

Data and Methods Appendixes

for “An Economic Ranking of the US Presidents, 1789-2009: A Data Based Approach”

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Appendix 1. Data Overview

1a. Base Measures

Mainstream economists, policymakers, and observers generally applaud an economy which simultaneously achieves four goals: increases national wealth, minimizes unemployment and inflation, and maintains a low balance of payments burden.¹ I therefore consider this combination of indicators to be my primary or “base” measure of economic performance. For my measure of change in national wealth, I use change in real gross domestic product per capita (in 2005 constant dollars). For inflation, I use consumer price index data, where the base period (=100) is the 1982-84 annual average. A simple percentage change in price levels is calculated for each administrative term. For unemployment, a simple change in unemployment as percentage of total civilian labor force is calculated for each administrative term. For change in balance of payments burden, I average the “grades” of two measures: change in trade balance and change in budget surplus, both as a percentage of real GDP. For trade balance, I calculate exports minus imports as a percentage of real GDP. For budget surplus, I use the annual US government budget surplus/deficit, also as a percentage of real GDP. A simple change in these percentages is then calculated for each administrative term.

1b. Secondary Measures

In order to construct my “overall” grades, I append to my “base” measures four additional indicators: stock market performance, currency strength, interest rates, and economic inequality. I include these additional indicators because 1) they are generally accepted as broad measures of macroeconomic performance, 2) reliable time-series data for them exist over long periods, and 3) they do not correlate highly with each other (or with the “base” indicators) and therefore likely capture different aspects of economic performance (see Appendixes, Table A). Data with these characteristics are rare. Furthermore, the “base” measures employ only four indicators, one of which (unemployment) contains data only from 1890 onward. Critics might argue that this is insufficient data upon which to base Presidential rankings. Therefore these secondary measures bring valuable scope and depth to the calculation. Methodological issues (correlations, consistency, commensurability) are discussed below.

The secondary measures are calculated as follows. Stock market performance is calculated as the percentage change in the Dow Jones Industrial Average during each administrative term. For currency strength, I calculate the change in the price of the British pound in US dollars for each administrative term. The British pound is a major currency throughout the time period under consideration, and therefore offers a rough *prima facie* indicator of US dollar strength. For interest rates, I use the US long-term rates (consistent series) to calculate the absolute change in interest rates (in percentage points) during each administrative term. Decreases in interest rates are judged as good for the overall economy, while rising rates suggest poorer conditions. For economic inequality, I use the change in the share of aggregate income received by wealthiest five percent of Americans. Since rising inequality is bad for a variety of socio-economic indicators, and perhaps even for democracy itself, decreases in economic inequality (a declining share of national income going to the wealthy) receive higher grades than increases in economic inequality.²

¹ Mankiw, N Gregory. 2011. *Principles of Macroeconomics 6th Edition*. Stamford, CT: South-Western College Publishers.

² Kaplan GA; Pamuk ER; Lynch JW; et al. 1996. Inequality in Income and Mortality in the United States: Analysis of Mortality and Potential Pathways. *British Medical Journal* 312(7037): 999-1003; Kelly, M. 2000. Inequality and Crime. *Review of Economics and*

Appendix 2. Grading Methodology

2a. General Approach

In calculating the grades and GPAs, each of the economic indicators is weighted equally and graded in an intuitive manner (see below), except for two indicators which need further discussion before proceeding: inflation and balance of payments. Although high inflation is generally disruptive to the macroeconomy, negative inflation is generally viewed as an economic catastrophe. Therefore lower inflation should not blindly earn a President a higher grade. Instead, adhering to assertions made by scholar-policymakers such as Ben Bernanke and Lawrence Summers, the highest grades are assigned to inflation in the 0-2 percent range.³ As inflation increases above 2 percent the inflation “grade” decreases. Since deflation is generally considered to be a worse situation and a more difficult policy problem to solve than inflation, the worst grades are reserved for negative inflation.⁴

