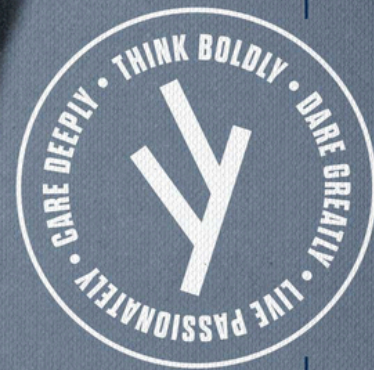


Care Deeply

Citizenship

Dare Greatly



Nature

Think Boldly

Live

Passionately

Leadership

In the  
Arena

Conservation

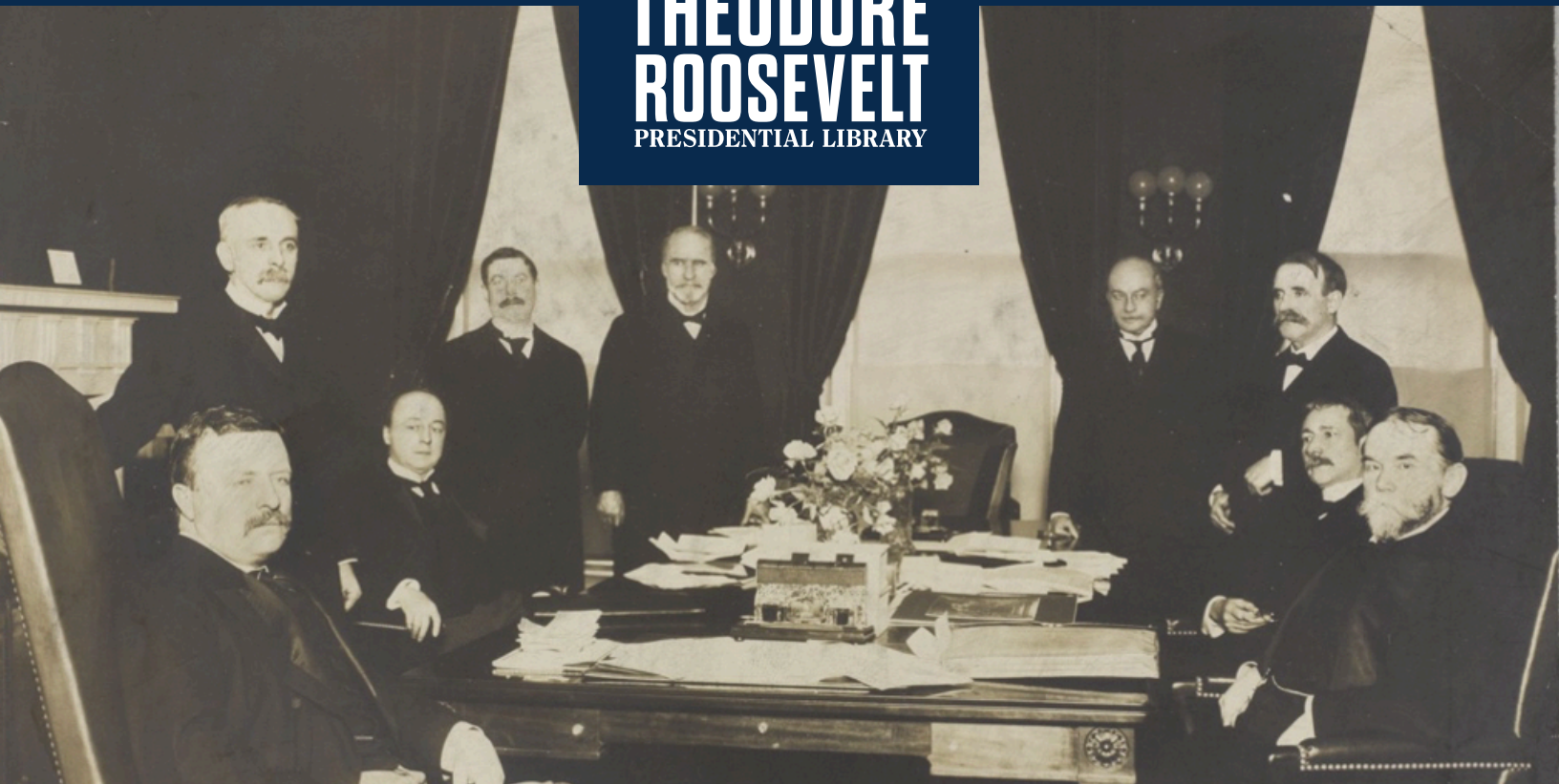
# THEODORE ROOSEVELT

PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY

Hands-On History Activity

**BUILD TR'S PRESIDENTIAL CABINET**





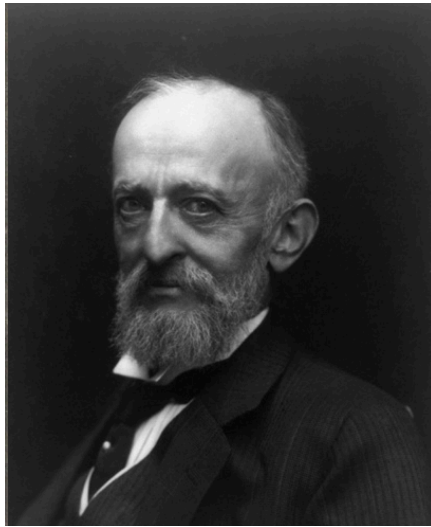
Hands-On History Activity

## BUILD TR'S PRESIDENTIAL CABINET

Back in the late 1700s, George Washington created the first presidential cabinet, or group of advisers to help the president make decisions. The cabinet consisted of four positions: Secretary of the Treasury, Secretary of State, Secretary of War, and Attorney General.

