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Gerald Ford: America's Steady Hand

Open-Ended Response Answer Key

1. Gerald Ford's upbringing and early experiences were characterized by his modest background and love for football. He was born in Omaha, Nebraska, and later grew up in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Ford played football at the University of Michigan and worked as an assistant football coach while attending law school. His decision to join the U.S. Navy during World War II demonstrated his commitment to serving his country and contributed to his character and values.
2. Gerald Ford became President due to unique circumstances. He was appointed Vice President after the resignation of Spiro Agnew and later became President following Richard Nixon's resignation due to the Watergate scandal. The significance of his decision to pardon Richard Nixon was to help the nation move forward from the Watergate scandal and avoid further divisions. The pardon was controversial, with both supporters who believed it was an act of national healing and critics who viewed it as an act of political favoritism.



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3. The economic challenges Gerald Ford faced during his presidency included severe inflation and economic instability in the mid-1970s. To address these challenges, he implemented the "WIN" program (Whip Inflation Now), which aimed to combat inflation by encouraging Americans to reduce energy consumption and control prices. However, the program faced criticism, and the economy remained a major concern during his presidency.
4. To address the energy crisis during the 1970s, Gerald Ford called for energy conservation measures and promoted the development of alternative energy sources. The goal was to reduce the country's dependence on foreign oil and mitigate the effects of oil shortages and high gas prices. Ford encouraged Americans to use energy more efficiently and explore renewable energy options, aligning with his commitment to addressing the energy challenges of the era.