For balance of payments, I grade two indicators separately (trade balance per GDP and budget surplus per GDP) and then average these two grades to arrive at a grade. Grades for budget surplus and trade balance are averaged together because, from a balance of payments point of view, they constitute somewhat orthogonal aspects of the same phenomenon (correlation = 0.56) with different mixes of private and public obligation, nor does one necessarily determine the other. Also, trade deficits have historically prompted distinctly different policy responses from government than have budget deficits.⁵

Timing is also controversial. It is not clear precisely when a new president becomes responsible for the behavior of the macroeconomy. Some scholars argue that presidents might have an effect on the economy immediately upon taking office, with the cases of FDR and Fillmore perhaps serving as the best examples.⁶ However, a one year lag is often used by most ranking exercises which use quantitative data.⁷ More recently, surveys have suggested that the public may award a new president as long as a two year honeymoon.⁸ Since there is no consensus as to how long of a “honeymoon” should be granted, the ranking exercise described below was calculated separately for honeymoons of zero, one, and two years.⁹

The economic performance GPAs were calculated in the following manner. First, each economic indicator was separately graded and curved for each presidential administration. All indicators were treated as individual grades and given equal weights (except for the two indicators which comprise the balance of payments grade, discussed above). In my first grading algorithm, I curved the grades into strict quintiles: the top 20 percent of performers received an “A” (4 points), the second 20 percent received a “B” (3 points), and so forth. Administrations with the same numerical grade were given the same letter grade. Since there are fifty-seven administrations in my sample, unequal quintiles were determined by the gap between numerical grades. That is, the numerical distance between letter grade divisions was maximized while still adhering as tightly as possible to strict quintiles. After the individual indicators were graded, they were combined via a simple average into an overall GPA for each administration. To arrive at Presidential grades, those executives with two terms (or more,

Statistics. 82(4): 530-539 ; Boix, Carles. 2008 Economic Roots of Civil Wars and Revolutions in the Contemporary World. *World Politics* 60(3):390-437.

³ Bernanke, Ben S. 2003. “A Perspective on Inflation Targeting”, Remarks at the Annual Washington Policy Conference of the National Association of Business Economists, Washington, D.C. March 25, 2003; Summers, Lawrence. 1991. “How Should Long-Term Monetary Policy Be Determined?” *Journal of Money Credit and Banking* 23(3), part 2: 625-631.

⁴ “Deflation in America: The Greater of Two Evils.” May 7th 2009. Economist; Williams, John C. 2009. The Risk of Deflation. *FRBSF Economic Letter*. Number 2009-12 (March 27, 2009) Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco

⁵ Lovett, William A., Alfred E. Eckes, Jr. and Richard L. Brinkman. 2004. *U.S. Trade Policy: History, Theory, and the WTO*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe; Eckes, Alfred E. Jr. 1995. *Opening America's Market: U.S. Foreign Trade Policy Since 1776*. Chapel Hill, NC : University of North Carolina Press; Wood, John H. 2009. *A History of Macroeconomic Policy in the United States*. New York: Routledge; Brownlee, W. Elliot. 2004. *Federal Taxation in America: A Short History*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

⁶ Eggertsson, 2008; Smith, Elbert B. 1988. *The Presidencies of Zachary Taylor and Millard Fillmore*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.

⁷ Dolan, Frensdreis, and Tatalovich. 2009.

⁸ A July 5 - 11, 2011 Quinnipiac University poll of 2,311 registered voters found that they blame W. Bush more than Obama for the poor state of the economy 54 - 27 percent, <http://www.quinnipiac.edu/polling.xml>; Gallup polls similarly reported that the majority of Americans first began to blame Obama, rather than W. Bush, for the economy in mid-September 2011, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/149600/Slight-Majority-Blame-Obama-Economy.aspx>.

⁹ For more, see Samuels, D. 2004. Presidentialism and Accountability for the Economy in Comparative Perspective. *American Political Science Review* 98(3): 425-436.

in the case of FDR) had their two administration grades averaged into a single Presidential grade before being curved into letter grades according to the “strict quintiles” approach described above.

