



GEORGE H.W. BUSH

PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY & MUSEUM

Teacher Handout: Pre-K/Kindergarten Museum Guide

The **George H.W. Bush Presidential Library & Museum** preserves the legacy of the 41st President and offers visitors a clear, engaging entry point into American history and civic life. It serves as a national resource where learners can explore leadership, public service, and the institutions that shape our democracy through authentic documents, artifacts, and stories. President Bush devoted his career to service, from his early years as a Navy pilot in World War II to his leadership as a congressman, diplomat, Vice President, and President. His belief that service strengthens communities guides the educational mission of the museum.

The museum provides experiences that introduce young learners to national symbols, major events, and the responsibilities of citizenship. Exhibits are designed to help students connect past and present and to spark curiosity about leaders, ideas, and traditions that shape the nation.

This guide supports teachers as they lead Pre-K and Kindergarten students through the museum. It encourages purposeful exploration, focused observation, and age-appropriate discussion while keeping learning standards in mind. Each section aligns with the Texas TEKS and highlights concepts that can be reinforced during and after the visit. Teachers can use the guide to prompt questions, connect museum content to classroom instruction, and help students build early confidence in understanding history and civic life.

1. Presidential Symbols

View President George H.W. Bush's limousine:

- Built with reinforced metal and bullet-resistant glass. Estimated weight: ~14,000 lbs.
- The presidential limo is a secure vehicle that President Bush used when traveling to important events and meetings.
- The tires are designed to keep moving even if they are damaged, which helped the Secret Service keep the President safe on the road.

Presidential Seal:

- The Eagle holds an olive branch (peace) and 13 arrows (strength).
- *E Pluribus Unum* means “out of many, one.”
- The 50 stars represent today’s 50 states.

2. Bush Family Traditions

- Photos of George H.W. Bush as a child and young adult.
- Photos of Barbara Pierce Bush as a child and young woman.

3. World War II

- George H.W. Bush served as a Navy pilot. He chose to serve as a naval aviator and began flight training soon after enlisting.
- George Bush enlisted in the United States Navy on his 18th birthday in 1942.
- He completed advanced flight training at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi in Texas.
- Bush flew a torpedo bomber called the TBM Avenger, which carried a crew of three.
- He served on the aircraft carrier USS *San Jacinto* in the Pacific Ocean.
- USS *Finback* submarine model: Bush was rescued after being shot down.

4. Courtship & Marriage

- Barbara and George met at a Christmas dance.
- George and Barbara wrote letters to each other while George trained to be a Navy pilot during World War II.
- George named three planes *Barbara*, *Barbara II*, *Barbara III*.
- They were married in January 1945 and began a long life of service together.
- *A replica of her wedding dress and the pin her mother wore at the wedding are on display.*

5. Early Family Life

- George attended Yale University; their first child, George W. Bush, was born in 1946.
- The family moved to Texas to begin work in the oil industry.
- George first lived in Odessa, Texas, where he worked in the oil industry and drove a red Studebaker.
- The Bushes later moved to Midland, Texas, where George helped start an oil

company called Zapata Petroleum.

- Daughter, Robin Bush, passed away from leukemia at age three, a loss that deeply shaped the Bush family.
- Son, George W. Bush later became the Governor of Texas and the 43rd President of the United States.
- Another son, Jeb Bush, later served as Governor of Florida.

6. Early Political Career

- In 1963, he was elected Chairman of the Harris County Republican Party in Houston, Texas.
- In 1964, he ran for the United States Senate. He did not win, but the campaign helped him become known across Texas.
- In 1966, George Bush was elected to the United States House of Representatives.
- He represented the Seventh District of Texas, which included parts of Houston.
- 1967: Elected to U.S. House of Representatives.

