

Politicians: Hillary Clinton

By Biography.com Editors and A+E Networks, adapted by Newsela staff on 09.27.16

Word Count **908**



Hillary Clinton speaking with supporters at a campaign rally at Carl Hayden High School in Phoenix, Arizona Photo: Wikimedia Commons

Synopsis: Hillary Clinton was born on October 26, 1947, in Chicago, Illinois. She earned her law degree from Yale University and married fellow law school graduate Bill Clinton in 1975. After her husband became president, she served as first lady from 1993 to 2001. She became a U.S. senator in 2001. In 2008, she ran unsuccessfully for president. She became U.S. secretary of state, and in 2016, she became the first woman in American history to become the presidential nominee of a major political party.

Background

Hillary Clinton was born Hillary Diane Rodham on October 26, 1947, in Chicago, Illinois. She was raised in Park Ridge, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago.

Hillary Rodham was the eldest daughter of Hugh Rodham and Dorothy Emma Howell Rodham. Her father was a wealthy fabric store owner.

As a young woman, Clinton was active in young Republican groups. She campaigned for the Republican presidential candidate, Barry Goldwater, in 1964. She was inspired to work in public service after hearing a speech by the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. She became a Democrat in 1968.

Education And Early Career

Clinton attended Wellesley College, where she was active in student politics and was elected senior class president. She then attended Yale Law School, where she met Bill Clinton, and graduated with honors in 1973.

Hillary Clinton worked at various jobs during her summers as a college student. In 1971, she first came to Washington, D.C. to work on a U.S. Senate subcommittee, and in the summer of 1972, she worked on the campaign of the Democratic presidential candidate, George McGovern.

She later taught at University of Arkansas Law School in Fayetteville, Arkansas. Her Yale Law School classmate and boyfriend, Bill Clinton, also was teaching there.

Marriage To Bill Clinton

Hillary Clinton married Bill Clinton in 1975, and in 1980 they had a daughter named Chelsea.

In 1976, Hillary Clinton worked on Jimmy Carter's successful campaign for president while Bill was elected attorney general. Bill Clinton was elected governor of Arkansas in 1978 at age 32.

Hillary Clinton joined a law firm in Little Rock. As first lady of the state of Arkansas, she chaired the Arkansas Educational Standards Committee and co-founded the Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families.

In 1988 and 1991, The National Law Journal named her one of the 100 most powerful lawyers in America.

First Lady

During Bill Clinton's 1992 presidential campaign, Hillary Clinton emerged as an active and valued partner of her husband. As president, he named her to head the Task Force on National Health Reform. The commission produced a complicated plan that was dropped in September 1994.

Senate Win And Presidential Run

In 2001, Clinton became a U.S. senator, becoming the first wife of a president to win public office. She was also the first woman to be elected to the Senate from New York. She easily won reelection in November 2006.

In early 2007, Clinton announced her plans to be the first female president. During the 2008 Democratic primaries, Clinton withdrew from the race when it became clear that Barack Obama would win the nomination.

U.S. Secretary Of State

Shortly after becoming president, Obama nominated Hillary Clinton as secretary of state. During her term, Clinton emphasized women's rights and human rights. She became one of the most traveled secretaries of state in American history, and promoted the use of social media to convey the country's positions.

The State Department, which Clinton headed, came under investigation after a deadly attack in Benghazi, Libya, killed the U.S. ambassador and three others in 2012. An independent panel found leadership and management problems at the State Department.

Having said that she would only serve as secretary of state for one term, Clinton stepped down from the role on February 1, 2013.

Bid For 2016 Presidency

In June 2014, Clinton released "Hard Choices," a book about her life. The following year, it came out that she had used her personal email account to handle official government business while she was secretary of state. This revelation caused a big scandal.

She announced she would run for president in the spring of 2015.

Campaign Issues

On her campaign website, Clinton discusses a wide variety of issues she believes in. They include lowering student debt (the amount of money students owe for college loans), reforming the criminal justice system, improving healthcare coverage and women's rights.

However, Clinton is also known for changing her positions on various issues. She used to be against gay marriage, but now she supports it. Clinton has a plan to fight climate change, the heating up of the earth's climate. Yet she supports fracking, a way to extract natural gas from rock which some experts say is bad for the environment. Clinton is also in favor of the death penalty but claims it should only be used in unusual cases.

Email Scandal

After a yearlong investigation, the FBI announced in July 2016 that the agency would not recommend criminal charges against Clinton for her email practices. The director said there was no clear evidence that Clinton intended to break the law. He did say, however, that she and her staff members were "extremely careless" in handling secret information.

Making History

In July 2016, Clinton accepted her party's nomination for president, a historic achievement for women in the U.S. She became the first woman in the nation's 240-year history to be chosen by a major political party as its candidate for president.