

# **US History**

## **Week 5 Distance Learning**

### **The Watergate Scandal**



#### **Learning Goals:**

1. I can explain the political concerns that emerge in the 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> Century.
2. I can explain the economic concerns that emerge in the 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> Century.
3. I can explain the social concerns that emerge in the 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Dear Students,

In this packet you will find:

- an article about the Watergate Scandal.
- questions about the Watergate Scandal.
- Vocab relating to the Nixon, Ford, Carter, and Reagan years

You will use the article provided to answer the questions and use the article, workbook that you may have at home and other course materials to complete the vocabulary assignment.

If you are printing, this packet from home, you only need to turn in the question pages. So, you do not need to print the entire packet if you are able to read the article on an electronic device. You can answer the questions on notebook paper, by writing on these pages provided, or by typing in this or another word document.

You may turn this work in the following ways:

- Photo of your hand written work to your teacher via Remind, email, or Focus
- Typed in word document of your work to your teacher via Remind, email, or Focus
- Printed or hand written hard copy to the school.

We hope you are staying healthy! We miss you!

Sincerely, Coach Read, and Ms. Sears

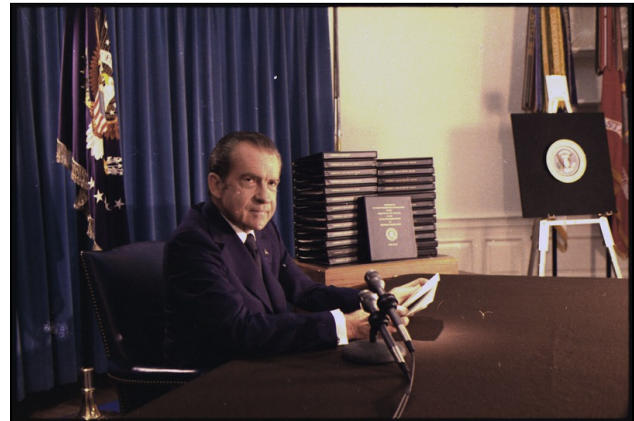
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## Watergate: Undoing a President

By USHistory.org  
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*This informational text discusses how the Watergate Scandal affected President Richard M. Nixon. Richard Nixon was Vice President of the United States under Dwight D. Eisenhower from 1953-1961 and President of the United States from 1969 to 1974. He resigned during his second term, in 1974, before he could be impeached for his involvement in the Watergate Scandal. The scandal began in 1971, when a member of President Richard Nixon's Campaign to Re-Elect the President was caught stealing information and tapping phones at the Democratic National Committee headquarters. The ensuing investigation and investigative reporting by the Washington Post revealed White House involvement and widespread corruption in the Nixon Administration. As you read, identify the crimes committed by the Nixon administration and how these crimes grew over time.*

- [1] On June 17, 1972, five men were arrested after breaking into the headquarters of the Democratic National Committee located in the Watergate Hotel in Washington, D.C. The burglars were not ordinary thieves. They carried wiretaps<sup>1</sup> to install on telephones. They carried cameras to photograph documents. Four of the five criminals were anti-Castro Cubans<sup>2</sup> who had been previously hired by the CIA.<sup>3</sup> The fifth was James McCord, the security adviser for Richard Nixon's<sup>4</sup> campaign staff known as the Committee to Re-elect the President, or CRP. Although the incident failed to make the front pages of the major newspapers at the time, it would soon become the most notorious<sup>5</sup> political scandal in American history.



*"Richard M. Nixon press conference releasing the transcripts of the White House tapes" by Jack E. Kightlinger is in the public domain.*

In the heated climate of the late 1960s and early 1970s, President Nixon believed strongly that a war was being fought between "us" and "them." To Nixon, "us" meant the conservative, middle-and working-class, church-going Americans, who believed the United States was in danger of crumbling. "Them" meant the young, defiant, free love, antiwar, liberal counterculture<sup>6</sup> figures who sought to transform American values.