7. Ambassador to the United Nations

- George Bush served as the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations in New York City.
- He was appointed to this role in 1971 after his time in Congress.
- The United Nations is a place where countries meet to talk, solve problems, and work for peace.
- As Ambassador, Bush represented the United States during important meetings with leaders from around the world.
- This experience became an important part of his journey toward becoming President.
- *Photos show Bush working with world leaders to promote peace.*

8. Service in China

- George Bush served as Chief of the U.S. Liaison Office.
- George Bush and his wife Barbara lived in Beijing and enjoyed learning about Chinese culture.
- They rode bicycles around the city to explore daily life and meet local people.
- George Bush believed that talking with other nations helped create peace and cooperation.
- *The Pagoda exhibit shows Bush family life in China.*

9. Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)

- 1976: Bush became CIA Director.
- The CIA helps protect the United States by studying information from around the world.
- As Director, Bush worked to strengthen the agency and support the people who served there.
- He helped improve communication between the CIA and other parts of the government.
- Satellite model shows intelligence gathering.
- Drawers contain examples of intelligence tools.

10. Vice Presidency

- George Bush served as Vice President of the United States from 1981 to 1989.
- He served with President Ronald Reagan during two terms in office.
- As Vice President, George Bush helped support the President and worked on important national issues.

11. Presidency

- George H.W. Bush became the 41st President of the United States in 1989.
- He served one term as President from 1989 to 1993.
- As President, George Bush worked to support families, strengthen the economy, and protect the environment.
- He signed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a major law that helps people with disabilities have equal access and opportunities.
- He led the country during important world events, including the end of the Cold War.
- He worked with other nations to help bring peace and cooperation around the world.
- George Bush led a large international team of countries during the Gulf War, which helped protect Kuwait.
- *A replica of Barbara Bush's inaugural ball gown is displayed.*

12. State Dinner Exhibit

- Table set for formal diplomatic meals.
- President and Mrs. Bush hosted many State Department dinners to get to know foreign Heads of State.
- *President's tuxedo and Mrs. Bush's gown are displayed.*

13. Oval Office

- He often invited students, families, and visitors to the Oval Office to help them learn about leadership and service.
- He worked on major issues there, including the Americans with Disabilities Act and efforts to protect the environment.
- The Oval Office was also where he met with world leaders to discuss peace and cooperation.
- President Bush liked to write notes and letters at his desk, a habit he held throughout his life.
- *The drawer below the telephone contains a baseball mitt he kept in his desk in the Oval Office.*

14. Domestic Leadership

- This wall highlights major legislation, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

15. Gifts of State

- This gallery shows beautiful and carefully made gifts that foreign leaders gave to the President of the United States.
- These objects show the art, history, and culture of each country.
- The items change from time to time, so visitors can see different examples of world craftsmanship.

16. Camp David Office

- Camp David is a peaceful retreat in the mountains of Maryland where Presidents go to rest and work.
- *Replica of President Bush's office at Camp David.*
- *Look for Millie's dog treat dispenser.*

17. Berlin Wall

- Built in 1961 and became a symbol of division during the Cold War.
- People in East Germany began calling for freedom and the right to travel.
- On November 9, 1989, the Berlin Wall opened and people from both sides celebrated together.

- Large concrete section of the Berlin Wall. (Actual piece of Berlin Wall on display)
- West side: colorful artwork (freedom).
- East side: plain concrete (government control).

18. Situation Room

- The Situation Room is a secure workspace inside the White House where the President and advisors watch world events and make important decisions.
- George Bush met with military leaders, intelligence teams, and national security advisors in this room.
- He used the Situation Room to monitor world events such as the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Gulf War.
- The room has large screens, maps, and communication tools that help leaders understand what is happening around the world.
- *Replica of the White House Situation Room.*
- *Used for major national and international decisions.*

19. Gulf War

- The Gulf War took place in 1990 and 1991 while George H.W. Bush was President.
- The conflict began when Iraq invaded the nearby country of Kuwait.
- President Bush believed that countries should respect each other's borders and work together peacefully.
- He helped form a large international team called a coalition, which included 35 nations from around the world.
- The United States and its partners worked together to protect Kuwait and push Iraqi forces out.

