

THE PERIODIC TABLE OF THE PRESIDENTS™

The Twenty-Fifth Amendment

Introduction:

The Twenty-Fifth Amendment clears up some questions that were left unanswered by the Constitution. Namely, what happens when the office of president or vice president becomes vacant? When William Henry Harrison died in 1841, Vice President John Tyler boldly claimed that he was the new president. This precedent was followed each time a president died while in office. After the assassination of John F. Kennedy, Congress passed the Twenty-Fifth amendment, making Tyler's precedent a constitutional fact.

The text of this amendment begins, "In case of the removal of the President from office or of his death or resignation, the Vice President shall become President. Whenever there is a vacancy in the office of the Vice President, the President shall nominate a Vice President who shall take office upon confirmation by a majority vote of both Houses of Congress."

Questions:

1. What does the Twenty-Fifth Amendment outline?
2. What year was the Twenty-Fifth Amendment ratified?
3. When William Henry Harrison died, who took over as president?
4. How many times has a president died while in office?
5. According to the Twenty-Fifth Amendment, how is a VP vacancy filled?
6. Before the Twenty-Fifth Amendment, how many times was the office of vice president vacant?
7. What is interesting about the manner in which Gerald Ford became president?
8. What does Section Three of the Twenty-Fifth Amendment permit?
9. According to Section Four, who can determine that a president is unable to perform his duties?
10. Why do you think the Founders did not include presidential succession in the original text of Article II?