

National Geographic Readers: Barack Obama

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Learn all about our 44th President and his legacy as a barrier-breaker and a pioneer.

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Age Range	Length	Lexile [®] Measure	AR Level

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Meet Barack Obama!

: Wecanran



In His Own Words

"No matter who you are, no matter what you look like, 'no matter where you come from, here in America, you can make it if you try.'"

It was cold on January 20, 2009. Barack Hussein Obama stood in front of the waiting crowd.

He raised his hand and swore to protect the country. The crowd cheered for America's first African-American president.

A Hawaiian Beginning

公众号: Wecancan

Barack Obama was born in 1961 in Hawaii, U.S.A. His mother was from Kansas, U.S.A. His father was from

Kenya, Africa. They met as college students at the University of Hawaii.

That's a Fact!

His favorite children's book is *Where the Wild Things Are*.

Obama never really knew his father. When he was just two years old, his father moved away. When Obama was six, his mother remarried and had another child. The family moved across the Pacific Ocean to Indonesia. Obama spent lots of time with his stepfather. He taught Obama to box.



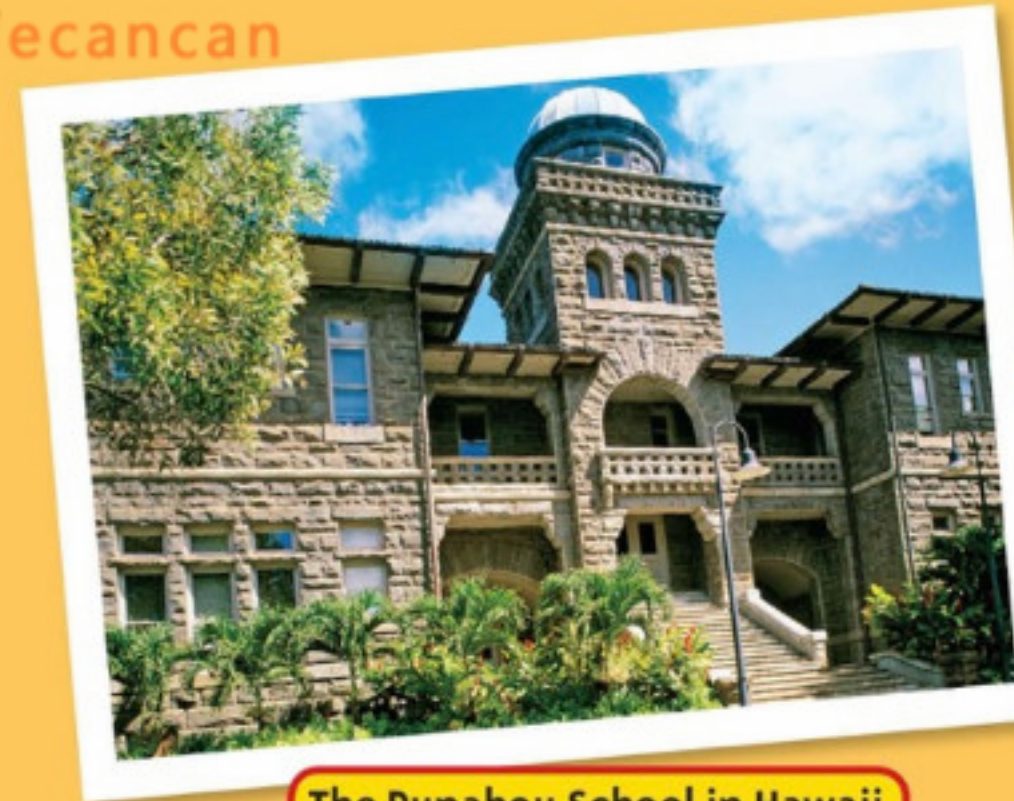
Barack Obama with his mother and half-sister, Maya, and his Indonesian stepfather, Lolo Soetoro.