In a second algorithm, I used a similar procedure to that described above except that, instead of strict quintiles, I imposed my own bell-curve. Specifically I awarded a “C” (2 points) to all scores within one standard deviation of the mean, centered on the mean. For the next half standard deviation, I awarded a “B” or “D” as appropriate; for the remaining administrations, I awarded an “A” or “F” accordingly. This method rewards/punishes extremes in performance, hopefully better identifying truly great or poor executives, while expanding the number of administrations considered to be merely average. Since scores fell within two standard deviations of the mean for most indicators, the result for each indicator was usually a classic bell-curve, though sometimes a bell-curve with a slightly flared tail(s) resulted. Again, administrations with the same numerical grade were given the same letter grade, care was taken to maximize the gap between letter grades while still adhering as closely as possible to the algorithm, and different honeymoons were calculated separately.

The final GPA calculation brought together all of the above GPAs to produce Table 2. For each President, each final “strict quintile” and “bell-curve” GPA for each honeymoon was averaged together and a final GPA assigned. Thus, in order to earn an “A-/B+” or higher, a president or administration had to consistently score well, regardless of honeymoon period or grading algorithm. His excellent performance must be robust across different indicators, time periods, and grading algorithms. No matter how one sliced the quantitative data, the excellent performance came through. Likewise, in order to earn an “D-” or below, a president or administration had to consistently and robustly perform poorly. As grades head from these extremes towards “C”, they indicate either mixed, uneven performance (across time, indicator, or algorithm) or consistent performance at a particular grade level. In this final grade assignment, finer gradations were allowed (4=A, 3.75=A-, 3.5=A-/B+, 3.25=B+, 3=B, and so forth) to communicate a more nuanced and honest ranking. To produce Table 3, each administration was treated in a similar manner.

Note that this method of calculating grades and ranks permits only the consideration of raw data, unadjusted for historical context, presidential character, intentionality, or ethical behavior. For example, Lincoln gets no “extra points” for having to fight a Civil War or ending slavery; neither Nixon nor Harding receive any demerits for their administrations’ scandals. These relatively subjective adjustments are best left to qualitative case studies, preferably using methodologies which attempt to minimize the personal, political, or cultural biases of the researcher. Perhaps the only obvious bias in my exercise is that towards the mainstream American neoclassical economic assumptions which underlie it; yet, even here, a measure of income inequality is included to judge equity.

2b. Correlations

Table A: Correlation Matrix of Economic Indicators (n=25)

	GDP/cap	CPI	Unemplmt	TradBal/gdp	Budgt/gdp	\$-Price of £	Interest	Dow Jones	Inequality
GDP/cap	1								
CPI	0.14	1							
Unemplmt	-0.86	-0.23	1						
TradBal/gdp	0.07	0.16	-0.01	1					
Budgt/gdp	-0.04	-0.28	0.07	0.37	1				
\$-Price of £	0.19	0.05	-0.34	-0.35	-0.29	1			
Interest	-0.14	0.42	0.16	0.21	0.31	-0.06	1		
Dow Jones	0.42	-0.13	-0.49	0.08	0.05	0.32	-0.36	1	
Inequality	-0.58	-0.17	0.44	-0.12	0.11	-0.02	-0.04	0.28	1

Table A reports the correlation matrix for the data. The only high correlation is between unemployment and per capita wealth. Economic theory and traditional mainstream views of performance both strongly suggest that these two metrics should not be lumped together into a single measure, nor should one be dropped from the calculation. As a robustness test, I ran the ranking exercise without unemployment, and again without wealth. Both tests resulted in only marginal differences in the final GPA calculations. Other relatively high correlations

with wealth include inequality and stock market performance, while the pairs of interest rates/inflation, stock market/unemployment, and inequality/unemployment have correlations above 0.40. Again, none of these correlations are judged as strong enough to produce issues serious enough to degrade the current ranking exercise. Other scholars might consider using factor analysis to construct a single measure from these components, or investigating different weightings of the individual measures.

