

# All the presidents' children

## A Before you read

Imagine growing up in the White House! What do you think your life would be like? Would you go to a normal school? Could you have sleepovers for your friends? Could you go to the cinema or for a burger with your friends? Discuss these questions in class.



## B Reading

Now read about some of the presidents' children who have lived in the White House in the past 45 years. They have had both advantages and disadvantages while living in the White House. They have always been watched – by both the press and also the Secret Service, security guards who work for the government. Their every move is known. Secret Service protection continues for presidents (and vice presidents) and their wives or husbands for their whole lives, and their children are protected until they reach their 16th birthday. Of course, there are also privileges for presidents and their families while they are in the White House – they have the best seats at concerts and film premieres, and they meet famous people they wouldn't normally get the chance to meet. Unfortunately (or fortunately), the whole world knows when you attend these events. The presidents' children can't have a normal childhood as we know it, but it is the only childhood they know so it is therefore their "normal".

According to Article II of the US Constitution, the president must be a natural-born citizen of the United States, be at least 35 years old, and have been a resident of the United States for 14 years. When you think about the age part of this rule, it means that a newly elected president could have a family and bring them with him or her when moving into the White House. The youngest of President Biden's children, Ashley Biden, is 40 years old. None of the current president's children moved into the White House with him and his second wife Jill Biden in 2021.

Donald Trump (president from 2017-2021) has five children. The youngest, Barron Trump, was eleven when he moved into the White House at the end of the 2016-17 school year. He lived in New York with his mother, Melania, until his school year finished in June. His father had already moved to Washington in January 2017. Barron lived with his parents in the White House until the end of 2020 when his father lost the presidential election. He was never very much in the news and seemed to be protected from the press by his parents.



The 44th US president was Barack Obama (2009-2017). His two daughters Malia (born in 1998) and Natasha, known as Sasha (born in 2001), both moved into the White House in 2009. Sasha was the youngest child to live in the White House since John F. Kennedy junior (son of US President John F. Kennedy) lived there in 1961. Before moving to Washington D.C., the Obamas

## All the presidents' children



lived in Chicago. The girls attended a private school and played soccer, tennis and the piano as well as doing gymnastics, dance and drama. They moved from their school in Chicago to the private Sidwell Friends School in Washington D.C., which is where several other presidents' children have gone to school since it was founded in 1883. Joe Biden's grandchildren also went there when he was Obama's vice president.

While attending high school, Malia spent time during her summer vacations working in television studios in New York and Los Angeles. She was also an intern in the US Embassy in Madrid. Then she had an internship at a film studio in New York before attending Harvard University. Sasha had a summer job in a restaurant. During their time living in the White House, they travelled with their parents, and the family was often photographed together at concerts and other events. Both Malia and Sasha were named among the 25 most influential teens in 2014 by *Time* magazine mainly for their fashion choices. Whenever they wore something new and stylish, it sold out very quickly.

Chelsea Clinton was an only child and moved into the White House with her parents, Bill and Hillary Clinton, in 1993 when her father became the 42nd president. She was born in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1980 and was 13 when she moved into the White House. She was given the code name 'Energy' by the Secret Service because she didn't sit still for very long. The Clintons wanted Chelsea to have a normal childhood and wanted to keep her out of the view of the media. Hillary Clinton spoke to a previous First Lady, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, and another former president's daughter, Margaret Truman, about children growing up in the White House. She wanted to hear how their experience could help her do the right thing for Chelsea.



It wasn't easy, but she managed, for example, by switching from a public school to the Sidwell Friends School to help protect her privacy. The Clintons decided that the press was only allowed to report about Chelsea when she took part in public events, e.g. state visits. It was important for the Clintons to not let others define Chelsea's sense of her own self-worth. Chelsea still received more television time than any presidential children before her. In the eight years of her father's presidency there were 32 stories in the *New York Times* and 87 news stories about her on TV. While living in the White House, Chelsea regularly attended church youth groups with other teenagers, loved to visit the Planet Hollywood restaurant with friends and also had sleepovers where her father often joined her and her friends for breakfast. She was also a serious ballet dancer and even stopped playing softball and soccer in order to concentrate on her ballet. When she was 21 Chelsea started to help her father in the White House more than before and also travelled abroad with him attending state dinners.