Childhood

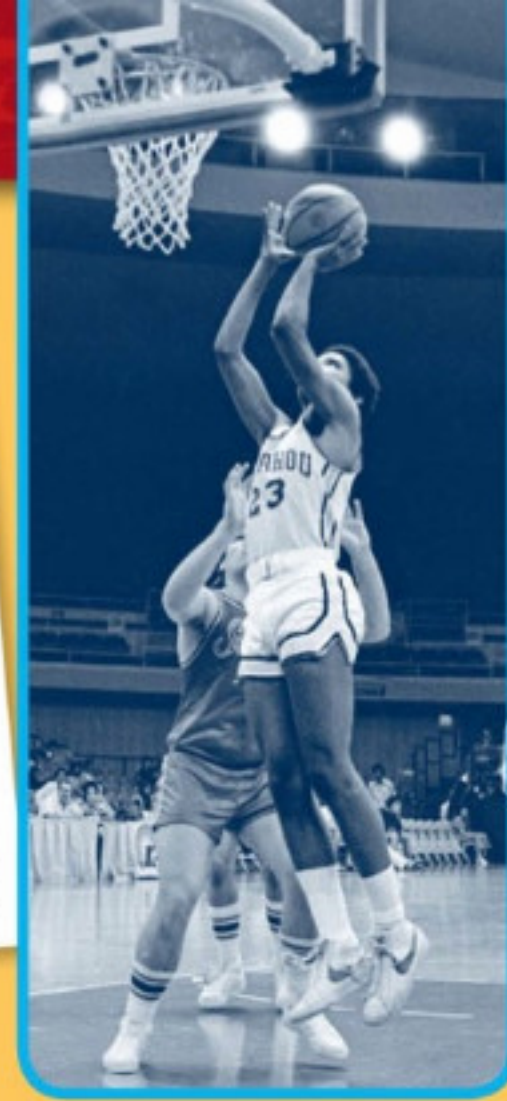
公众号: Wecancan

After four years, his mother wanted a better education for her children. She sent Obama back to Hawaii to stay with his grandparents. There, he attended the Punahou School.

Obama played on the basketball team and did well in his classes.



The Punahou School in Hawaii



Hawaii had many multiracial (MULL-tee RAY-shul) families, but few African Americans. Obama was one of only three black students at his school. He started to notice racism there.