2c. Consistency

One issue worth addressing explicitly is GPA consistency across different algorithms. The replication of a finding using different and competing methods is often the best confirmation of any scientific measure.¹⁰ I therefore report the results, in Table B, of how consistent Presidential grades were across different ranking algorithms (e.g. different honeymoon periods, “straight quintile” vs. “bell-curve” method). Six presidents were “perfectly” consistent. That is, they were awarded the same grade regardless of which honeymoon period or approach towards the grade curve was used. Ten presidents had “high” consistency. In this case all grades but one were identical, and the outlier was the adjacent grade (e.g. one “B” and the rest “A’s”). The two Presidents with “above average” consistencies received all grades but one identical, and the outlier was not an adjacent grade (e.g. one “C” and the rest “A’s”). The remaining consistency ranks degrade logically; the more the assigned grades varied according to different algorithms, the lower the consistency rank. At the furthest, extreme, Nixon and Ford were ranked as “inconsistent”, extremely sensitive to honeymoon period and grade curve. To a certain degree, some correlation between grade and consistency makes sense: the best/worst performers should consistently score high/low across different algorithms, they should be consistently good or bad. Meanwhile, Presidents with mixed performances, hence more average overall GPAs, should be inconsistent across different algorithms. As expected, the most inconsistent Presidencies (Nixon, Ford) returned average overall GPAs. However, there were also some Presidents with average GPAs who were highly consistent in their average-ness (Grant, Tyler, LBJ, Ike).

Table B: Consistency of President’s Grades Across Ranking Algorithms*

<u>Perfect:</u>	<u>High:</u>	<u>Above Ave.:</u>
FDR A	Harding A	Fillmore A-
Clinton B	Hayes A	Washington A-
Reagan B	McKinley A	
Monroe D	Ike B-	
Hoover F	LBJ B-	
Van Buren F	Grant C+	
	Tyler C+	
	Taft D+	
	Arthur F+	
	Harrison F+	
<u>Average:</u>		
J. Adams A-/B+		
Truman A-/B+		
JFK B+		
Cleveland B-/C+		
Wilson B-/C+		

¹⁰ Tashakkori, Abbas and Charles Teddlie (eds.). 2003. *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioral Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications; Denzin, Norman K. 1978. *The Research Act*, 2d ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.

W. Bush	D		
A. Johnson	D-		
Buchanan	D-		
J.Q. Adams	D-		
Jackson	D-		
<u>Below Ave:</u>		<u>Poor:</u>	<u>Inconsistent:</u>
Coolidge	B-	H. Bush	B-/C+
Polk	C+	Lincoln	C-/D+
Teddy	C	Carter	D
Pierce	D+	Jefferson	B-/C+
Madison	D	Taylor	B-/C+
		Nixon	C
		Ford	C

*Grades shown here are the economic performance grades indicated Table 1

2d. Commensurability

There is also the issue of data commensurability. Data are available from 1789 onwards for some indicators, but other time series start more recently (Table 1). There is no mathematically optimal way to deal with this issue; tradeoffs are involved. Imputing or estimating the missing data are too fraught with difficulty and error to be a reliable option.¹¹ A conservative solution would be to drop the incomplete time-series, but I argue that this would eliminate much valuable data and likely result in an unrepresentative, biased measure, at least for some presidents. My solution is to err on the side of more information. I use all the data available to produce the grades and rankings (Tables 1 and 2), but show the correlation of GPAs between the different data combinations, and let the readers judge for themselves. This approach has merit in academic practice. To continue with the analogy of grades in school, if some students miss some weekly quizzes for health reasons, most teachers do not simply drop those quizzes for all students in the final grade calculation. Rather, if no make-ups are permitted, then one standard practice is to drop the missed quizzes from those particular students' grade calculation. This is precisely the solution used here towards the Presidential grades. This solution may still introduce bias for some Presidents, but I argue that the informational gains outweigh the penalties. Also all data are made available for readers to investigate for themselves. Interested scholars can then address those instances which they find to be controversial using case-study research or more in-depth quantitative methods.

