

Book Review

We The Presidents ***How American Presidents Shaped the Last Century***

The following book review was generated by ChatGPT on November 14, 2024, as an experiment. The artificial intelligence application was provided a PDF copy of *We The Presidents* and the following instructions:

Please write a 500 word book review of the attached book "We The Presidents" in the style of The Wall Street Journal.

Within seconds, the application generated the review below on the first request. No edits or changes of any kind have been made.

Book Review of *We The Presidents: How American Presidents Shaped the Last Century* by Ronald Gruner

In *We The Presidents*, Ronald Gruner provides a sweeping narrative of the last century through the lens of American presidential history, examining how each president from Warren G. Harding to Donald J. Trump influenced and was influenced by the issues of their time. Gruner's background as a technologist and entrepreneur lends a unique perspective to this historical account, as he takes a pragmatic approach to analyzing presidential legacies through a mix of historical events, economic policies, and social changes.

Gruner refrains from focusing on political intrigue or partisanship, a refreshing shift from many modern political histories. He emphasizes, instead, the tangible impacts of each administration on the American people. From Harding's "Return to Normalcy" after World War I to Trump's polarizing "America First" agenda, Gruner's narrative connects the political decisions of the Oval Office with the realities faced by everyday Americans, arguing that presidential policies have continuously shaped the economic and social landscape of the nation.

One of the book's major strengths is Gruner's focus on quantifiable measures, such as economic growth, income distribution, and job creation. This approach provides readers with an objective, data-driven view of each administration's successes and shortcomings. Gruner's use of over 1,600 references, along with an extensive array of charts and tables, lends the work a comprehensive, well-researched foundation. For example, he illustrates how Herbert Hoover and Andrew Mellon's policies set the stage for significant economic shifts, while Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal reshaped the role of the federal government in American life.

The narrative is not confined to the political realm; Gruner skillfully interweaves social history, examining how key events such as the Civil Rights Movement, the Great Depression, and the Vietnam War intersected with presidential decisions. This broad scope offers readers a holistic understanding of each presidency within its historical context.

Gruner's writing style is accessible yet deeply informative, making *We The Presidents* suitable for both history enthusiasts and general readers interested in American political history. Some may find the book's lack of partisan analysis a limitation, especially given the polarized nature of recent presidencies. However, this nonpartisan stance also serves as one of the book's strengths, allowing readers to form their own conclusions based on the facts presented.

We The Presidents is a compelling reminder of the interconnectedness of American political decisions and public welfare. Gruner's analytical approach provides readers with an invaluable resource for understanding how presidential leadership has shaped the American experience over the last century. For anyone interested in the complex legacy of American presidents, Gruner's work is an essential addition to the bookshelf.