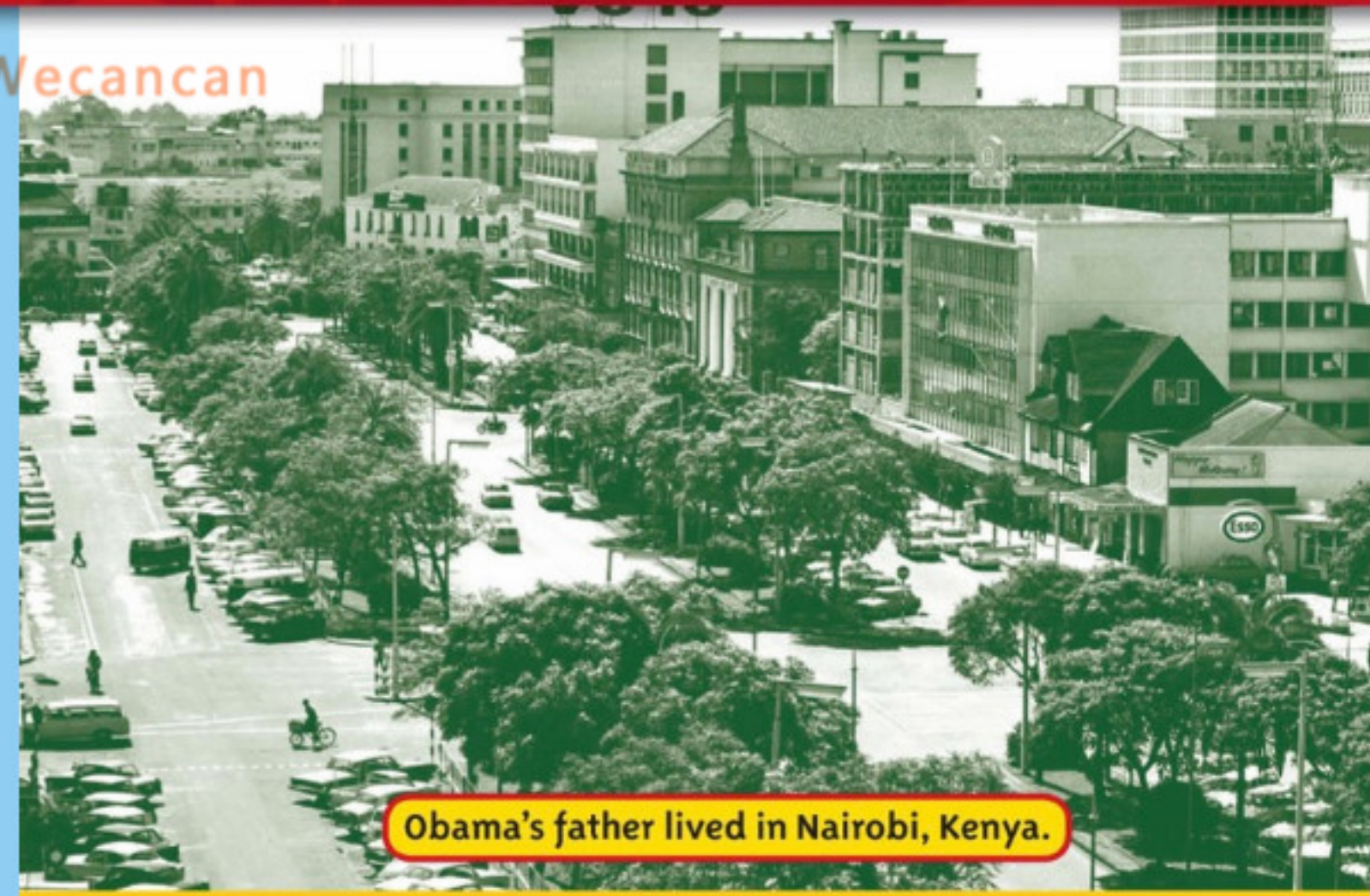
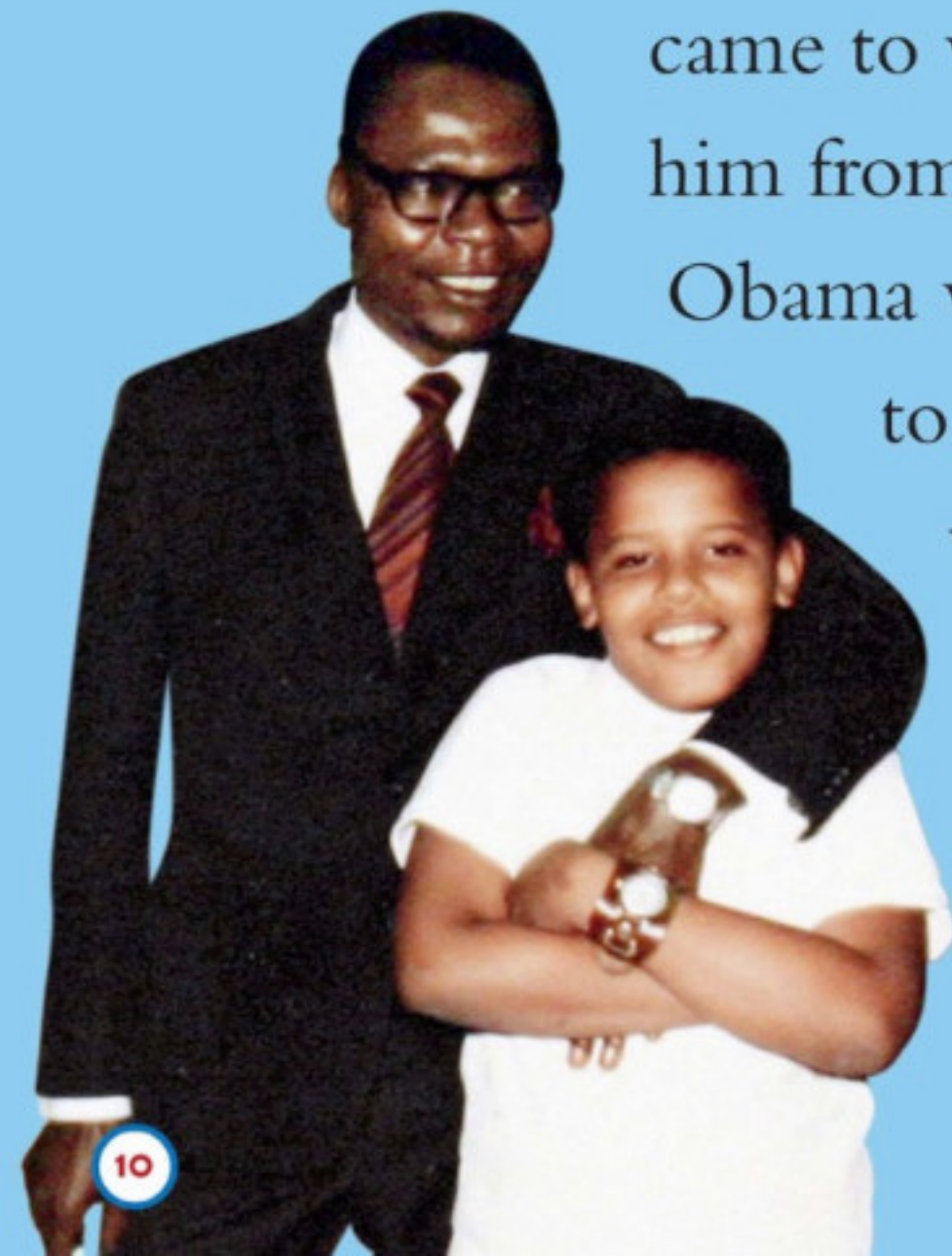


