



Who is in Charge?

Article II, Section 1 of the Constitution set out how the nation would deal with the loss or incapacity of a serving President. The Constitution did not provide for a vacancy in the office of Vice President. The office was just left empty. The 25th Amendment clarifies how the vice president takes over for the president if, for some reason, he dies in office or becomes incapacitated. It also addresses several other issues including a vacancy in the office of Vice President. The 20th amendment dealt with the issue of succession if the President-elect died.

Use local and Internet resources to find the answers to these questions.

1. On occasion, the President is too sick to serve. What happens under those circumstances?
2. Give an example of when the President was too sick to discharge his duties, but remained in office.
3. Under the Constitution and the Succession Act of 1792, if the office of Vice President was vacated, it was left empty. Seven Vice Presidents died in office. Two resigned their office.
 - a. John Caldwell Calhoun resigned in December 1832. Why did he resign?
 - b. Spiro Agnew resigned in 1973. Why did he resign?
4. Describe what occurs, under the 25th Amendment, when the office of V.P. is vacated.
5. What is meant by Presidential Succession?
 - a. What are the first ten offices in the current order of succession?
6. No one in the Judicial branch is listed in the order of succession. Why?

Extras:

*Contrast how the issues of succession are addressed in your state or a local level of government with the federal approach to succession.

*Look into your Student Council's bylaws. Do they address this problem? How? Do you agree or disagree with the process?

*During the Election of 2000, the Twentieth Amendment became highly relevant. Explain.