20. Eco-Terrorism

- Iraqi forces set fire to oil wells during retreat.
- Many companies helped extinguish the fires, including several from Texas.
- Kuwait gifted symbolic "door" to the U.S. The door represents an open passage between Kuwait and the U.S., signifying trust, cooperation, and shared values.

21. A Life of Service

- President Bush's boat *Fidelity*. (On display)
- Continued volunteer service after his Presidency.

22. Gifts of the People

- This gallery showcases a rotating selection of artifacts given to President Bush, reflecting the creativity, gratitude, and cultural traditions of people across the United States and abroad.
- Features gifts given to President and Mrs. Bush by private citizens and world leaders.

23. Sully the Service Dog

- Statue of Sully, President Bush's service dog during his final months.

Teacher Questions: George H. W. Bush Presidential Library & Museum

Who was George H. W. Bush, and what important job did he do for our country?

Answer: Multiple

What job did President Bush have in the Navy?

Answer: Pilot

What sport did President Bush play in college?

Answer: Baseball

Can you name one of George and Barbara's children?

Answer: George and Barbara Bush had six children: George W., Robin, Jeb, Neil, Marvin, and Dorothy (Doro).

What is something he cared about that you think is important too?

Texas TEKS Alignment (Pre-K–Grade 2 Social Studies)

K.2 History — Students identify key past events and figures, including **George H. W. Bush** and **Barbara Bush**.

K.3 Geography & Culture — Students recognize basic physical and cultural features of places such as **Texas**, **China**, and **Maine**.

K.4 Citizenship — Students learn the roles of authority figures and why rules matter in communities.

K.5 National Symbols — Students identify important U.S. symbols, including the **Presidential Seal** and **American flag**.

K.6 Economics — Students understand basic needs, jobs, and public service roles such as **president**, **ambassador**, and **military service**.

K.7 Government — Students identify the **President**, **Vice President**, and the basic functions of government.

Grade 1 & 2 Extensions

- Historical timelines (WWII, Berlin Wall, Gulf War).
- Civic responsibility and leadership.
- National celebrations and traditions.
- Introduction to laws (ADA).
- Understanding international relationships (UN, China).

Additional Classroom Resources

Teachers can extend museum learning by using free, high-quality government resources that support civics, history, and primary source analysis. These programs offer ready-to-use lessons, videos, and activities that help students connect their museum experience to classroom instruction.

- **The National Archives** The official home of millions of primary sources. Teachers can access documents, photographs, maps, and recordings that support inquiry based learning and historical thinking. Website: <https://www.archives.gov>
- **DocsTeach** A classroom platform from the National Archives that offers interactive activities built from authentic primary sources. Teachers can search by topic or skill and create custom lessons. Website: <https://www.docsteach.org>
- **Civics for All of Us** A national civic education initiative from the National Archives. It provides virtual field trips, teacher workshops, and classroom materials that introduce students to the Constitution, citizenship, and the responsibilities of community life. Website: <https://civics.archives.gov>
- **Library of Congress** Provides digital collections, oral histories, maps, and teacher guides that support literacy, history, and cultural studies. Website: <https://www.loc.gov>
- **Smithsonian Learning Lab** Offers artifact-based collections, videos, and interactive tools that help students explore American history, science, and culture. Website: <https://learninglab.si.edu>
- **National Park Service Education Resources** Features lesson plans, virtual tours, and multimedia content that connect students to national parks, historic sites, and environmental stewardship. Website: <https://www.nps.gov>
- **Digital Public Library of America** A nationwide digital library that provides access to millions of images, documents, and artifacts from museums and libraries across the country. Website: <https://dp.la>

These resources help teachers reinforce museum learning, support TEKS aligned instruction, and encourage students to explore history and civics with curiosity and confidence.