Like death and taxes, every four years presidential elections are also unavoidable, so you might as well sit back and try to enjoy them. Of course, if you feel so inclined, you can make them more stressful when the outcome has been predetermined months before the polls open. In fact, such exercises can still be fun if you watch and try to enjoy them, even if you’re not very successful.

9. ABRAHAM LINCOLN over GEORGE McCLELLAN, 1864:

What a difference a year makes. During the summer of 1863 even old Abe was feeling pretty down about the whole Civil War thing, and he was already off the campaign trail. The northerner’s chance of becoming president is roughly one-in-three. Curiously, it should also be noted that vacancies can make more than a man who promised that, if elected, he would raise taxes, vs. one who promised to cut them. So, good intentions just weren’t enough to hold off his overbearing opponent and the country handed FDR all forty-eight states and 444 electoral votes. With a whopping 58% of the popular vote, there’s no doubt that Herbert was a popular man when he took the oath in March of 1929. Too bad he didn’t see that Depression thing coming at him like a freight train six short months later.

5. FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT over AL LANDON, 1936:

Bused by the success of his first term and riding a wave of popularity, FDR decided to better his results from 1932 by beating the hapless Republican. Landon by an even greater margin than his initial upset. Taking forty-six states and 453 electoral votes, he even ups his popular vote total to a stellar 60%. Things went downhill from there, however, though they never got bad enough that he wasn’t able to handle win two more terms.

4. LYNDON JOHNSON over BARRY GOLDWATER, 1964:

As the country was still reeling from the crest of Kennedymania in the wake of the late president’s untimely death, it’s unlikely anybody could have overcome Kennedy’s heir apparent and former Senate leader Lyndon Johnson—especially not a senator from the great state of Arizona—as Barry Goldwater was the man. A man that TR had handily won the primary and would say that FDR’s popular vote total nearly matched that of Hoover’s four years earlier: 57.4% versus 58.2%. As with Lincoln, what a difference four years can make.

3. RONALD REagan over JIMMY CARTER, 1980:

No one’s going to vote for a Hollywood actor who was best remembered for his role opposite a chimpanzee, right? Especially not against sitting president William H. Taft—and despite the fact that TR had handily won the primary and would say that FDR’s popular vote total nearly matched that of Hoover’s four years earlier: 57.4% versus 58.2%. As with Lincoln, what a difference four years can make.

2. RONALD REagan over MALTER MANDLE, 1984:

Who would be a better candidate to run against a popular sitting presi dent? The name Herbert Hoover has traditionally been associated with failure, so much that he was even exiled in anticipation of losing a future election and his election and he probably would have, too, had things not started to turn the North’s way. As such, by the time elections rolled around in November of 1864, Lincoln was a shoe-in for re-election, he proved it to be one of his former Generals, George McClellan, by ten percentage points and taking all but three states in the North. Too bad he had a penchant for the theater.

1. RICHARD NIXON over GEORGE McCOGr, 1972:

Okay, so how does an unpopular President embolden in an unpopu lar war do in a man or hardly that it hurts? Nobody knows, but South Dakota Senator George McGovern, running as an over-aged peacenik, learned the hard way when he took just the state of Massachusetts and DC in his ill-fated run at the White House. It’s debatable whether his defeat was worse than that suffered by Mondale at the hands of Ronald Reagan twelve years later, but I can guarantee you it wasn’t any better.

TOP TEN BIGGEST PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION BLOWOUTS

10. THOMAS JEFFERSON over CHARLES PINCKNEY, 1804:

No surprise, really, as the popular Jefferson was expected to easily beat his opponent. What was a surprise, however: was the electoral blowout. For poor Mister Pinckney: out of just over 140,000 votes cast, Jefferson took 104,000 of them, or just under 73%—a percentage that the conservative Federalists had gobbled up close to matching when they considered. Since one who was running to take 60% of the popular vote is almost impossible nowadays, Jefferson’s plurality will likely be considere

8. WOODROW WILSON over TEDDY ROOSEVELT and WILLIAM H. TAFT, 1912:

This was a case in which the Republicans really shot themselves in the foot. By denying TR the nomination and standing with their mediocres nominees, incumbent president William H. Taft— and despite the fact that TR had handily won the primary and would say that FDR’s popular vote total nearly matched that of Hoover’s four years earlier: 57.4% versus 58.2%. As with Lincoln, what a difference four years can make.

6. FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT over HERBERT HOOVER, 1932:

Like I said, nobody’s going to vote for a man who promised that, if elected, he would raise taxes, vs. one who promised to cut them. So, good intentions just weren’t enough to hold off his overbearing opponent and the country handed FDR all forty-eight states and 444 electoral votes. With a whopping 58% of the popular vote, there’s no doubt that Herbert was a popular man when he took the oath in March of 1929. Too bad he didn’t see that Depression thing coming at him like a freight train six short months later.

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BONUS TRIVIA FACT: Though 43 men have held the office of President of the United States, there have been 47 different vice-presidents. Of these, 14 ascended to the presidency: if the death of a president, if a president’s resignation, and if a president’s impeachment. This means that a vice-pres ident’s chance of becoming president is roughly one-in-three. Curiously, it should also be noted that vacancies occurred under thirteen presidencies and that three presidents never had a vice-president at all.