

Presidential Rankings and Years of Experience

		Rank Order	Avg. Rank	Age	Vice Pres	Gov	U.S. Senate	U.S. House	State Legis	U.S. Gen'l	Cabinet	Other – years in parentheses
16	Abraham Lincoln	1	1.58	52				2	8			
32	Franklin D. Roosevelt	2	2.00	51		4			2			
1	George Washington	3	2.83	57					¹	8½		Pres. Constitutional Convention
3	Thomas Jefferson	4	4.42	57	4	2			3		4¼	2 nd Continental Congress
26	Theodore Roosevelt	5	4.83	42	½	2						NYC Police Commissioner ² (2)
28	Woodrow Wilson	6	6.58	56		2						President of Princeton (8)
33	Harry S. Truman	7	7.18	60	¼		10					
7	Andrew Jackson	8	9.00	61		¾ ³	3 ⁴	1¾		7		
34	Dwight D. Eisenhower	9	10.73	62						11		Supreme Allied Commander (2½ ⁵)
11	James K. Polk	10	11.08	49		2		14				Speaker of the House (¾)
2	John Adams	11	12.21	61	8							1 st and 2 nd Continental Congress
35	John F. Kennedy	12	12.55	43			8	6				
4	James Madison	13	12.67	57				8	4		8	“Father” of the U.S. Constitution ⁶
36	Lyndon B. Johnson	14	13.60	55	3		12	12				Senate Majority Leader (6)
5	James Monroe	15	14.08	58		¾			1		6 ⁷	Continental Congress 1783-86
22,24	Grover Cleveland	16	15.00	55		2						Mayor of Buffalo (1)
40	Ronald Reagan	17	15.63	69		8						
25	William McKinley	18	16.33	54		4		12				
6	John Quincy Adams	19	16.90	57			¾				8	Multiple Ambassadorships ⁸
27	William Howard Taft	20	19.67	51		½ ⁹					4½	U.S. Solicitor General then Judge.
42	Bill Clinton	21	20.67	46		12						
43	George W. Bush	22	21.00	54		6						
8	Martin Van Buren	23	21.58	54	4	¼	8		8+ ¹⁰		2	

¹ Washington served in the Virginia House of Burgesses for 16 years beginning in 1759 and he was one of the 7 delegates chosen to attend the First Continental Congress.

² Formally referred to as “president of the board of New York City Police Commissioners”.

³ Military Governor of Florida Territory for 8 months in 1821.

⁴ 6 months on one occasion and 2½ years on another.

⁵ Held post in Europe and later also N. Africa and Mediterranean from December 1943 to May 1945. He held post again for 14 months beginning April 1951.

⁶ Drafted the “Virginia Plan” which became the basis for the Constitution. Along with Hamilton and Jay he wrote “The Federalist Papers” arguing for ratification. After initially opposing the Bill of Rights he became one of its principal supporters.

⁷ Served in Madison’s cabinet for six straight years, with two stretches as Secretary of State sandwiched around a 6-month term as Secretary of War.

⁸ Netherlands 1794-96, Portugal 1796, Russia 1809-1814, Great Britain 1815-1817.

⁹ He was civilian Governor of the Philippines.

¹⁰ A N.Y. State Senator by 1812, he appears to have remained there through the end of 1820 when he was elected a U.S. Senator. He *may* have joined the State Senate before 1812.

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19	Rutherford B. Hayes	24	22.00	54		5¼		2½		2¼		
41	George H. W. Bush	25	22.14	64	8			4				DCIA (1), UN Ambassador (2)
21	Chester A. Arthur	26	25.50	51	½					1		
31	Herbert Hoover	27	26.17	54							7½ ¹¹	
38	Gerald R. Ford	28.5	26.30	61	¾			25				House Minority Leader (9)
39	Jimmy Carter	28.5	26.30	52		4			4			
23	Benjamin Harrison	30	27.33	55			6					
30	Calvin Coolidge	31	28.42	51	2½	2			6			
37	Richard Nixon	32	29.20	56	8		2	4				
20	James Garfield	33	29.57	49				18	2	3		
12	Zachary Taylor	34	29.58	64						10		
10	John Tyler	35	31.75	51	1 mo.	1¼	6	4¼				
13	Millard Fillmore	36	32.42	60	1¼			8	2			
18	Ulysses S. Grant	37	33.42	56						7		
9	William H. Harrison	38	33.57	68			3¼	2½	2			Miscellaneous ¹²
17	Andrew Johnson	39	34.67	56	4	4	4½		¹³			
14	Franklin Pierce	40	34.92	48			5	4	4	2		
15	James Buchanan	41	36.58	65			10¼	10	6		4	Ambassador to Great Britain (3)
29	Warren G. Harding	42	37.08	55			6¼		4			
44?	John McCain			72			22	4				War Hero (long-serving POW)
44?	Hillary Clinton			61			8					First Lady (8)
44?	Barack Obama			47			4		8			Community Organizer

Note: I have not counted *assistant* or *deputy* Cabinet Posts. Some lengths' of service figures – especially for state legislatures and for U.S. General are approximations based on incomplete data. I've rounded to the nearest ¼ year where possible.

Source: Wikipedia.

¹¹ Secretary of Commerce from 1921-1928 – a period of great prosperity was instrumental in getting him nominated and elected President. Experience hounds might not have guessed that *he* would be the one to preside over the Great Depression.

¹² E.g., Secretary of the Northwest Territory and Acting Governor, represented the Northwest Territory in the U.S. Congress, Governor of the Indiana Territory.

¹³ Served in the legislature for an undetermined amount of time.