

Joe Biden

Joseph Biden is a politician and lawyer. In November 2020, he was named as the projected new president of the USA. This prediction has been made based on evidence of how different groups of people voted. He could make history in January 2021, by becoming the oldest president ever, at the age of 78.



Early Life

Joseph Robinette Biden Jr was born on 20th November 1942, in Pennsylvania, USA. He was the first of four children born to his parents, Joe Biden Sr (a businessman and car salesman) and Catherine (known as Jean).

As a child, Biden had a stammer, which made it difficult for him to speak clearly and was teased by his classmates. He says that to help him manage it, he practised reciting long pieces of poetry in front of a mirror.

While studying at university, Biden worked as a lifeguard at a swimming pool. He also enjoyed participating in sports, including American football and baseball.

A Political Career

US politicians work in the Senate. Biden first ran for the US Senate in 1972 and at the age of 29, he became the fifth-youngest senator in the nation's history. He was re-elected six times (remaining in the Senate from 1973 to 2009) and is one of its longest-serving senators.

Biden has run for nomination as Democratic candidate for president twice previously, in 1988 and 2008, but did not win either nomination.

He was the vice-president of the US for eight years when Barack Obama was the president and advised him on a number of policies, such as spending and ways to reduce gun crime. They were said to be friends as well as colleagues. He was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Obama on 12th January 2017. This is the nation's highest honour for a civilian and Barack referred to him as 'the best vice-president America has ever had.'

In 2020, Joe Biden became the Democratic Party's presidential nominee.

After months of campaigning, the elections took place and Biden was pronounced the president-elect, with more votes than current president and Republican candidate, Donald Trump. He could become the USA's 46th president in January 2021.



Joe Biden



In a speech made after he became president-elect, Biden promised to be a president that 'seeks not to divide, but unify'. He has promised to develop the international roles of the US and is a keen supporter of racial equality.

Biden's vice-president - Kamala Harris - will also make history, several times over; she will be the first woman, the first Black person and the first South Asian American person to be US vice-president. Biden has said of her, 'She is smart, tough and ready to lead'.

The latest US election recorded the highest number of voters in one hundred years, with Biden receiving over 74 million votes - more than any other candidate in history.

Any vote count disputes should be resolved by 8th December 2020; the US congress will count the electoral votes on 6th January 2021 and the president-elect and vice-president-elect will be sworn into office on 20th January. This historic event is known as an inauguration.

Personal Life

Biden has known tragedy in his life, losing several people close to him. His first wife, Neilia and daughter, Naomi, died in a car accident in 1972. His two sons were injured and Biden spent the next few years as a single father, travelling long distances as a senator to work each day while ensuring he was around to care for his sons.

In 1975, Biden met Jill Jacobs - a teacher; they were married in 1977 and welcomed a daughter, Ashley, in 1981.

His adult son, Beau, passed away in 2015 from brain cancer. Biden has said that he tries to make his family proud, by doing his best every day.

Biden himself fell ill, with two life-threatening brain aneurysms (a large swelling in an artery wall) in 1988 and was off work for seven months while he recovered from surgery on them.

Many people believe that the fact Biden has been through difficult times in his own life means that he is able to empathise with a great many people and this is partly what makes him popular with his supporters.

In 2017, Biden and his wife set up a charity called The Biden Foundation. The charity supported causes such as affordable higher education and jobs for the families of military services members. The charity was wound down as Biden began running for president.

Questions

1. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they happened in.

	Joe Biden began working at the US Senate.
	Biden married Jill Jacobs.
	Biden studied at univeristy.
	Biden ran for president.

2. Draw **four** lines to match the events to the year they occurred.

1973	•
2020	•
1988	•
1942	•

•	Joe Biden was born.
•	Biden failed in his first bid to be nominated as a Democratic candidate.
•	Biden began working as a senator.
•	Biden became president-elect.

3. Look at the sentence beginning **This is the nation's...**

Find and copy the phrase that means the same as **greatest award**.

4. Name **two** key dates in Biden's political career.

- _____
- _____

5. Fill in the missing words.

After months of _____, the _____ took place and Biden was pronounced the president-elect.

6. Name two qualities which describe Joe Biden and explain your choices.

7. Biden has promised to be a president '...that seeks not to divide, but unify'. What do you think he means by this?

8. How do you think that the challenges Biden has faced in his personal life and political career may impact his role as president?

9. What do you think might be some of the key policies of Biden's term as US president? Explain your answer fully.

10. Explain why you think that Kamala Harris may be a popular vice-president with American citizens.

Answers

1. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they happened in.

2	Joe Biden began working at the US Senate..
3	Biden married Jill Jacobs.
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3. Look at the sentence beginning **This is the nation's...**

Find and copy the phrase that means the same as **greatest award**.

highest honour

4. Name **two** key dates in Biden's political career.

Accept any two of the following: November 2020, January 2021, 1972, 1973-2009, 6th January 2021, 20th January 2021.

5. Fill in the missing words.

After months of **campaigning**, the **elections** took place and Biden was pronounced the president-elect.

6. Name two qualities which describe Joe Biden and explain your choices.

Pupils' own responses, such as: He is hardworking - he never stopped even when he lost his wife and daughter and he was a single father to two sons. He is determined - he tried again to run as a Democratic candidate for presidency, even though he had failed twice before.

7. Biden has promised to be a president '...that seeks not to divide, but unify'. What do you think he means by this?

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think he means he wants people to work together for the good of the country, whatever their political beliefs.

8. How do you think that the challenges Biden has faced in his personal life and political career may impact his role as president?

Pupils' own responses, such as: He has been through a lot of difficult times, like so many other people, and this will enable him to relate to others and others to relate to him. His sad experiences have made him more determined to make the most of life and he has overcome adversity, so will be able to work through challenges that may come his way as president. He will work hard to achieve what he believes is right - just as he continued in his efforts to be a Democratic candidate even though he had failed twice before.

9. What do you think might be some of the key policies of Biden's term as US president?
Explain your answer fully.

Pupils' own responses, such as: He will try to stamp out racism and bring about racial equality because it says in the text that he is a keen supporter of racial equality. He will make choices about what to spend money on, as he used to advise Obama on spending. He will try to reduce gun crime, because he already has a lot of experience of doing so when he was vice-president. He will try to build positive relationships with other countries because it says he wants to develop the USA's international role.

10. Explain why you think that Kamala Harris may be a popular vice-president with American citizens.

Pupils' own response, such as: She will appeal to a wide range of voters: Joe Biden is 78; Kamala may appeal to younger voters, as she can offer a different perspective. She will be an inspiration to many different people, being the first Black person and the first South Asian American person to be elected vice-president. Women may support her because she is the first female vice-president ever elected.