Watergate:
A Turning Point in American Trust

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When choosing a topic, we considered something close to home that we had always been curious about. Driving by the mysterious-looking Watergate Hotel frequently made us wonder what went on behind its walls. We are both interested in politics and the government, so believed that studying the Watergate scandal would be a perfect opportunity to delve deeper into both of these topics. We were both familiar with the general plot of the scandal, but never knew about its specific details, which motivated us to research the topic. The Watergate scandal revealed to us the importance of political transparency and campaign finance management.

When we began researching Watergate, we started with databases to gain general information. We used articles containing timelines and overviews of the scandal. Once we understood enough details about Watergate, we moved towards secondary sources which mainly allowed us to understand its significance. We began creating notecards and carefully sorted them into different piles such as Nixon's resignation and the lasting effects of Watergate. Lastly, we utilized primary sources such as newspaper articles from the Washington Post, especially articles written by the famous duo Woodward and Bernstein.

Deciding on our category was a bit difficult at first. We originally planned to use a website, but were having technical difficulties and decided that we could showcase our knowledge more engagingly. We then pivoted to a performance and were nervous about our decision, but then quickly grew to love our new presentation category. We began writing our script in the shoes of two University of Chicago students who voted for Nixon. The storyline follows the two students, Michael and Christopher through their tracking of the scandal and how their opinions change. We thought that choosing a student perspective would be a unique and exciting idea. We continued to edit the script as we went and when we finally were confident about it we planned costumes and props.

The Watergate scandal relates to this year's theme of turning points in history because it marks a large change in the relationship between American citizens and the government. For example, the percentage of Americans who viewed the president as a man of high integrity dropped from 63% to 35% between 1973 and 1974. Reform was made after Nixon's resignation that have been crucial to modern-day government such as the Privacy Act of 1974 and the Hughes-Ryan amendment. The present-day effects of Watergate exist strongly in the minds of American voters because today we vote for candidates whom we can trust and believe in instead of candidates with extensive government experience.

Bibliography

By Jim Mann and Bob Woodward Washington Post Staff Writers. "Judge Seals Watergate Testimony: Watergate Case Testimony Sealed." *The Washington Post, Times Herald (1959-1973)* (Washington, D.C.), 1972, 2. ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Washington Post (148283686).

This primary source newspaper explains how all Watergate testimonies have been sealed. We used this source to show how little the public knew and was able to know about the case because the judges wanted to protect the people's involved constitutional rights.

By Laurence Stern Washington Post Staff Writer. "New CIA Head Vows to Shun 'Watergates': No 'Watergates,' CIA Head Pledges." *The Washington Post, Times Herald (1959-1973)* (Washington, D.C.), 1973, 2. ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Washington Post (148396170).

A primary newspaper source explaining how the CIA properly used its powers and was ethically involved in Watergate. We used this source to prove that not all members of security within the government are bad and should not be distrusted.

By Stephen Green Washington Post Staff Writer. "Watergate Prosecutors Admit Error: Prosecutors Admit Watergate Errors." *The Washington Post (1974-)* (Washington, D.C.), 1974, 2. ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Washington Post (146168634).

A primary source explaining how Watergate prosecutors on trial admitted to the Judiciary Committee that they made at least two errors throughout the handling of the investigation. This source was used in our presentation to show how the Watergate prosecutors were so unwilling and distrustful of the evidence that they found against Nixon because they did not want to believe that he was guilty.

Corn, Davis, and Jeff Goldberg. "How Mark Felt Fooled the FBI." *Nation* 281, no. 1 (2005): 19-23. MAS Ultra - School Edition.

A secondary newspaper source discusses Mark Felt, the man who leaked the details of Watergate and did not get in trouble because he supplied essential information. We used this source to show how Mark Felt deceived the FBI and was Woodward and Bernstein's inside source throughout the scandal, highlighting how he thought he would never be caught due to his close relationship with Nixon.

Daily Telegraph (London, England). "My Chilling Night in the Watergate 'Scandal Room' the Notorious Crime Scene Attracts Tourists, 50 Years On. by Chris Leadbeater." June 17, 2022, 5. Gale in Context: Global Issues.

A secondary source article discusses how Watergate is still widely remembered 50 years after the fact and can be seen in modern media. We used this source to show how greatly the negative Watergate legacy impacted the United States and how they viewed the government.

"Dark Days in the White House." In *American Decades Primary Sources*, edited by Cynthia Rose, 230-35. Vol. 8. Detroit, MI: Gale, 2004. Gale in Context: U.S. History.

A primary source explaining Watergate and its significance with sources from its time. We used this source more specifically to go into depth on the arrest of the five burglars and what their criminal charges were.

Dean, John W., and James Robenalt. "The Legacy of Watergate." *Litigation* 38, no. 3 (2012): 19-25. JSTOR.
A secondary source that explains the legacy of Watergate in detail and how it has affected our government today. We are using this source to prove that Watergate has had lasting effects on society and the government.

de Vries, Tity. "The 1967 Central Intelligence Agency Scandal: Catalyst in a Transforming Relationship between State and People." *The Journal of American History* 98, no. 4 (2012): 1075-92. JSTOR.
A secondary source that explains the role of the CIA in Watergate. We are using this source to illustrate how the scandal lowered trust in the CIA because of their illegal and unethical practices throughout Watergate.

