




Dwight D. Eisenhower

Soldier and U.S. President

 Pupil's Edition,
pp. 487–492



A career soldier, Dwight D. Eisenhower (1890–1969) served as president for two terms, from 1953 to 1960.

Dwight D. Eisenhower (known as Ike) was born in Denison, Texas, on October 14, 1890. In 1911 he entered the United States Military Academy at West Point. Eisenhower graduated in 1915 and was sent to his first post, Fort Sam Houston in Texas.

A Soldier's Life In Texas, Eisenhower met Mamie Doud and married her in 1916. In 1917 the United States entered World War I. Eisenhower was sent to Georgia, to Maryland, and then to Pennsylvania. His most unusual assignment was to drive a tank across the United States to show Americans the latest in fighting equipment and also to demonstrate how badly the nation needed better roads. When Eisenhower later became president, he worked for a better U.S. highway system.

In 1941, when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, Eisenhower was called to Washington, D.C., to come up with a plan of defense.

History Lessons Eisenhower was eventually made the commander of American troops in Europe. His ability to get along with people and to get people to work together toward a common goal helped Eisenhower to become Supreme Commander of the allied forces in Europe.

By 1944 the war was going in favor of the Allies, and Eisenhower gave the order to invade France. On June 6, 1944 (D-Day), Allied troops landed on the beaches of Normandy. By August 25, Paris had been freed from German control. Allied troops advanced on Germany.

By May of 1945, German leader Adolf Hitler had killed himself and Germany had surrendered. Franklin Roosevelt had died, and Harry Truman was president. Truman ordered that atomic bombs be dropped on Japan to bring an end to the war.

After the War After the war, Eisenhower was asked to serve as president of Columbia University in New York City. Then Truman asked him to head a new organization called the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). This was an organization of western European countries dedicated to containing

the spread of communism. While at NATO, Eisenhower learned the Republicans were considering him as a candidate for president.

Eisenhower retired from the military and went on the campaign trail. Supporters began to wear “I Like Ike” buttons on their clothing. In July 1952 at the Republican convention, Eisenhower won the nomination. He selected Richard Nixon to be his vice-presidential running mate.

Eisenhower as President Eisenhower was popular, and he was elected to be the president in 1952. Under his leadership, the 1950s were a prosperous time for most people. Eisenhower also reduced America's military, saying it was time for peace, not war.

One area of trouble in 1950s America was civil rights. Eisenhower made it clear he supported civil rights, and he actively supported and enforced school desegregation.

In that same year, Eisenhower suffered a stroke. In spite of his condition, he refused to slow down. During his last days as president, Eisenhower kept the United States and the communist Soviet Union from going to war. He left office in 1961. In 1969, Dwight D. Eisenhower died of pneumonia after suffering several heart attacks.

Review Questions

1. Where did Eisenhower attend college?
2. What was Eisenhower's role during World War II?

Critical Thinking

3. **Evaluating** What quality made Eisenhower a successful leader?
4. **Drawing Conclusions** Why might Eisenhower have been so popular with the American people?