When Theodore Roosevelt became president on September 14, 1901, there were eight cabinet positions—the original four, plus Secretary of the Navy (added in 1798), Postmaster General (added in 1829), Secretary of the Interior (added in 1849), and Secretary of Agriculture (added in 1889).

During Theodore Roosevelt's first term, Congress passed a bill establishing the Department of Commerce and Labor to oversee the development of commerce and manufacturing in the United States. With the new department came a new cabinet-level position—the Secretary of Commerce and Labor, thus adding a ninth cabinet member on February 16, 1903.



Oscar Straus, President Roosevelt's first Jewish cabinet secretary, 1912.

Roosevelt's personal secretary served as the first Secretary of Commerce and Labor, but on December 17, 1906, Roosevelt made history when he appointed Oscar Straus secretary, making him the first Jewish cabinet secretary.

Today, the president's cabinet has 15 executive departments with nine additional cabinet members. Some cabinet positions that existed in Theodore Roosevelt's time, like Postmaster General, now no longer belong to the cabinet while others, like the Secretary of Commerce and Labor, morphed into the Secretary of Labor.

The four original positions that Washington created are still the most important cabinet posts and are sometimes called the "inner cabinet" because they deal with the core functions of the government.

**In this Hands-On History activity, you will build your own cabinet based on the cabinet positions that existed during Theodore Roosevelt's presidency and see what important issues Roosevelt's cabinet members advised him on.**

## SUPPLIES

**Equipment Needed:** You will need craft sticks, glue, scissors, the handouts below, a writing implement, and something to color with (colored pencils, markers, etc.).

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Use scissors to cut out the nine different cabinet members (each cabinet position has different pieces and symbols to represent it). Students can color the elements, if desired.
- 2 Glue each cabinet member on a craft stick. You will need nine craft sticks per student for Theodore Roosevelt's full cabinet.

*(Instructions continue on next page)*



President Roosevelt and his cabinet members, 1907.

## INSTRUCTIONS (CONTINUED)

3

Using the handout below, read more about what each person in Theodore Roosevelt's cabinet advised him on. As you learn about each cabinet position, you can hold up the corresponding craft stick cabinet member.

4

Select people for your cabinets that would best fit the job description of each position.

## TIPS



### **Pick whomever you want for your cabinet:**

Since you're the president, you can select the people you want in your cabinet. They can be your friends, family, or even famous people. What types of people would you like represented? Back in Theodore Roosevelt's time, there was less diversity in the president's cabinet, but today cabinet members come from all walks of life.



### **Think about what cabinet room you would like:**

Theodore Roosevelt met with his cabinet in a rectangular-shaped room in the Executive Office Building (now the West Wing). Today, presidents meet in the Cabinet Room next to the president's oval office. As you can see from the pictures, Roosevelt's Cabinet Room has large chairs, a big table, and a fireplace. It's also very formal. What kind of environment would you want to meet with your cabinet in?



### **Draw a picture of you and your cabinet:**

Take inspiration from the real picture of Theodore Roosevelt and his cabinet and draw a picture of you as president surrounded by your cabinet.



PERSON:



PERSON:



PERSON:



PERSON:



PERSON:



PERSON:





PERSON:



PERSON:



PERSON:

# BUILD TR'S PRESIDENTIAL CABINET

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**What is a presidential cabinet? No, it's not like the cabinets you have in your kitchen. Presidential cabinets are people who help the president make important decisions. When Theodore Roosevelt was president, he had nine people in his presidential cabinet who helped him. If you were president, what people would you want to help you?**

## SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY

The Secretary of the Treasury advises the president on all matters relating to financial, economic, and tax policy. In other words, the secretary deals with all things related to money. Who would you select to advise you on handling the money of the United States?

## SECRETARY OF STATE

The Secretary of State oversees all interactions between the United States and other countries—foreign affairs. The secretary represents the United States to foreign countries. Who would you select to advise you on interactions with other countries in the world?

## SECRETARY OF WAR

The Secretary of War (a position that does not exist today) oversaw everything related to the United States Army. Today, we have the Secretary of Defense who oversees all American military affairs. Who would you select to advise you on the military and U.S. Army?

## ATTORNEY GENERAL

The Attorney General is the head of the Department of Justice and advises the president on all legal matters. The Attorney General also serves as the chief law enforcement officer in the United States. Who would you select to advise you on legal issues and questions regarding the law?

## SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

The Secretary of the Navy (a position that exists today but is under the Secretary of Defense) advises the president on all naval affairs (military operations at sea). The secretary serves as the head of the Department of the Navy, which includes the United States Navy and the United States Marine Corps. Who would you select to advise you on military matters related to operations at sea?



## POSTMASTER GENERAL

The Postmaster General (a position that exists today but is not a cabinet member) oversees the operations of the United States Postal Service—in other words, the mail! When Theodore Roosevelt was president, it was called the Post Office Department. Who would you select to advise you on issues related to the mail and the post office?

## SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

The Secretary of the Interior oversees the management of federal land and natural resources. This means things like the national parks and national wildlife refuges. Who would you select to advise you on issues related to the outdoors, nature, and the national parks?

## SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

The Secretary of Agriculture deals with matters relating to food and farming. This includes things like the safety of food. Who would you select to advise you on issues related to food and farms?

## SECRETARY OF COMMERCE AND LABOR

The Secretary of Commerce and Labor (a position that does not exist today) oversaw business and manufacturing (making products using machines). This means encouraging the development of businesses in the United States. Who would you select to advise you on issues related to businesses?