

Activity – read the beginning of the Sample Answer below and complete the essay. Don't forget a conclusion.

How did the power of the President change between 1945-1973?

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The role of the President of the United States has grown in importance since its inception after the War of Independence. What began as an honorary role has grown to be one of the most powerful figures in the world. The power of the president evolved greatly during 1945 with Truman to Nixon in 1973.

In understanding the change in the power of the President it is important to understand the role. The ability to make laws is divided between the President, Congress and the Supreme Courts. This has created a system of checks and balances which allows each branch to have some control over the other two branches. The President can propose laws for congress and have a large influence on laws but he has to work to ensure the support of congress. He is in a strong position if his party is in the majority but still has to work to gain influence. In terms of Foreign Policy Director he can make treaties, appoint ambassadors and meet with foreign diplomats but the power to declare war rests with Congress.

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The growth of the presidency has depended on a number of factors such as the strength of the individual presidents. Some such as Johnson had greater powers of persuasion. Their own political beliefs also had a role to play. Democrats favour more government intervention in economic and social affairs whereas Republicans are opposed to federal government intervention and prefer to give more power to individual states. The circumstances at the time such as economic problems and involvement in international affairs such as the Cold War and the complex problems of a changing American society also has a part to play in how the power of the President changed.

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The era between 1945 and 1973 has been called by historians as the growth of Imperial Presidency where more and more power was centralised in the hands of the President. When Truman took control he was faced with two problems: how to defeat Japan and deal with the Cold War with Russia. He personally believed in a strong, moral presidency and had a motto on his table in the Oval Office "The Buck Stops Here". He took decisive action in the dropping of the Atomic Bomb. The policy of containment of Communism was formulated with his own beliefs as outlined in the Truman Doctrine and the circumstances of the time. It was with domestic policies that Truman encountered checks on the growth of Presidential power. A Conservative block of Republicans and Southern Democrats did not want to Federal government influence expanded. Many of his policies were turned down. He did however issue some executive orders which ended racial discrimination in federal employment.

Eisenhower at the end of his presidency was accused of not making enough of his powers. AS a Republican he favoured cutting back big government and felt his predecessors had taken over some of the powers of Congress. He still opposed efforts to reduce the power of the Presidency to negotiate agreements and treaties with foreign powers.

Under Kennedy the power of the Presidency was shown.....