

Ivy League Plus Universities and the American Presidency

How many Ivy League universities are there?

Can you name an American president who attended an Ivy League university?

Madam Toastmaster, fellow toastmasters, and esteemed guests, for my researching and presenting project I chose to look at Ivy League Plus universities and American presidents who earned degrees there.

My speech has two parts. First, I will describe the Ivy League Plus universities and interesting facts about these. Next, I will present the results of my inquiry into which American presidents earned degrees there. Finally, I will conclude with a summary to answer the questions I raised.

From my Summer at Harvard in 2005, I came across the list of eleven universities that Harvard, including itself, considered peer institutions. These are the eight Ivy League universities, MIT, Stanford, and University of Chicago. [Put page 1 of PDF] These are sometimes loosely referred to as Ivy League Plus universities. This table shows their location and year of founding.

Among the eight Ivy League universities on top, seven were formed in American colonies before the revolutionary war. Among the eleven Ivy League Plus universities, nine are in those original 13 American colonies that did not secede from the union. Only Stanford and University of Chicago are outside of that region.

Next, I will present the results of which American presidents earned degrees at these eleven universities. There are a total of 16 American presidents who earned degrees at five of the eight Ivy League universities and President Herbert Hoover at Stanford. The table lists the presidents in order of their last names. [Put page 2 of PDF]

Of these, President George W. Bush and President Barack Obama earned degrees at two Ivy League universities. President Theodore Roosevelt and President Franklin Delano Roosevelt also attended two Ivy League universities but did not complete their second degrees. Their second degrees were awarded posthumously by Columbia Law School in 2008. The only president who earned a Ph.D. was Woodrow Wilson, who also served as president of Princeton University.

Three of these sixteen American presidents, three were awarded Nobel Peace Prize. They are President Theodore Roosevelt, President Woodrow Wilson, and President Barack Obama. Of these, one American president, President William Howard Taft, later became Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court.

In American history, there have been two presidents whose sons also became president. These are President John Adams and President John Quincy Adams, both of whom earned degrees at Harvard and the first and second Presidents Bush, both of whom earned their undergraduate degrees at Yale. Distant cousins Theodore Roosevelt and Franklin Delano Roosevelt both earned their undergraduate degrees at Harvard.

Thus, there are eight Ivy League universities. In addition, MIT, Stanford, and University of Chicago were considered peer institutions. Sixteen American presidents have earned one or more degrees at these eleven universities.