**Personality of the Presidents**

Harding – Coolidge – Hoover – Roosevelt – Truman – Eisenhower – Kennedy – Johnson – Nixon – Ford – Carter – Reagan

Harding (1921-1923):

* He generally liked people and was extremely relaxed about the conditions of the US promoting his policy of laissez-faire.
* Harding was humble and sought approval for all his life
* He hated to decide on things that would antagonize people
* When running competitively, he promoted the good things about himself, not try to sabotage the opponents campaign
* He was an indecisive leader
* His administrators received bribes from businessmen

Coolidge (1923-29):

* Coolidge was a former Governor of Massachusetts. His calm, shy personality appealed to the attitudes of the time.
* His common sense and dry wit earned him a reputation for being wise.
* Coolidge refrained from giving public statements unless they were absolutely necessary, and when he did, they were short and to the point
* He shared a similar attitude to Harding and was also involved in scandal that he was corrupt.

Hoover (1929 – 1933):

* Hard – working, self-assured, aloof, incorruptible
* Shy, awkward during social relations, extremely sensitive to criticism (quite wary of crowds)
* Wasn’t the best media president, no real bond with the public

Roosevelt (1933 – 45):

* Wanted to connect the with the people – created fireside chats
* Seen as friendly and approachable and a president that was always there (paternal)
* He did 2 conferences per week
* Nation had faith in him
* Suffered badly from polio – strength, courage, admirable

Truman (1945 – 53):

* He always acted boldly and decisively
* Once he made a decision, he stuck to it and move on
* He was earnest and incorruptible yet blunt in speech
* Seemed rather sheltered and inapproachable to the people of America.

Eisenhower (1953 – 61):

* Eisenhower had a very paternal manner
* He avoided bad-mouthing or speaking badly of anyone (including opponents) in public
* Was famous for his outbursts of anger and then his quick return to his usual calm nature (anger was a common childhood trait within Ike and he often exploded in anger when refused his way)
* Seemed to inspire confidence in others and had an obvious yet silent demand for respect
* Was a rather poor public speaker which often hindered his confidence
* Very superstitious – carried 3 coins in his pocket wherever he went (a silver dollar, a franc & a guinea)

JFK (1961 – 1963):

* He was bubbly, attractive, cool, popular, smooth, witty and charming
* He was young which appealed to the youth of America who had not had a relatable president such as him
* He maintained a good relationship with the media (sometimes staying distant in order to control his sometimes wild temper) showing America he was a friendly, approachable guy
* He was highly competitive and always felt the need to be on top.
* He was extremely charismatic showing is friendly nature and his passion for the presidency
* He was a risk-taker – he took the risks as he believed you couldn’t progress without them

Johnson [LBJ] (1963 – 1969):

* He was fiercely competitive and a master manipulator – due to his political knowledge and experience
* He liked the idea of power and had a complex personality according to his friends and wife as he appeared one way to the public and very soft in his personal life.
* He had good internal organization
* He was very soft and was very warm but he was not eager to get up in front of millions of people and act that way
* He was disliked mostly due to America’s role in the Vietnam War and the injustices here (increasing troops in Vietnam to over 550,000 by early 1968
* He went through poverty in rural Texas as a child which taught him that to win and succeed you mustn’t make the people love you but you must over power them so your decisions are supported

Nixon (1969 – 1974):

* After the incidents of the Watergate Scandal and a further possible impeachment in the early 70’s, Nixon’s true personality is often debated by many
* He was seen to the public as mainly narcissistic, hypersensitive and secretive
* It appeared he had a real fear of appearing passive or soft to the public
* He was an extremely hard worker and thoroughly paid attention to detail, always striving for excellence and perfection in all tasks.
* He was courageous and never trembled in the face of criticism or adversity
* He had high expectations of those around him – short temper if not met
* He was known as ‘Tricky Dicky’ as he was evasive and devious

Ford (1974 – 77):

* Ford was seen as a stark contrast to Nixon, especially in personality
* He was honest and truthful and was commonly known as ‘Mr. Nice Guy’
* He was hard working and proved himself dedicated as he worked in the House of Representatives for 25 years
* Many saw forgiveness as a great trait of Ford’s as he pardoned Nixon despite the upheaval and controversy it caused amongst the American public
* It is often said he had a great deal of courage as within 1 month he pardoned Nixon, putting jis popularity with the public on the line. But this was his character
* He was trustworthy and brought the nation out of turmoil and deceit acting as a breath of fresh air
* However, many saw him as a coward as he struggled to make decisions and didn’t force Nixon into impeachment which many believed was justice for his abuse of presidential power

Carter (1977 – 1981):

* He was seen as hard working and determined which showed in his intellectual achievements and his good education in his life before politics
* He was modest and unpretentious which all Americans seemed to like about him most
* His informal approach and image and his insistence that he was known as Jimmy not ‘James’, he was seen more as a peoples president as he didn’t act as something he wasn’t.
* He was well known for few bursts of anger but many ice comments and a heavy use of cold sarcasm

Reagan (1981 – 89):

* He was seen as an extrovert, confident, friendly but above all, courageous
* Reagan appeared to ‘swim against the tide’ and was seen to bring back America’s optimism again as he wanted equality and freedom
* He had a disarming manner that could put people at ease and he always liked people but most importantly, wanted people to like him
* He was very content to be the front man
* However, he was very reluctant when making decisions and didn’t enjoy taking the blame or being disliked