¹¹ Feinstein, Charles H. and Mark Thomas. 2002. A Plea for Errors (Historical data, Industrial Revolution). *Historical Methods* 35(4):155-165

Appendix 3. Data Sources

Several datasets are taken from the MeasuringWorth Project based out of the Economics Department at the University of Illinois at Chicago. For more information see <http://measuringworth.com/aboutus.php>.

3a. Primary Indicators

GDP: Millions of 2005 constant dollars. Johnston, Louis and Samuel H. Williamson. 2011. "What Was the U.S. GDP Then?" MeasuringWorth. <http://www.measuringworth.org/usgdp/>

Inflation: Officer, Lawrence H. 2011. "The Annual Consumer Price Index for the United States, 1774-2010," MeasuringWorth. <http://www.measuringworth.com/usdpi/>

Employment: 1890-1947 data from "Labor Force, Series D 85-86 Unemployment 1890-1970" Chapter D "Labor" *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970, Part 1* (Wash DC: US Department of Commerce) page 135; 1948-2010 data from "(Seas) Unemployment Rate" Series Id: LNS14000000 (Seasonally Adjusted). 1947-2010 Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey Bureau of Labor Statistics, US Department of Labor, accessed online at data.bls.gov.

Exports, Imports: 1790-1970 data from US Bureau of the Census. 1975. *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970, Part 2*, "Chapter U: International Transactions and Foreign Commerce". Washington DC: USGPO: "Series U 1-25 Balance of Payments 1790-1970": pp. 864-866, columns labeled "Exports of Goods & Services, Total" and "Imports of Goods & Services, Total". 1971-2010 data are Exports, Imports of goods and services and income receipts from Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. International Transactions Accounts Data, Table 1. U.S. International Transactions. I subtract imports from exports, then compute the result as a percentage of real GDP (rGDP), and finally calculate the change in the per-rGDP figure over the administration. I find there is little substantive difference between the old 1790-1970 US Census numbers and the BEA data, nor does the inclusion/exclusion of income receipts, etc. make a significant difference in the outcome.

Federal Budget: 1790-1900 data from US Bureau of the Census. 1975. *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970, Part 2*, using the following tables on page 1104-1105: Series Y 335-338 "Summary of Federal Government Finances--Administrative Budget 1789-1939" From this table use the column labeled "Surplus or Deficit". 1901-2010 data from "Table 1.1—Summary of Receipts, Outlays, and Surpluses or Deficits (: 1789–2016" from *Budget of the United States Government Historical Tables Fiscal Year 2012*.

Govt. Debt: 1790-1939 data from *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970, Part 2*. Bureau of the Census, US Department of Commerce. Washington DC 1975 using the following tables on page 1117-1118, Series Y 493-504 "Public Debt of the Federal Government 1791-1970" in Chapter Y: Government-Elections and Politics (Series Y 1-271); from this table use the column labeled "Total Public Debt". 1940-2010 data from Table 7.1—Federal Debt at the End of Year: 1940–2016 from *Budget of the United States Government: Historical Tables Fiscal Year 2012*, column entitled "Gross Federal Debt"

3b. Secondary Indicators

Value of Dollar: Officer, Lawrence H. 2011. "Dollar-Pound Exchange Rate From 1791" MeasuringWorth. <http://www.measuringworth.org/exchangepond/>

Interest Rates: US Long-Term interest rates (Consistent Series). Yield on long-term bonds, those that mature in at least 15 or 20 years. The "consistent series" involves smoothing of the corresponding contemporary series, showing the interest rate from the standpoint of the year-2001 observer. From Officer, Lawrence H. 2011. "What Was the Interest Rate Then?" MeasuringWorth. <http://www.measuringworth.com/interestrates/>

