Impeachment

Definition:

An impeachment is a process that

- enables a legislative body to remove a public official from office
- comprises two parts: (1) an accusation or indictment and (2) a trial
- does not necessarily result in somebody's removal from office; it is only a legal statement of charges and may run parallel to an indictment in criminal law

Procedure:

- Step 1: Accusation or indictment by the House of Representatives
- Step 2: To convict the accused, a two-thirds majority of the senators present is necessary

Famous cases:

Walter Nixon, Judge

Date of Final Senate Action: November 3, 1989

Result: guilty, removed from office

William J. Clinton, President

Date of Final Senate Action: February 12, 1999

Result: not guilty

Richard Nixon and the Watergate scandal:

During the **summer of 1974**, in the wake of the Watergate scandal, the Senate prepared for the possibility of a presidential impeachment trial, as the House of Representatives moved ever closer to impeaching President Richard Nixon.

The committee, aided by Senate parliamentarian Floyd Riddick, devoted long hours to the Senate's constitutional role in impeachment proceedings. The committee was meeting on **August 8, 1974**, when President **Nixon announced that he would resign.**

Sources:

http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/briefing/Senate_Impeachment_Role.htm

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Impeachment#United_States