



HOW DOES IMPEACHMENT WORK?

Removal from presidential office isn't all that simple. Here's how it works.

KNOWING THE TERMS AND FACTS



What does "Impeachment" actually mean?

"Impeachment" simply means officially charging someone in public office of misconduct or legal wrongdoing. The term and process can be used for many different federal officials, not just the President of the United States. Impeachment does not mean that the person is guilty.



What is an impeachable offense?

The Constitution (Article II, Section 4) says that high-ranking federal officials can be removed from office if convicted of "treason, bribery, or other high crimes or misdemeanors." The terms "high crimes" and "misdemeanors" is debatable; the seriousness is determined by the House and Senate.



Does impeachment mean removal from office?

Not necessarily. Impeaching a federal official (such as the President) only means that the majority (51%) of the House of Representatives approve of formal charges against the official. The Senate still has to vote to officially convict and remove an official from office.



Is removal from office after impeachment common?

No. In the history of the United States, **only eight officials—all federal judges—have actually been removed from office after impeachment.** Only two presidents have ever been officially impeached but neither were convicted by the Senate or removed from office.

THE SIX-PART PROCESS FOR IMPEACHING AND REMOVING A PRESIDENT FROM OFFICE

1



ACTION President

The president commits an act that appears to be of treason, bribery, high crime, or other serious misdemeanor.

2



INQUIRY House of Representatives

A member (or multiple members) of the House of Representatives submits an official inquiry of impeachment.

3



HEARING House Judiciary Committee

A judiciary committee in the House reviews the inquiry to determine if there is enough credible evidence to pursue article(s) of impeachment.

4



VOTE House of Representatives

All 435 members of the House vote on articles of impeachment. If at least 218 (>50%) vote in favor of an article, the president is impeached.

5



TRIAL Senate and House

The House appoints members of the Senate to hold a trial; the Supreme Court Chief Justice presides. At least 67 senators (2/3 vote) must vote in favor of conviction.

6



CONVICTION Senate

If a 2/3 vote is reached by the Senate, the president is convicted and removed from office.

IMPEACHMENT

Reference: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2019/09/24/trump-congress-what-is-an-impeachment-inquiry/2430212001/>
Icons: Freepik via Flaticon.com

If committee doesn't find enough evidence from the inquiry, the process ends here.

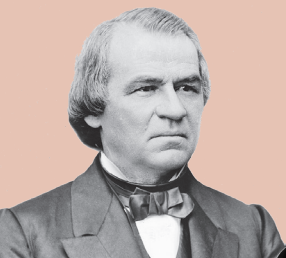
If fewer than 218 votes are in favor of impeachment, the process ends here.

If fewer than 67 Senate votes are in favor of conviction, the process ends here.

If the president is convicted and removed, the vice president becomes president.

PRESIDENTIAL IMPEACHMENTS

ANDREW JOHNSON
1868

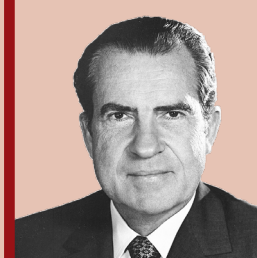


BILL CLINTON
1998



Only two presidents in the history of the United States have been impeached by the House of Representatives: Andrew Johnson (1868) and Bill Clinton (1998). Johnson was impeached by the House for violation of the Tenure of Office Act, but he was acquitted by the Senate, who was one vote short of conviction. Clinton was impeached by the House for perjury and obstruction of justice after attempting to cover up an extramarital affair, but was acquitted by the Senate after coming short of the 2/3 votes necessary for conviction. Both Johnson and Clinton finished their terms as president.

RICHARD NIXON
1974



Three articles of impeachment were approved by the House against Nixon—obstruction of justice, abuse of power, and contempt of Congress—but Nixon resigned from office before a vote was made.