MULTIRACIAL: Having parents of more than one race
RACISM: The belief that certain races are superior to others

Obama felt different from other students and wished his father was there to teach him about his African family.

When Obama was ten, his father came to visit him from Kenya.

Obama was excited to spend a whole month with his dad.



Obama's father lived in Nairobi, Kenya.

Obama's father visited Punahou School. He spoke to the class about Kenya. Obama was sad when he left. It was the last time he ever saw his father.

That's a Fact!

Obama was called "Barry" before he went to college. Then he began using his full name, Barack.

Obama's Cool "Firsts"

公众号: Wecancan

You already know Barack Obama is the first African-American president. But do you know these other "firsts"?



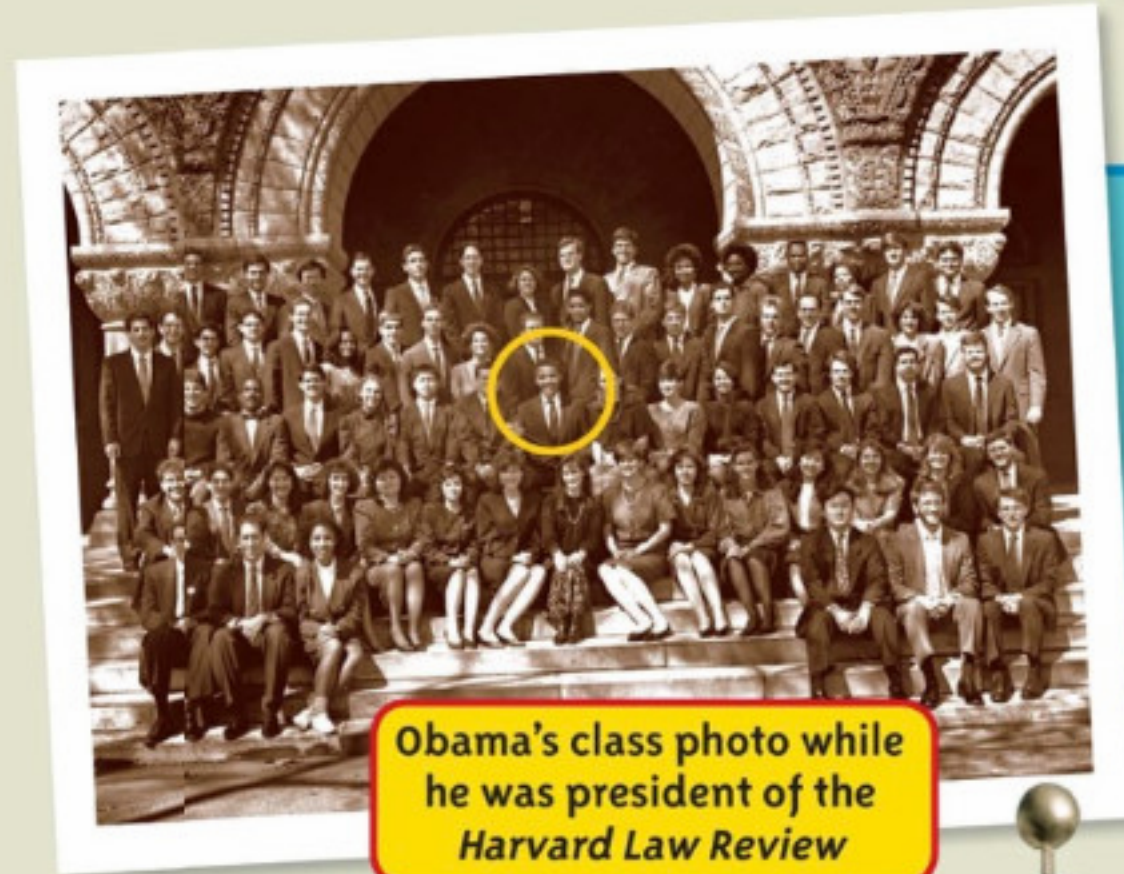
Barack Obama is the first president to own and use a smartphone.

