From Watergate to Ford

The Election of 1972
- Nixon 1st 4 years had been mixed with failures and successes
- But part of Nixon’s plan in the 1st years was doing things to assure victory in 1972
- Nixon was known for political toughness and underhanded techniques.
- The Plumbers: A groups that Nixon used to respond to leaks during his 1st Presidency and to investigate political enemies.
- The Plumbers broke into a Psychiatrist office to dig up dirt on him after he had leaked the Pentagon papers on the Vietnam war.

Reelection
- Due to events like in China, Nixon was popular and leading for reelection in 1972.
- He wanted to ensure that victory.
- Therefore his team organized a burglary of the Democratic National Committee in the Watergate hotel to plant wires and get information.
- At the time, the burglary made little news since no one ever imagined how high this would lead
- Nixon was reelected by a landslide in 1972.
- Nixon thought he was past the scandal.
Essential Questions
1. What was Nixon known for as a politician?
2. Who were the “Plumbers”?
3. What happened at the Watergate Hotel?
4. Why did the incident at Watergate generate little interest?

Watergate
• Watergate may have just gone away if it was not for Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein of the Washington Post.
• As they investigated they began to find evidence that Nixon’s team was linked to the burglary.
• By 1973 men involved in the White House and Nixon’s campaign had been convicted.
• People began to wonder if Nixon knew.
• The Washington Post continued to investigate and now people and Congress listened.
• Nixon cleaned house and fired top officials.

Butterfield’s Bombshell
• The Senate began its own investigation
• John Dean, Secretary of State, fired by Nixon, claimed he talked regularly with Nixon about the Watergate cover up.
• Then Alexander Butterfield claimed all conversations in Nixon’s offices had been taped recorded.
• Investigators asked Nixon for the tapes, but he refused to hand them over on the basis of “Executive Privilege”
• Saturday Night Massacre: Nixon ordered the Attorney General fired and two officials refused and resigned, a third fired him.
Nixon maintains innocence

- Public confidence sank
- But Nixon reaffirmed his innocence.
- Nixon kept delaying the release of the tapes and said there was an 18 minute piece missing.
- As pressure mounted, Nixon released transcripts and they showed his involvement.
- Investigators now pushed for more, and even sought subpoena’s for the release of the tapes.
- The Supreme Court agreed and ruled Nixon must hand over the tapes.
- With pressure mounting and Congress moving to impeach Nixon, he resigned knowing the tapes would reveal everything.

Essential Questions

1. Why did the Watergate scandal not go away?
2. What was Butterfield’s bombshell?
3. Why were people upset with the transcripts?
4. Why did Nixon finally resign from the Presidency?

Gerald Ford

- In 1973 Nixon’s Vice President Spiro Agnew resigned for taking bribes.
- House of Representatives leader Gerald Ford was put in his place.
- When Nixon resigned he became the first President never elected by the people.
- One of his first actions was to pardon Nixon so he would not have to face charges in court for his actions.
- Was seen as a buffoon by the people and his peers.
Ford’s Presidency
- Had constant battles with Democratic Congress
- Ford believed inflation could be stopped if the government spent less
- He vetoed many spending measures by a Democratic Congress.
- He tried to support South Vietnam with more supplies, but Congress vetoed.
- He was able to get out Americans and 140,000 South Vietnamese by helicopter though.
- Congress refused to allow him to engage in Communist skirmishes around the globe.
- He continued Nixon’s policy of Détente.

Essential Questions
1. What happened to Nixon’s Vice President in 1973?
2. Who became President when Nixon was resigned?
3. What did Gerald Ford do to Nixon? Why?