Nixon would stop at nothing to win this war of hearts and minds, even if it meant breaking the law.

1. Wiretaps are listening devices that allow third parties to hear and record private telephone conversations.
2. Fidel Castro was the revolutionary Prime Minister of Cuba from 1959 to 1976 and President of Cuba from 1976 to 2008. Under his administration, Cuba became a one-party communist state.
3. The CIA, or Central Intelligence Agency, would hire anti-Castro Cubans in various efforts to covertly overthrow the communist government during the Cold War.
4. Richard Nixon (1913-1994) was the 37th President of the United States, serving from 1969 until his resignation amid scandal in 1974.
5. **Notorious (adjective):** famous or well known, typically for some bad quality or deed
6. A "counterculture" is a subculture or subgroup of a population that has different values and norms of behavior from mainstream culture. In the 1960s and 1970s, the counterculture figures in the U.S. included those who supported

In 1971, a White House group known as the “Plumbers” was established to eliminate administration<sup>7</sup> leaks<sup>8</sup> to the press. Their first target was Daniel Ellsberg who had worked on the Pentagon Papers, a highly critical study of America’s Vietnam War policy. Ellsberg leaked the Pentagon Papers — a top secret study of government decision-making in regards to the Vietnam War intended to be used internally by the government — to the New York Times. The Plumbers vandalized the office of Ellsberg’s psychiatrist, hoping to find discrediting information on Ellsberg to release to the public.<sup>9</sup>

- [5] Later that year, Attorney General John Mitchell resigned from his position in order to head CRP. Under his direction, the campaign raised millions of dollars in illegal contributions and laundered<sup>10</sup> several hundred thousand for “plumbing” activities. A White House adviser named G. Gordon Liddy suggested that the Democratic headquarters be bugged<sup>11</sup> and that other funds should be used to bribe, threaten, or smear<sup>12</sup> Nixon’s opponents. After the arrest of the five burglars at Watergate, people scrambled to cover up White House involvement. Nixon suggested the payments of hush money<sup>13</sup> to avoid a connection between Watergate and the White House. He suggested that the FBI<sup>14</sup> cease any investigation of the break-in. He recommended that staffers perjure<sup>15</sup> themselves if subpoenaed<sup>16</sup> in court.

The Watergate cover-up was initially successful. Despite a headline story in The Washington Post by Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein suggesting White House involvement, Nixon went on to win 49 of 50 states in the November 1972 Presidential election against George McGovern.

When the burglars were tried in January 1973, James McCord admitted in a letter that members of the Nixon Administration ordered the Watergate break-in. A Senate committee was appointed to investigate, and Nixon succumbed<sup>17</sup> to public pressure and appointed Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox to scrutinize<sup>18</sup> the matter.

Complicit<sup>19</sup> in the cover-up, many high-level White House officials resigned including Nixon’s Chief of Staff, Bob Haldeman, and his Adviser on Domestic Affairs, John Eherlichman. In an unrelated case, Vice-President Spiro Agnew resigned facing charges of bribery and tax evasion. Nixon’s own personal counsel, John Dean, agreed to cooperate with the Senate and testified about Nixon’s involvement in the cover-up. In a televised speech, Nixon assured the American public “I am not a crook.” It seemed like a matter of Nixon’s word against Dean’s until a low-level aide told the committee that Nixon had been in the practice of taping every conversation held in the Oval Office.

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civil rights and fought against the Vietnam War and the larger Cold War – the invisible war between the U.S. with its “western values” and the Soviet Union with its non-western, socialist and communist values.