Obama on a call during his 2012 presidential campaign

Barack Obama is the first U.S. president to receive the Nobel Peace Prize during his first year as president.



The Nobel Peace Prize medal



Obama's class photo while he was president of the *Harvard Law Review*

Barack Obama is the first African-American president of the *Harvard Law Review*. The *Law Review* is a respected magazine published by students at Harvard Law School.

Barack Obama is the first president from Hawaii. His mother and grandparents moved there in 1960.



State flag of Hawaii

Community and College

Obama lived in New York City, New York, during college. He saw how racism was affecting the lives of poor black Americans. Many had no money. Others had no jobs. This bothered Obama. He wanted to help people improve their lives.



A homeless person in New York City in 1983



Obama signing up voters

Obama graduated from college and moved to Chicago, Illinois. He became a community organizer. He helped poor people find homes they could afford and register to vote.



COMMUNITY ORGANIZER: A leader who works to improve neighborhoods

Law School and Politics

公众号: Wecanread

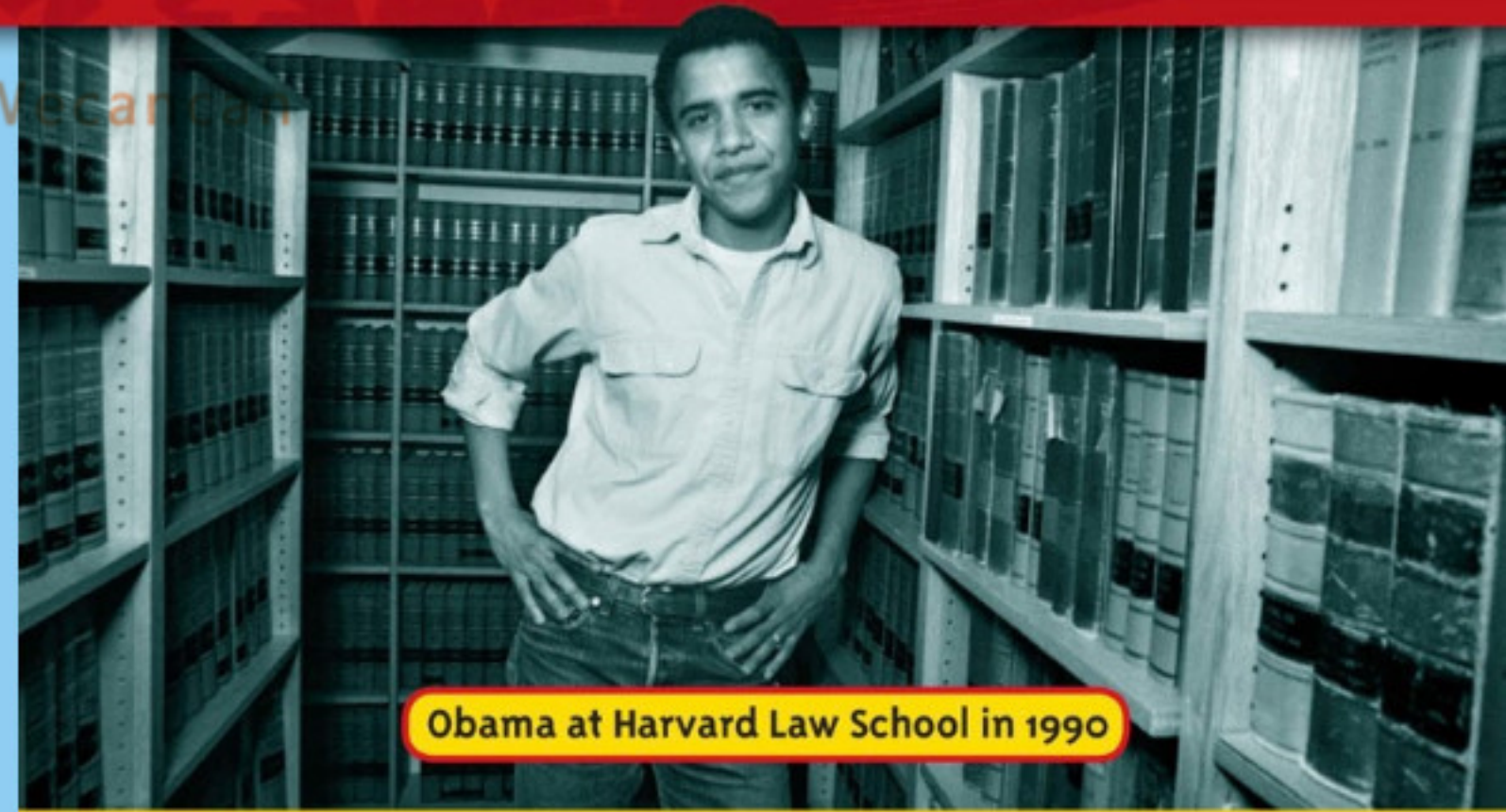
In 1982, Obama's father died. Obama traveled to Kenya and met all his African relatives.