Dow Jones: annual percentage performance of the Dow Jones Average (close on Dec 31 of prior year to Dec 31 close of current year). Williamson, Samuel H. 2011. "Daily Closing Values of the DJIA in the United States, 1885 to Present," MeasuringWorth. <http://www.measuringworth.com/DJA/>

Economic Inequality: 1913-1948 data from Lindert, Peter H. 2000. Three Centuries of Inequality in Britain and America. In A.B. Atkinson and François Bourguignon (eds.), *Handbook of Income Distribution*, volume 1. Amsterdam: Elsevier Science, Ch. 3 (pp. 167-216). 1949-2010 data from. Table F-2. Share of Aggregate Income Received by Each Fifth and Top 5 Percent of Families, All Races: 1947 to 2010 from U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplements. For the one-year and two-year honeymoon calculations, for 1949 the percentage change in CPS data is used to estimate the shifted change in Kuznets data in Linder. Since the measurement sought is percentage point change during each administration, data consistency within administrations is important; investigation of the data suggests that differences between datasets are minor and should not affect the calculations performed in this article.

Appendix 4. Irregular Presidential Administrations

In determining the assignment of irregular administrative terms, I took historical context into account, deciding case-by-case which administration should be assigned to particular years. Alternative approaches might rule that any President serving less than one year has his time awarded to his successor. Or one could take the data's point of view, and award the year to whomever held the majority of that year. I leave these alternate calculations to other scholars, however my suspicion is that they would not be significantly different than those presented here. Indeed, my practice of triangulation using different honeymoon periods should address these issues.

Table C: Irregular Terms of Office

<u>President</u>	<u>Term</u>	<u>Approx Time in Office</u>	<u>Data Treatment</u>
W.H. Harrison	Mar 4, 1841 – Apr 4, 1841	1 month	Omitted. 1841 awarded to Tyler
Taylor	Mar 4, 1849 – Jul 9, 1850	15 months	Two years, 1849 and 1850
Fillmore	Jul 9, 1850 – Mar 4, 1853	32 months	Three years, 1850 through 1852 inclusive
Lincoln ²	Mar 4, 1865 – Apr 15, 1865	1 month	Omitted. 1865 awarded to A. Johnson
Garfield	Mar 4, 1881 – Sep 19, 1881	6 months	Omitted. 1881 awarded to Arthur.
McKinley ¹	Mar 4, 1897 – Mar 4, 1901	48 months	Five years, 1897 through 1901 inclusive.
McKinley ²	Mar 4, 1901 – Sep 14, 1901	6 months	Omitted. 1901 awarded to McKinley ¹ .
TR ¹	Sep 14 1901 – Mar 4, 1905	42 months	Three years, 1902 through 1904 inclusive
Harding	Mar 4, 1921 – Aug 2, 1923	27 months	Three years, 1921 through 1923 inclusive.
Coolidge	Aug 2, 1923 – Mar 4, 1925	19 months	Five years, 1924 through 1928 inclusive, treated as a single term.
FDR ⁴	Jan 20, 1945 – Apr 12, 1945	3 months	Omitted. 1945 awarded to Truman ¹ .
JFK	Jan 20, 1961 – Nov 22, 1963	35 months	Three years, 1961 through 1963 inclusive.
LBJ	Nov 22, 1963 – Jan 20, 1969	62 months	Five years, 1964 through 1968 inclusive, treated as a single term.
Nixon ²	Jan 20, 1973 – Aug 9, 1974	19 months	Two years, 1973-1974.
Ford	Aug 9, 1974 – Jan 20, 1977	29 months	Two years, 1975-1976.

W.H. Harrison (1841): omitted, time awarded to Tyler. Harrison served as President for only one month, March 4-April 4, during which time he mostly dealt with appointments or was ill. Congress was out of session, hence legislative and policy activities were minimal. Harrison did call the newly elected 27th Congress into special session, but it did not meet until almost two months after his death. By September, all of Harrison's cabinet had resigned from Tyler's administration, except for Secretary of State Daniel Webster.

