**Presidential communication: lesson overview**

AP Gov: CON‑4 (EU), CON‑4.D (LO), CON‑4.D.1 (EK)

Article II, Section 3 of the US Constitution establishes the president as Chief Legislator; in this role, the president has the power to shape policy and influence which bills Congress attempts to pass.

Advances in communication technology have changed the president’s relationship both with other branches of government and with the electorate, increasing presidential influence over the legislative agenda.

**Key terms**

| **Term** | **Definition** |
| --- | --- |
| **State of the Union** | An annual presidential report required by the Constitution, conventionally delivered as a speech to Congress since 1913 and televised since 1947. The president can use the State of the Union to set their policy agenda and recommend policies to members of Congress. |
| **bully pulpit** | Theodore Roosevelt’s notion of the presidency as a platform from which the president could promote an agenda directly to the public. |

**Key takeaways**

**How technology has changed presidential communication** — Presidents have leveraged changes in communication technology to enhance their power by appealing directly to the American public. For example, Franklin D. Roosevelt broadcast his fireside chats over the radio, keeping the public informed of his policy goals aimed at righting the economy after the Great Depression. In the twenty-first century, presidents have used social media to reach large audiences of Americans and to respond rapidly to political issues.

**How the president communicates to the national constituency and Congress** — When setting a policy agenda, presidents have taken advantage of contemporary technology and social media to influence the national constituency, promoting presidential policy goals via the president’s bully pulpit. The State of the Union is an opportunity for presidents to inform Congress and the American public of policy goals, and to signal which legislation they may veto.

**Review questions**

What is one example of how a president can use modern technology and social media to influence the national constituency?

What is the purpose of the State of the Union?

How does the bully pulpit enhance the presidency beyond its expressed powers?