Dunlap, Riley E., and Robert L. Wisniewski. "The Effect of Watergate on Political Party Identification: Results from a 1970-1974 Panel Study." *Sociological Focus* 11, no. 2 (1978): 69-80. JSTOR.
This is a secondary source that provides detailed information in graphs and writing about the change over time in American voting statistics and overall trust in the government. We are using this source to provide statistics and proof of Watergate's direct effect on the American people.

Ervin, Sam J. "Watergate and the Presidency (1972)." In *The Constitution and Supreme Court*. American Journey. Woodbridge, CT: Primary Source Media, 1999. Gale in Context: U.S. History.
A secondary source article outlining what Watergate was and how Nixon got involved in the first place. We used this article to show and go more into depth on how news sources and journalists got their information before even the people involved found out.

Federal Bureau of Investigation. *Watergate (Summary)*. Report no. 139-4089. N.p., 1974. Federal Bureau of Investigation.
A summary of Watergate and its investigation by the FBI. We used this resource to gather information about the FBI's perspective and compare it to contrasting opinions which concluded that the FBI was involved in Watergate.

Flanagan, Richard M., and Louis W. Koenig. "Watergate." In *Dictionary of American History*, 3rd ed., edited by Stanley I. Kutler, 425-28. Vol. 8. New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2003. Gale in Context: U.S. History.
A secondary source describes in detail the beginning of Watergate and how Nixon became involved with his involvement in the coverup along with the initial impeachment charges against Nixon. We used this source to show how Watergate's initial roots are to be traced back to the White House disappointment in the 1970 congressional elections and also to reveal that White House defendants were pressured to plead guilty, therefore, committing perjury.

Genovese, Michael A. "The Lessons of Watergate: Thirty Years on." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (2004): 455-57. JSTOR.
Secondary source reviewing Watergate's legacy and negative impact on American political society a multitude of years later. We used this source to show that no matter how much time goes by American trust in the government will never be the same as it was before Watergate.

Greenberg, David. "Nixon, Resignation of." In *Dictionary of American History*, 3rd ed., edited by Stanley I. Kutler, 110-12. Vol. 6. New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2003. Gale in Context: U.S. History.
A secondary source that goes into depth on the intricate details of Nixon's resignation. Wee used this source to show that even with Nixon resigning from his position and making a public apology American government was forever changed for the worse because of Watergate.

History Staff. "The Watergate Scandal: A Timeline." History. Last modified October 9, 2018. https://www.history.com/news/watergate-scandal-timeline-nixon.
A timeline of Watergate is given in this source. We used this source at the beginning of our research to familiarize ourselves with key events and when each of them occurred.

Kassop, Nancy S. "United States V. Nixon." In *American Governance*, edited by Stephen Schechter, Thomas S. Vontz, Thomas A. Birkland, Mark A. Graber, and John J. Patrick, 226-28. Vol. 5. Farmington Hills, MI: Macmillan Reference USA, 2016. Gale in Context: U.S. History.
United States v. Nixon where constitutional authority is used to defend Nixon. We used this source to determine whether the court case itself was the turning point and later concluded that it was not.

McLeod, Jack M., Jane D. Brown, and Lee B. Becker. "Watergate and the 1974 Congressional Elections." *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 41, no. 2 (1977): 181-95. JSTOR.
Secondary source outlining Watergate's influence on the 1974 Congressional Elections. We used this source to show how Watergate caused speculation involving the values of the American government which ultimately affected the Congressional Elections.

"The Media and Watergate." In *American Decades*, edited by Judith S. Baughman, Victor Bondi, Richard Layman, Tandy McConnell, and Vincent Tompkins. Vol. 8. Detroit, MI: Gale, 2001. Gale in Context: U.S. History.
Secondary source describing the media's prominent involvement in Watergate. We used this source to show how Woodward and Bernstein uncovered the scandal of the century and were for the American people to know the truth. In other words, Woodward and Bernstein were unwilling to take bribes because they knew how important their investigative journalism for Watergate was for the future of the American government.

Nixon, Richard M. "Richard M. Nixon: Letter of Resignation, 1974." In *Gale U.S. History Online Collection*. Detroit, MI: Gale, 2015. Gale in Context: U.S. History.

A primary source describing the historical context in which Watergate took place and what Nixon's initiatives were when going into his presidency. We used this source to show Nixon's involvement in the Vietnam War and how his strong foreign connections were changed after Watergate.

Okpaku, Joseph, and Bonnie Schulman. "Who's Who and What's What in Watergate." *Transition*, no. 45 (1974): 70-74. https://doi.org/10.2307/2935030.
Secondary source outlining important details regarding the people involved in Watergate and why they were involved, as well as including some notable dates. We used this source to gain better knowledge of who was involved and what was behind their motive for their involvement in Watergate.