Taylor (1850): Awarded two years, 1849 and 1850. In the Taylor-Fillmore case, both men can arguably claim 1850 as their own because: 1) the transfer of power occurred in mid-year; 2) the Federal government was active during this time (Congress was in session); 3) Presidential action had an immediate impact on policy (specifically the Compromise of 1850); 4) Taylor and Fillmore differed distinctly in their policy and administrative philosophies. Taylor believed in a passive executive and rarely included Vice President Fillmore in his councils or agenda. Taylor also opposed the spread of slavery, hence likely would have vetoed elements of the Compromise of 1850, possibly even fomented violent confrontation with the South. See below.

Fillmore (1850): Awarded three years, 1850-1852, inclusive. Fillmore had an immediate effect on policy upon taking office. Fillmore accepted the resignations of the existing cabinet members and replaced them all, a hitherto unprecedented change in top advisors and department heads. Also, Fillmore had a distinctly different theory of the Presidency, and decidedly different views on slavery, than his predecessor. His activist approach in support of the Compromise of 1850 ensured its passage. This had implications for the markets for labor, cotton, and land.

Lincoln2 (1865): omitted, time awarded to A. Johnson.

Garfield (1881): omitted, time awarded to Arthur. Garfield had an active administration of only four months (March 4 to July 2). During this time, his only major economic action was to negotiate a re-financing of US Civil War era bonds. He also reasserted the Presidential prerogative over the Senate in executive appointments and addressed the US Post Office's "Star Route" fraud, thus advancing civil service reform. However, much of his active administration was spent on dealing with a barrage of office-seekers which culminated in a standoff with fellow Republican and New York machine boss, Senator Roscoe Conkling, perhaps contributing to his assassination by a mentally ill patronage-seeker. After Garfield was shot, his biographer reports that "The only *bona fide* executive business that Garfield completed during his illness was the signing of an extradition treaty to return a jailed forger to Canada...In effect, for most of the summer of 1881, the United States of America was without a functioning chief executive."¹²

McKinley2 (1901): omitted, time awarded to McKinley1. McKinley's brief second term was largely devoted to foreign policy, specifically settling issues in Cuba and the Philippines. Congress went out of session after early March, not to return until months after his assassination. From May onwards, McKinley either traveled or vacationed at home in Ohio.

Harding (1923): awarded 1921-1923 inclusive.

Coolidge (1923): Awarded 1924-1928 inclusive. Congress was out of session when his predecessor, Harding, died (Aug 2, 1923) and did not return to session until early December. A former Massachusetts governor with no Federal experience, Coolidge was entirely new to Washington when he arrived. As vice president, Coolidge had been allowed to join Harding's cabinet meetings, but he did not participate. He was not deeply involved in any Harding agenda items. Instead he was given speeches to make, but otherwise his biographer reports that "Coolidge wasn't much of a force in politics, the capital or the nation".¹³ After his succession to the presidency, Coolidge retained Harding's cabinet and policy agenda at first. He asserted his own stamp on it only in 1924.

FDR4 (1945): omitted, time awarded to Truman1. FDR's final term lasted only three months, Jan 20 – April 12.

JFK (1963): awarded three years, 1961-1963 inclusive.

LBJ (1963): awarded one five-year term, 1964-1968 inclusive.

Nixon2 (1974): awarded two years, 1973-1974.

Ford (1974): awarded two years, 1975-1976. Assumed the vice-presidency from the position of House minority leader in Dec 1973, after Vice President Spiro Agnew's resignation. Ford served only eight months as VP, during which time he mostly stumped for the Republican party and Nixon's 1974 re-election campaign, and occasionally acted as lobbyist for Nixon's legislation on Capitol Hill.

¹² Rutkow, Ira. 2006. *James A. Garfield*. New York: Times Books, Henry Holt & Co. p. 121-122

¹³ Greenberg, David. 2006. *Calvin Coolidge*. New York: Time Books.