NOTE TAKING: Process

• In Binder or Notebook (for my CLASS only!)
• In the TOP RIGHT corner write the following:
  – 2/3/09 (DATE)
  – Evolution of Presidency (TITLE)
  – (OBJECTIVE)

TLW describe how the presidency has evolved throughout time.

QUESTION

Why do we have a president?
Deliberations at the Constitutional Convention

• Alternatives
  – Some (founders) proposed a plural executive
  – Some wanted an executive council to have veto power over presidential actions
  – Some (e.g., Alexander Hamilton) wanted a President with a life term
  – Eventually a compromise—single, elected President with fixed term of office (4 yrs)

Evolution of Presidency

• Concerns of the founders
  – Fear of an excessively strong President
    • “fetus of monarchy”
    • No term limits (until 22nd Amend. In 1951)
  – Fear of an excessively weak President
    • “tool of Senate” b/c of ratification and confirmation powers
  – “Make him too weak: the legislature will usurp his powers. Make him too strong: he will usurp the legislature.” Gouverneur Morris

Evolution of Presidency

• Election of the President
  – Some wanted Congress to elect President → fear of congressional dominance
  – Some wanted a direct election. Problems:
    • Inordinate weight to large states
    • Demagogues might have excessive appeals to the masses
    • Illiteracy was common
    • Communication was poor
  – Compromise: Electoral College
    • People had some input.
    • Large states good amount of influence—small states protected
    • Small states had more power if election thrown to HoFR
Evolution of Presidency

• Term of office:
  – Fear of an unlimited number of terms of office were quieted when Washington chose not to run for a third term
  – This precedent was followed until 1940...

Evolution of Presidency

The first Presidents: Washington-Monroe, 1789-1825

• All eminent men who were active in the movement for independence, all but Adams served two terms, all but Adams were from Virginia
• Washington warned against political parties—but they developed anyway
• General “rule of fitness” prevailed in making appointments. Partisanship did become a factor, but generally only well respected men received appointments
• Presidency kept modest. Congress was expected to take lead role in new gov’t

Evolution of Presidency

Andrew Jackson, 1829-1837, expansion of presidential power

• Use of spoils system
• Jackson vetoed 12 acts of Congress, more than all his predecessors combined.
• Jackson ignored a Supreme Court order regarding Indian removal
Evolution of Presidency
The reemergence of Congress, 1837-1932
• After Jackson’s term—Congress reestablished its power
• Brief flashes of presidential power (Lincoln—wartime)
• Of the next eight presidents—none served more than one term in office
• Presidency was seen as negative force (except T. Roosevelt, Wilson)—seen as source of opposition to Congress (Cleveland 414 vetos)
• Strong personality or a crisis forces President’s to become central figure
• Bush Jr. strengthened pres. authority (war powers & Patriot Act)

SUMMARIZE NOTES
• The most important step of note taking is to take what you have written down and write a summary.

• At the end of your notes—

• WRITE a 50 word summary describing how the presidency has evolved since the beginning of the United States.

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