

Impeachment: 'Long climb up a steep mountain'

House Judiciary Committee approval of an impeachment inquiry against President Clinton goes next to the full House, where a vote is expected by the end of the week. The House will then play prosecutor and present the charges to the Senate, which sits as a jury – two-thirds of the senators present have to vote to convict the president to remove him from office

1 **October 5, 1998:** House Judiciary Committee vote for a Watergate-style impeachment inquiry. Documents that prosecutor *Kenneth Starr*

has sent to Congress lay out evidence of 11 possible impeachable offences, including obstruction of justice and perjury

House of Representatives:
435 members. Controlled
by Republican party.
Minority Democrats
outnumbered
by 21 seats

Senate: 100 senators, two from each state. Republicans have 55 seats, Democrats have 45 seats.

Vice-president Al Gore can cast deciding vote

② Vote in House of Representatives: Assuming approval by the full House, committee can launch an investigation, subpoena witnesses – including Monica Lewinsky – hold hearings and make judgments about the evidence assembled by Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr

5 The vote: At the end of the hearing, the Senate goes into closed session. Individual senators are limited to 15 minutes of debate. **There is a separate vote on each article of impeachment. Conviction on even one is grounds for removal**

3 Hearings: Committee decides whether there are grounds for impeachment
If committee votes that there are then full House decides whether to approve articles of impeachment and send them to Senate

4 The trial: Chief Justice *William H. Rehnquist* will preside over any Senate trial in which both sides present their case. **The president is permitted to have legal counsel and has the right to testify and cross-examine witnesses**

1868: Trial of **President Andrew Johnson** – accused of violating the Constitution and Tenure of Office Act by removing the secretary of war. The Senate falls one vote short of ousting Johnson, who completes his term

1974: Facing almost certain impeachment stemming from the Watergate cover-up, **President Richard Nixon** resigns. **Hillary Rodham**, now Mrs Clinton, was one of 43 lawyers on the House Judiciary Committee's special impeachment inquiry staff

Sources: Associated Press, Reuters

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