Obama with his African relatives

That's a Fact!

Obama is six feet one inch tall.



Obama at Harvard Law School in 1990

His father had been a leader there. That made Obama want to be a leader himself. How could he start? Obama thought he should become a lawyer. He applied to Harvard University, where his father had attended. He studied hard and graduated with high honors.

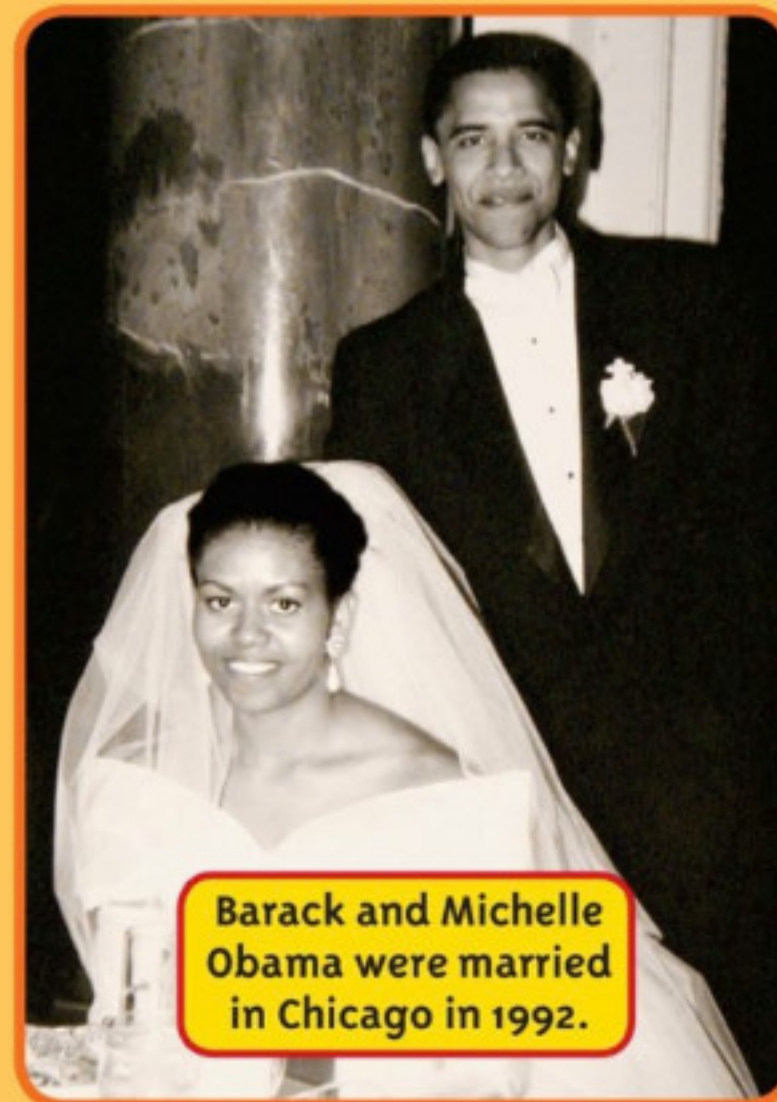
Obama teaching a class at the University of Chicago

公众号: Wecan



Now Obama was ready to use his education. He wanted to help others be treated fairly. He moved back to Chicago to work as a civil rights lawyer. He also taught law classes to college students.