7. The Nixon Administration is made up of all the people who work for Nixon in the executive branch.
8. A leak is an anonymous tip from an insider source to an outsider, like a journalist.
9. Daniel Ellsberg was charged under the Espionage Act of 1917, but, due to illegal evidence gathering, all charges against him were dismissed in 1973. He remains in U.S. history one of the most famous whistleblowers, or people who expose information or activities that are deemed illegal or unethical.
10. Laundering is the process of transforming the profit from criminal or corrupt practices into legitimate, legal assets.
11. Bugging, like wiretapping, means to secretly implant electronic listening devices.
12. **Smear (verb):** to slander
13. Hush money is money used to bribe people into silence on an illegal or shameful topic.
14. The FBI is the Federal Bureau of Investigation.
15. **Perjure (verb):** to give false testimony under oath
16. **Subpoena (noun):** a written order that commands someone appear in court to give evidence
17. **Succumb (verb):** to stop trying to resist something
18. **Scrutinize (verb):** to examine something carefully, especially in a critical way
19. **Complicit (adjective):** helping to commit a crime or do wrong in some way

Nixon flatly refused to submit the tapes to the committee. When Archibald Cox demanded the surrender of the tapes, Nixon had him fired. Public outcry pressed Nixon to agree to release typewritten transcripts of his tapes, but Americans were not satisfied. The tape transcripts further damaged Nixon. On the tapes he swore like a sailor and behaved like a bully. Then there was the matter of 17 crucial<sup>20</sup> minutes missing from one of the tapes.

- [10] Finally, in *U.S. v. Nixon*, the Supreme Court declared that executive privilege<sup>21</sup> did not apply in this case, and Nixon was ordered to give the tapes as evidence to Congress.

By this time, the House Judiciary Committee had already drawn up Articles of Impeachment,<sup>22</sup> and Nixon knew he did not have the votes in the Senate to save his Presidency.<sup>23</sup>

On August 8, 1974, Nixon resigned the office, becoming the first President to do so. His successor, Gerald Ford, promptly awarded Nixon a full pardon<sup>24</sup> for any crimes he may have committed while in office. The press and the public cried foul, but Ford defended his decision by insisting the nation was better served by ending the long, national nightmare.

During his years in office, Nixon had brought a controversial end to the Vietnam War, opened communication with Red China, watched NASA put astronauts on the moon, and presided over a healing period in American history in the early 1970s. Despite these many accomplishments, Watergate's shadow occludes Nixon's legacy.

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20. **Crucial (adjective):** extremely important
21. Executive privilege is the power of the president and other members of the executive branch to resist certain subpoenas or requests for information about the executive branch by other branches of government.
22. Impeachment, or the forced removal from office of the president, vice president, or civil officers, can be recommended and voted on by Congress for "treason, bribery, or other high crimes and misdemeanors." Nixon was charged with three articles of impeachment: obstruction of justice; abuse of power; and contempt of Congress.
23. In impeachment trials, the House of Representatives has the power to raise and vote by a simple majority on articles of impeachment, thereby impeaching the President. The Senate has the power to convict the President of impeachment by a two-thirds majority vote. Nixon believed he was going to lose the vote in both the House and the Senate.
24. **Pardon (verb):** a governmental decision to allow a person convicted of a crime to be treated as though never convicted

## Watergate: Undoing a President

<https://www.commonlit.org/en/texts/watergate-undoing-a-president>

1. When was Richard Nixon President of the US?
2. Why did he resign?
3. What was the Watergate Scandal?
4. Who was involved?
5. Who did Nixon define as “us” and who did he define as “them”?
6. What was the purpose of the “Plumbers”?
7. How did the White House try to cover up involvement in the Watergate Scandal?
8. What happened to Nixon’s Vice President?
9. How did the White House Tapes make Nixon look? Why?
10. Who took over for Nixon? Why did he pardon Nixon?  
What was this pardon controversial?

## Weeks 5 and 6 US History Distance Learning: Watergate-Modern Times

Term	Definition
Stagflation	
OPEC	
Detente	
SALT	
24.3	
Camp David Accords	
Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini	
25.3	
AIDS	
26.1	
NAFTA	
Contract with America	
26.4	
Urban flight	
Gentrification	
Proposition 187	