Phillips, Andrew. "The Legacy of Watergate." *Maclean's* 110, no. 24 (1997): 31. Academic Search Premier.
Secondary source about the lingering negative legacy that Watergate holds onto in today's society. We used this source to show how many people were still infatuated by Watergate and how multiple people did not understand how Nixon could lie to the American people. Overall, this source was used to show declining distrust in the American government after Watergate.

"Richard Nixon's Smoking Gun Tape." In *Gale U.S. History Online Collection*. Detroit, MI: Gale, 2014. Gale in Context: U.S. History.
The infamous "Richard Nixon's Smoking Gun Tape," in the recording Nixon is found guilty of criminal conspiracy and obstruction of justice. We used this source to show how Nixon was trying to use his power to take advantage of the Watergate investigation and lead them the wrong way before he got caught on tape.

"Richard Nixon: Presidential Tape Recordings Address (1974)." *American Government*. Last modified 2024. https://americangovernment.abc-clio.com/Search/Display/210687.
Primary source where Nixon speaks on his incriminating tape recordings. We used this source to show how willing Nixon was to commit criminal acts to save face in front of the American people, but when he admitted to his wrongdoings he took full responsibility because he could no longer deny the facts.

Ritchie, Donald A. "Investigating the Watergate Scandal." *OAH Magazine of History* 12, no. 4 (1998): 49-53. JSTOR.
This source gave details on the testimonies made throughout Watergate and prompted the reader with analytical questions. We used this source to gather information on each testimony, especially Nixon's defense.

Robenalt, James D. "How Martha Mitchell's Firing of a Bodyguard Spurred Watergate Scandal." *The Washington Post*, June 5, 2022, NA. Gale in Context: U.S. History.
Secondary source explaining how the firing of a bodyguard led to the unveiling of the Watergate scandal. We used this source to how instrumental the fired bodyguard was in unraveling the Watergate scandal. As well as how cooperative he was with the FBI.

Stathis, Stephen W. "Nixon, Watergate, and American Foreign Policy." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 13, no. 1 (1983): 129-47. JSTOR.
Watergate had a large impact on international affairs. It affected foreign policymaking heavily because the government was too busy attempting to solve issues in its own country. We used this source to gain more knowledge on what Watergate affected and why.

The Times (London, England). "Barry Sussman; Editor at the Washington Post Who Played an Important Role in Exposing the Watergate Scandal but Received Little of the Credit." June 17, 2022, 56. Gale in Context: Global Issues.
Barry Sussman was an editor at the Washington Post who played a large role in uncovering Watergate but receives little credit. This article tells his story and how he contributed to exposing Watergate. We used this source to gain a new perspective and learn more about someone who oversaw Woodward and Bernstein as we heavily focused on them.

Unitarian Universalist Church of Delaware County. "Announcement: Church Stance on Nixon and Watergate, 1974." *JSTOR*. https://jstor.org/stable/community.30764608.
Primary source document from a Unitarian Church in Delaware voicing their opinions about political involvement in the Watergate scandal to Nixon. We used this source to show how strongly the American people wanted Nixon to cooperate with the Judiciary Committee so that the whole investigation could be expedited.

Voort, Tom van der. "Watergate: The Aftermath." UVA Miller Center. https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/educational-resources/watergate/watergate-aftermath.
This source explains the aftermath of Watergate including Nixon's resignation and how it affected the next election. We are using this source to highlight the drastic changes among the American public after Watergate.

"Watergate Scandal: Transcript of White House Meeting (1972), Excerpt." *American Government*. Last modified 2024. https://americangovernment.abc-clio.com/Search/Display/210960.
A transcript of the White House meeting in 1972 regarding the Watergate break-in and their involvement. We used this source to show how scared Nixon and his other staff members were of being found out and charged for their involvement so they just kept making the situation worse by trying to hide money used for the illegal activities in untraceable banks.

WBAP-TV (Television station : Fort Worth, Tex.). [News Script: Nixon watergate], item, April 30, 1973, 10:00 p.m.; (https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc1739706/: accessed January 4, 2024), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, https://texashistory.unt.edu; crediting UNT Libraries Special Collections.
This document describes and quotes the official resignation of several Nixon administration members which was broadcast on nationwide radio. We used this source to show how members of the FBI were working secretly with Nixon and knew about his involvement to help him cover up his wrongdoings.

"Woodward and Bernstein." In *Encyclopedia of World Biography Online*. Detroit, MI: Gale, 1998. Gale in Context: U.S. History.

This source focuses on Woodward and Bernstein, two Washington Post writers who were critical to the uncovering of Watergate. The two released many articles that would reveal Nixon's lies. We used this source to highlight how important the media was in spreading the word about the scandal.

Zimmer, Troy A. "THE IMPACT of WATERGATE on THE PUBLIC'S TRUST in PEOPLE AND CONFIDENCE in THE MASS MEDIA." *Social Science Quarterly* 59, no. 4 (1979): 743-51. JSTOR.

A source that provides graphs and data about how Watergate affected citizens. We used this source to prove our point that the scandal lowered citizens' trust in the government using the data it provided.