## All the presidents' children

In 1977 Jimmy Carter was elected the 39th president of the U.S. His daughter, Amy, was just nine when she moved into the White House, where she lived for four years. No children had lived in the White House since the 1960s when John F. Kennedy was president. The press was therefore very excited to be able to report on a child in the White House, making Amy very popular with them. She was seen roller-skating along her new home's West Wing with a friend and she had a treehouse in the garden of the White House. Her friends used to come for sleepovers in her treehouse. She just behaved like any girl of her age and when asked by a reporter whether she had a message for the children of America, Amy took time to think, and then replied, "No." Why should she? According to her, she was just a normal child whose father was the president and she lived in the White House.



### C Comprehension

Answer the questions with information from the text.

1. How old must a resident of the U.S. be to become president?
2. Why didn't any of President Biden's children move into the White House?
3. Why didn't Donald Trump's youngest son move into the White house in January 2017?
4. What hobbies did Barack Obama's daughters have?
5. What did Malia and Sasha Obama do in their summer vacations?
6. How many brothers or sisters does Chelsea Clinton have?
7. What sports did Chelsea Clinton do?
8. What typical teenager activities did Amy Carter do while her father was president?

### D Language

1. Complete these sentences about the text. Use the conditional.

1. If you are a US citizen and \_\_\_\_\_ in the U.S. for over 14 years, you can \_\_\_\_\_ president.
2. If President Biden \_\_\_\_\_ younger children, they \_\_\_\_\_ into the white House with him in 2021.
3. Barron Trump \_\_\_\_\_ to Washington with his father if he \_\_\_\_\_ the school year first.
4. The Obamas \_\_\_\_\_ in Chicago if Barack Obama \_\_\_\_\_ president in 2009.

## All the presidents' children

5. Sasha and Malia \_\_\_\_\_ influential teens in 2004 if they \_\_\_\_\_ in the White House.
6. If Chelsea Clinton \_\_\_\_\_ good at ballet, she \_\_\_\_\_ softball and soccer.
7. If Jimmy Carter \_\_\_\_\_ another election, Amy \_\_\_\_\_ in the White House for another four years.
8. If the West Wing in the White House \_\_\_\_\_ so long, Amy \_\_\_\_\_ through it.
9. If children \_\_\_\_\_ in the White House, they \_\_\_\_\_ different childhoods.

### 2. Find words in the text that are related to these.

1. president	
2. intern	
3. child	
4. influence	
5. regular	
6. normal	
7. protect	

### 3. Explain these words as they are used in the text. Use a dictionary if you are not sure.

1. natural-born citizen
2. resident
3. presidential election
4. press
5. intern/internship
6. influential
7. childhood
8. self-worth
9. state dinner
10. roller-skate

# All the presidents' children

---

## E Writing

Choose one of these topics to write about.

### 1. "What a difference your parents make"

What do you think of this statement? How are children affected by their parents' jobs and personalities? Is it important what jobs or personalities they have? What about where they come from? Write about 150 words.

### 2. "What is normal?"

Answer this question for yourself. Think about your life growing up in the pandemic compared to your older brothers and sisters or teenagers five years ago. What is different and what is the same? What would you change?

### A Before you read

Students discuss the questions in class.

### B Comprehension

1. 35 years old
2. The youngest was 40 years old.
3. Because he finished the school year in New York first.
4. played soccer, tennis, the piano, did dance, gymnastics and drama
5. worked to earn money and gain experience
6. She didn't have any siblings; she was an only child.
7. ballet, soccer, softball
8. She roller-skated through the White House and had a treehouse in the garden.

### C Language

1.
  1. If you are a US citizen and live in the U.S. for over 14 years, you can become president.
  2. If President Biden had had younger children, they would have moved into the white House with him in 2021.
  3. Barron Trump would have moved to Washington with his father if he hadn't finished the school year first.
  4. The Obamas would have stayed in Chicago if Barack Obama hadn't become president in 2009.
  5. Sasha and Malia wouldn't have been named very influential teens in 2004 if they hadn't lived in the White House.
  6. If Chelsea Clinton hadn't been good at ballet, she would have played softball and soccer.
  7. If Jimmy Carter had won another election, Amy would have lived in the White House for another four years.
  8. If the East Room in the White House wasn't so long, Amy couldn't roller-skate/couldn't have roller-skated through it.
  9. If children don't live in the White House, they will have different childhoods.
2.
  1. president -> presidential, presidency;
  2. intern -> internship;
  3. child -> children, childhood;
  4. influence -> influential, influencer;
  5. regular -> regularly;
  6. normal -> normality;
  7. protect -> protection
3. Students write their own definitions.

### D Writing

Individual answers expected.