

Campaigning For the Presidency

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INTRODUCTION

When I was in high school, I remember taking a Government and Economics class. The teacher was discussing the basics: How a bill becomes a law, the three branches of government and duties, the check and balance system, etc. Like myself, many students have certain thoughts about the president imbedded in their minds. For example, I used to think the president had sole power over the United States. I thought every governmental decision made had to go through him. What responsibility! How could someone have so much power? How does a person become President of the United States? Well, after many of my myths about the president were shattered, I was still very curious about this person who represents the citizens of the United States. My Government and Economics teacher lectured about the process of electing the president (a brief explanation of the electoral college and votes needed to win), but there was never an explanation about how a person even gets the chance to run in an election. So, for many years there were a lot of unanswered questions in my mind about who selects the presidential candidates, and what process does a person have to go through in order to be considered a nominee. To take things even further, once someone was nominated, I often wondered what that individual had to do to insure his/her win in a presidential election. Of course, all of this popped into my mind after I discovered that we, the people, elected the president. So, it all started to make sense. If the people elect the president, then the presidential candidates must appeal to the people. He must earn their support through campaigning.

Election campaigning is an organized effort to persuade voters to choose one candidate over others competing for the same office (Ziubek). In today's world, Presidential campaigning is part science (statistical polling) and part art form. Candidates must sell themselves to the American people day in and day out, shaking hands and making promises about how they will make this country a safer and better community. In this unit, students will understand the history behind campaigning, and take a look at the different campaigning techniques and methods used throughout U.S. presidential elections, particularly in the 19th and 20th centuries. They will be equipped with enough information to put on their own mock election at the school, using different campaigning methods to sway the students to vote for them.

My purpose for writing this unit is to give students the opportunity to experience an election first-hand. My fifth grade students will one day be old enough to actually participate in the voting process. I think it is of extreme importance for them to know about the entire process of electing a president. In future elections, students will know the meaning behind campaigning, and will be able to identify certain techniques when they see it. This unit will be aligned with the fifth grade TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills) for social studies, reading, and language arts. Lessons will be student centered, educational, and fun.

UNIT BACKGROUND

In this unit, students will first learn about the history of presidential election campaigning. So, how and why did this concept of *persuasion* begin? Political campaigning has existed as long as there have been interested citizens to campaign amongst. The phenomenon of political

campaigns are tied to special interest groups and political parties (“Political Campaigns” *Wikipedia*). The defining characteristic of democratic political campaigns is the involvement of the people to try to influence government and other social bodies (*Political Campaigning*). The campaign is established with one goal in mind: win an election. The focus of the campaign is to reach as many people as possible and persuade them to support the goal of the campaign. One of the first priorities of the campaign team is to establish the campaign message (“Political Campaigns” *Wikipedia*). This is a brief summary of what the goal is and why the average voter should support it. This draws on techniques from advertising to propaganda. These techniques have changed throughout U.S. history’s presidential elections. The ideal of the campaign is for the number of people involved, the media presence, the funds available, the hours worked by volunteers, and the number of people reached by the message to increase rapidly and to keep increasing until the goal of the campaign is reached.

Well, let’s go back in time to early America when there were no political parties, and most positions were appointed by the British parliament (Dinkin 1). In colonial times, the main method of campaigning was canvassing and handshaking (Dinkin 3). Back then, in small communities where few people had the right to vote, people felt it was of extreme importance to personally know the candidate to whom they were voting. Candidates would also “treat” the voters to refreshments. They would literally wait for voters before and after balloting. If a candidate did not provide refreshments to the voters, he would more than likely be in danger of losing the election.

As elections became more competitive, candidates used newspapers as an electioneering aid. Candidates would insert announcements of their intent to run for a particular position and would write short essays on their opinion on certain issues. In Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, copies of pamphlets were handed out before an election.

Students will mostly have examples of campaigning methods and techniques from presidential elections in the 19th and 20th centuries. Many of the nineteenth century campaigns consisted of very elaborate contests between two distinguished political parties. Money spent on brass bands, banners and torches were now becoming a thing of the past in the new century. A new style of campaigning was born – “Educational Campaigning” (Dinken 96). Parties spent more money on printed materials, attempting to educate the people of America about serious issues and the position each candidate held. Parties began holding large numbers of “educational meetings” to explain party positions to their constituents. The printed word emerged as the dominant form of electioneering in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Newspapers were not the same electioneering tool that it had once been in the past. More independent journalism began to grow, presenting news more accurately and impartially (Dinken 100).

CAMPAIGNING TECHNIQUES

Every campaign has a goal in mind, and that is to get across a message in order to win an election. The message is then communicated by a number of methods. Some methods include: the public media (they may run the story that someone is trying to get elected); advertising in the media (TV advertisements are very common, and newspapers and billboards); holding protests and rallies (if enough people can be persuaded to come); holding mass meetings with speakers; writing directly to members of the public; communicating face-to-face with members of the public, either at events, in the street or on the doorstep; distributing leaflets or pamphlets; through websites; online communities; and bulk mail; and through whistle stop tours – a series of brief appearances in several small towns (“Political Campaigns” *Wikipedia*).