Obama dreamed of doing important things. He decided to run for the Illinois State Senate. He won the election in 1996. In 2004, he won the election for an even bigger job—U.S. senator.



Barack and Michelle Obama were married in Chicago in 1992.



CIVIL RIGHTS LAWYER: A lawyer who makes sure people receive fair and equal treatment

SENATOR: One kind of elected member of the United States government

Road to the Presidency

In 2004, Barack Obama was asked to give the main speech at the Democratic National Convention. This was an important event. He wrote the speech himself and became famous for it. His speech gave people hope for the future.



In His Own Words

“There is not a Black America and White America and Latino America and Asian America—there’s the United States of America.”



People wanted the government to change. Obama thought he could do that. So he decided to run for president. His campaign (kam-PANE) slogans were “Yes We Can” and “Change We Can Believe In.”

How could Obama win? He was just 47 years old, very young to be president. His campaign did not have a lot of money, and there had never been a black president before.

Obama didn't let this stop him. He used the Internet to organize volunteers and to raise money.

On Election Day in November, 2008, Barack Obama won!

He became the first African-American president. The White House was Obama's new home.



Barack, Sasha, Malia,
and Michelle Obama
on Election Night 2008

8 Cool Facts

公众号: Wecan

1



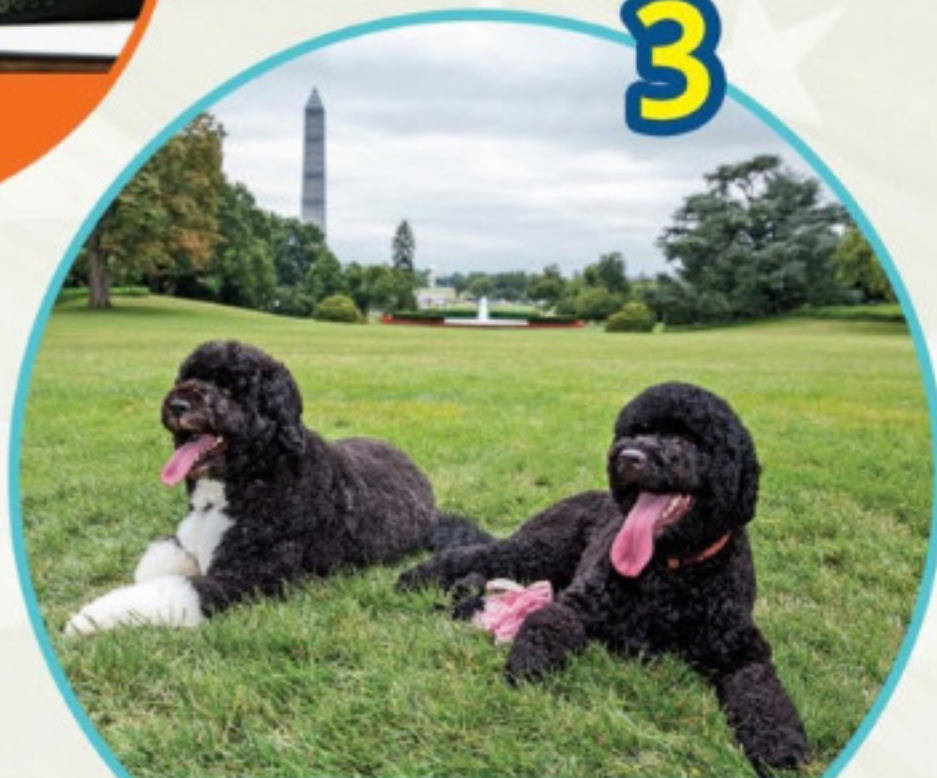
Obama has eight half brothers and sisters, from his mother's and father's other marriages.

2



Obama is left-handed.

