Forbes was responsible for overseeing the construction of veteran's hospitals all across the country. These contracts were worth millions of dollars to the construction companies they were awarded to. Forbes accepted large bribes from corrupt construction companies who also treated him to wild parties and illegal liquor as he toured the nation at the taxpayers' expense.

At least three others that Harding appointed to government positions were discovered to be taking bribes. These scandals forever tainted the Harding administration, and to this day, it is remembered as one of the most corrupt presidential administrations in history.

Multiple Choice: *Select the choice that completes the statement or answers the question.*

1. _____ Which of the following best describes the Ohio Gang?
 - a. They were a notorious gang of outlaws who robbed banks and smuggled illegal alcohol.
 - b. They were Warren G. Harding's longtime political supporters who controlled, manipulated, and pilfered large sums of government money.
 - c. They were members of the Ku Klux Klan who had committed several crimes, but managed to evade capture for many months.
 - d. They were a professional baseball team accused of cheating, purposefully losing the World Series because they had bet against themselves.

2. _____ Which of the following best summarizes the Tea Pot Dome Scandal?
 - a. It was discovered that several government officials were visiting an illegal speakeasy known as the Tea Pot Dome, openly violating the prohibition law.
 - b. President Harding was using government money to build his own private mansion on top of a hill known as the Tea Pot Dome.
 - c. The White House cook was accused of attempting to assassinate President Harding by poisoning his tea.
 - d. Secretary of the Interior Albert Fall became wealthy from receiving bribes for allowing two companies to drill for oil on government lands.

3. _____ Which of the following statements is *not* accurate?
 - a. Tea Pot Dome was the only scandal associated with the Harding administration.
 - b. Pharmacies were legally allowed to sell alcohol as long as they acquired the proper permits.
 - c. Jess W. Smith was illegally selling permits to bootleggers.
 - d. Smith was reaping large profits from selling illegal permits.

4. _____ Which of the following best describes the scandal surrounding the director of the Veteran's Bureau, Charles Forbes?
 - a. Forbes was accused of giving veteran's benefits to civilians who had not actually served in the military.
 - b. Forbes was hiring doctors for veteran's hospitals who had no prior medical experience.
 - c. Forbes was accepting bribes from the construction companies contracted to build veteran's hospitals.
 - d. Forbes was taking money from the Veteran's Bureau and using it to fund expensive personal vacations.

5. _____ Which of the following is a proven fact?
 - a. President Harding had many adulterous relationships.
 - b. President Harding fathered a child out of wedlock.
 - c. Several people within the Harding administration were taking bribes.
 - d. The Harding administration was the most corrupt presidential administration in history.

Vocabulary: *Match each word with its correct definition. Consider how the word is used in the lesson. This might help you define each term. Use a dictionary to help if necessary.*

- | | |
|--------------|----------|
| a. pilfer | d. guise |
| b. unethical | e. taint |
| c. embroil | |
6. _____ a trace of dishonor; contaminate
 7. _____ to steal
 8. _____ a pretended appearance
 9. _____ lacking moral principles
 10. _____ to throw into confusion, discord, or conflict

Guided Reading: *Fill in the blanks below to create complete sentences.*

1. Most of the scandals involving the Harding administration did not involve Harding himself, but others in his _____.

2. Under the Tea Pot Dome was the US Navy's _____ reserves.

3. As the US Senate investigated the Tea Pot Dome scandal, it was discovered that Albert Fall had also become instantly _____.

4. _____ were legally allowed to buy and sell alcohol if they acquired the appropriate permits from the government.

5. Charles Forbes accepted large bribes from corrupt construction companies who also treated him to wild parties and illegal _____.

Correct the Statement: *Each of the following sentences is false. Circle the incorrect word(s) and write the word or phrase that makes the statement correct in the answer blank provided.*

6. Harding's political supporters who controlled, manipulated, and pilfered large sums of government money became known as the "Iowa Gang." _____.

7. Tea Pot Dome was a rock formation in Montana. _____.

8. It was discovered that Jess W. Smith was legally selling permits to bootleggers.
_____.

9. The director of the Department of Defense, Charles Forbes, was also accused of wrongdoing.
_____.

10. To this day, the Harding administration is remembered as one of the most honest presidential administrations in history. _____.

Summarize: *Answer the following questions in the space provided. Attempt to respond in a complete sentence for each question. Be sure to use correct capitalization and punctuation!*

1. Who was the Secretary of the Interior accused of accepting bribes in the Tea Pot Dome scandal?

2. What was under the Tea Pot Dome?

3. When did the Secretary of the Interior lease the Tea Pot Dome?

4. Where was the Tea Pot Dome?

5. Why was the Ohio Gang known by this name?

6. How did the Ohio Gang receive their government positions?

Student Response: *Write a paragraph addressing the questions raised below. A thorough response should consist of three to five complete sentences.*

7. Why do you suppose so many politicians are tempted to use their political power to advance their own personal wealth? Do you think politicians of today are more or less corrupt than those of the 1920s? Why or why not? Explain your answer thoroughly.