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Numbers of Presidents, Inaugurations, etc.

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Numbers of Presidents, Inaugurations, etc.

Can you explain why there have been 55 inaugurations but only 43 presidents?

I do not know your age, but you ask a question that is a favorite among school children and history buffs.

Let's first tackle the number of presidents. George W. Bush is our nation's 43rd president, as your question notes. But -- he is only the 42nd person to serve as president. That is because Grover Cleveland's two terms (1885-1889 and 1893-1897) were not consecutive, but interrupted by Benjamin Harrison's term (1889-1893), so Cleveland is referred to as the 22nd and 24th president of the United States.



So there have been 43 presidents but 55 inaugurations. Why?

- Exactly 21 presidents have been inaugurated once (Adams, Quincy Adams, Van Buren, Harrison, Polk, Taylor, Pierce, Buchanan, Hayes, Garfield, B. Harrison, Theodore Roosevelt, Taft, Harding, Coolidge, Hoover, Truman, Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Carter, and Bush).

- Exactly 16 presidents have been inaugurated twice (Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Jackson, Lincoln, Grant, Cleveland, McKinley, Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, Eisenhower, Nixon, Reagan, Clinton, and George W. Bush). That adds up to 32 inaugurations.

- Franklin Roosevelt was inaugurated a third and fourth time.

That's how you get to 55 inaugurations in U.S. history.

Not to complicate the picture, but five presidents (Tyler, Fillmore, Andrew Johnson, Arthur, and Ford) were not formally inaugurated. That is because they were vice presidents who finished the term of a president who died or resigned. Even though these five did not go through an inauguration, they were, in accordance with Article II, Section 1, of the U.S. Constitution, sworn in

(Question from Susie O.)