THE CONSTITUTION WITH CARL

Volume 23 - The Twenty-second Amendment - Two Terms

Two Terms and No More

Central question: How long should one person hold the presidency?





The Constitution, as first written, set no limit on how many times a president could be elected. For more than 150 years, a custom did the work instead: two terms, then go home, following the example George Washington set. Then one president was elected four times, and the country decided that a custom was not strong enough. In 1951 the Twenty-second Amendment turned the custom into law.

This book reads the amendment's words carefully, because the words are more exact than the short version most people repeat. The amendment counts *elections*, and it has a careful rule for a vice president who takes over in the middle of a term. Worked out step by step, that rule means one person can lawfully serve as much as ten years as president, but no one can be elected a third time.

For ages 7 to 11. Level Up boxes reach to age 13.

START HERE

Meet Carl and the Four Strands

Carl the Cardinal is Term Carl in this volume. He stands beside a timeline rail with two marked segments, looking down its length. The rail is this book's picture: a presidency has a beginning, a middle, and, since 1951, a fixed end that everyone can count in advance.

The four strands, kept separate

Strand	What it is
THE WORDS	The amendment itself, in ORIGINAL WORDS, plus a PLAIN LANGUAGE EXPLANATION set apart from it.
THE HISTORY	Evidence from before and around 1951 about why the words were added, and the record of what happened under them.
COURTS HAVE SAID	Named cases with years. This is interpretation by judges, labeled as interpretation. This amendment's courts page is short, and page 14 explains honestly why.
STILL DEBATED	Real disputes that remain. Stated fairly, never as settled fact.

How to use this book

- Read the words aloud first. Then read the explanation.
- Write, draw, point, or dictate your answers. All of those count.
- This book connects to Volume 21, which taught when terms begin and end. This book asks a different question: how many terms one person may have. You do not need Volume 21 open beside you; everything this book needs is on its own pages.
- Two dates run this book. Congress proposed the amendment in March 1947. The states finished ratifying it on February 27, 1951. The four years between them are part of the story.

CARL'S ONE DISTINCTION

Carl keeps one distinction in front of him from the first page to the last: **the amendment counts elections, and it measures takeovers by a two year line**. A president is elected, or not elected. A successor has served more than two years of someone else's term, or not more than two years. Everything in this amendment is decided by those two measurements, and the activities on pages 15 and 16 practice exactly them.

MEET CARL BOX

Carl in this volume is a timekeeper. He does not root for longer presidencies or shorter ones. He reads the rail: who was elected, how many times, and where the two year line falls. When Americans argue about whether the limit is wise, that argument lives in STILL DEBATED on page 18, stated in both sides' own terms.