3



Obama has two "first dogs," Bo and Sunny.

4



Obama can speak Spanish.

5



The name Barack means "one who is blessed" in Swahili.

6



Obama likes to play Scrabble.

7



Obama owns a red pair of boxing gloves once owned by Muhammad Ali.

8



Obama's heroes are Martin Luther King, Jr., and Mahatma Gandhi.

The Nation's Leader

公众号: Wecan U.S. soldiers in Iraq

In his first term as president, Obama had many goals. He wanted to bring home U.S. soldiers who were fighting overseas. He wanted more people to have health care. And he wanted more Americans to be able to find jobs.



TERM: A fixed or limited period of time



U.S. soldiers in Iraq



A job fair in New York City



President Obama addresses Congress.

1961

Born in Honolulu, Hawaii

1983

Graduates from Columbia University in New York City, New York

1985

Works as a community organizer in Chicago, Illinois

1990

Becomes first African American to be elected as president of *Harvard Law Review*

1991

Graduates from law school, becomes civil rights lawyer in Chicago, teaches law at the University of Chicago

1992

Marries Michelle Robinson on October 18



Obama worked hard to meet his goals. But the problems Americans face are very hard to fix. After four years, Obama wanted more time to make changes. In 2012, he ran for a second term and won!

A new president will take over in 2017. But for now, there is still much to do.

In His Own Words

"The best way to not feel hopeless is to get up and do something. Don't wait for good things to happen to you. If you go out and make some good things happen, you will fill the world with hope, you will fill yourself with hope."

1996

Wins election to the Illinois Senate

2004

Delivers main speech at Democratic National Convention; elected U.S. senator in November

2007

Announces he will run for president of the United States

2008

Elected 44th president of the United States

2009

Wins Nobel Peace Prize

2012

Wins second term as U.S. president in November

Be a Quiz Whiz!

See how many questions you can get right! Answers are at the bottom of page 31.

Barack Obama is the ____ president of the United States.

- A. 30th
- B. 44th
- C. 12th
- D. 40th

1



2



Obama graduated from Punahou High School. Which state is it in?

- A. Indonesia
- B. Hawaii
- C. California
- D. New York

Before becoming president, Obama worked as a ____.

- A. Community organizer
- B. Law professor
- C. U.S. senator
- D. All of the above

3



4



What are the two first dogs' names?

- A. Martha and Murphy
- B. Bode and Maggie
- C. Bo and Sunny
- D. Splash and Roscoe

5



Obama first became famous in politics when he ____.

- A. Moved to Chicago
- B. Gave an important speech
- C. Got married
- D. Traveled to Kenya

6



While a law student, Obama was selected to be the first African-American president of the *Harvard Law Review*.

- A. True
- B. False

7



What year was Obama elected to be a U.S. senator?

- A. 1992
- B. 1996
- C. 2004
- D. 2012



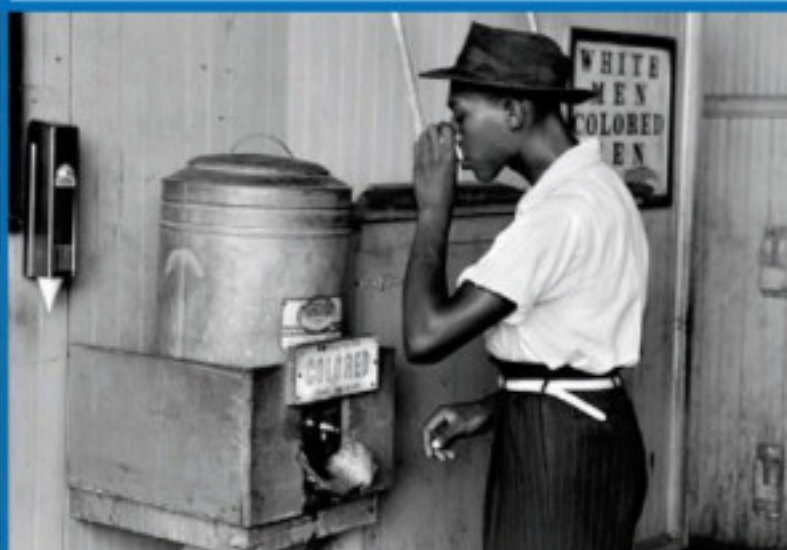
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