How Long Can You Be President?

DIRECTIONS: Read. Answer the questions.

A presidential term lasts for four years. George Washington was elected president without anyone running against him 1788 and again in 1792. He probably would have been elected again in 1796; in fact, there were a lot of people who wanted to make George Washington King! But he decided that two terms was enough. Our next President, John Adams, had had enough after one term. Thomas Jefferson, the third president, agreed that if there was no limit that anyone elected president could possibly end up in the position for life. Following George Washington’s example, all of our presidents left office voluntarily after two terms, up until 1933, when Franklin Delano Roosevelt decided to run for a third term. He won, and was even elected for a fourth term, but died a few months after his inauguration. After that, the 22nd Amendment was passed in 1947 limiting the number of full terms a president can serve to two. The amendment was ratified by the required number of states in 1951.

1. How many terms did George Washington serve as president?

2. How were future presidents influenced by how long Washington’s was president?

3. Which president was elected for four terms?

4. What constitutional amendment limits the number of presidential terms a person can serve?

5. Before the constitutional amendment, how were term limits enforced?