The 1964 Lyndon B. Johnson Democratic campaign also used negative ads attacking the opposition, highlighted by perhaps the most famous political commercial ever broadcast, the so-called “Daisy” spot developed by media innovator Tony Schwartz (*Lyndon Baines Johnson*).

Goldwater, Johnson's opponent, was never mentioned in the commercial, but it was repeatedly broadcast by television news shows covering the campaign. There is an image of a little girl picking petals of a daisy, counting in her innocent voice: "one, two, three, four..." and as she reaches ten, a resounding male voice suddenly reverses the count: "ten, nine, eight, seven ..." At zero comes a deafening roar, and the screen fills with the mushroom cloud of an atomic bomb. Then the voice of Lyndon B. Johnson is heard saying, "These are the stakes to make a world in which all God's children can live, or to go into the darkness. We must either love each other, or we must die." A reassuring male voice concludes: "Vote for President Johnson on November 3. The stakes are too high for you to stay at home" (*Lyndon Baines Johnson*). Goldwater was never able to overcome the label, and Johnson's 61% popular vote victory was the greatest margin to that day (*Lyndon Baines Johnson*).

ERAS OF CAMPAIGNING

In Pippa Norris's book, *A Virtuous Circle: Political Communications in Post Industrial Societies*, the author states there are three eras of campaigning: pre-modern campaigns (19th century), modern campaigns (20th century), and post-modern campaigns (21st century). In the *pre-modern campaigns*, they were based upon direct forms of interpersonal communications between the candidates and citizen (7). Parties rang doorbells, posted pamphlets, and had rallies, doorstep canvassing, and party meetings. Parties provided all the machinery linking voters and candidates. In the *modern campaigns*, television becomes the principal forum of campaign events. Politicians and professional advisors conduct polls, design advertisements, set up news conferences, and photo opportunities (8). For citizens, the typical experience of the election becomes more passive, in the sense that the main focus of the campaign is located within national television studios, so that most voters become more distant and disengaged spectators in the process (9). *Post-modern campaigns* are understood as those where the professional consultants on advertising, public opinion, marketing, and strategic news management become more co-equal actors with politicians, assuming more of an influential role within government in a campaign (10). For some citizens, the election may represent a return to some of the forms of engagement found in the pre-modern stage, as the new channels of communication potentially allows greater interactivity between voters and politicians (10). No matter what era campaigning takes place in, all political campaigns are made up of three elements: Message, money and machine ("Political Campaigns" *Wikipedia*).

The message is the preferred outcome. In a modern political campaign, the message must be carefully crafted before it is spread. Well-financed campaigns use all of the tools of consumer advertisers. Money represents the physical resources that will be expended to achieve that outcome ("Political Campaigns" *Wikipedia*). Finally, machine represents human capital, the foot soldiers loyal to the cause, and the true believers who will carry the word. The machine may have a paid staff or may be completely run by volunteer activists. Successful campaigns usually require a campaign manager and a treasurer who, along with a candidate, make the strategic decisions ("Political Campaigns" *Wikipedia*).

PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNING IN THE 19TH CENTURY

Since this unit will focus mainly on 19th century elections, we will look at several elections from this era and identify some campaigning techniques. Presidential candidates used different methods in attempts to winning the election. In the election of 1828, Andrew Jackson, who was projected with an image of a populist, ran against President Adams, who was a member of the "ruling class" ("U. S. Presidential Elections"). This was considered the meanest campaigns in U.S. history (Miller). Jackson was attacked at being a military tyrant who would use the presidency as a springboard for his own Napoleonic ambitions of empire (Miller). The Adam's campaign brought up every skeleton in Jackson's closet, including, his duels and brawls, his

execution of troops in the War of 1812, his declaration of marshal law in New Orleans, and his invasions of Spanish Florida (Miller). But by far, the most painful personal attack on Jackson was the attack on his and Rachel's character over their marriage (Miller). They did not go unanswered, and attacked back. They struck back with attacks on corrupt officials in Adam's administration and labeled Adams an elitist who wanted to increase the size and power of government to benefit the aristocracy (Miller).

Negative campaigning is a technique seen more now than in the 19th century, but despite all of the accusations, voters overwhelmingly elected Jackson in 1828. His victory can be contributed somewhat to the fact that he was viewed by the people of America as the "common man" (Miller). He had faults and made mistakes just like most voters. His victory can mostly be contributed to his military accomplishments and the trust voters had that he would bring the same success in restoring honor to government (Miller).

In the election of 1840, the Whig party, with Harrison as their presidential candidate, imitated successful Democratic campaign techniques to appeal to the people of America. His campaign used sloganeering, parades, aggressive organizing, rallies, newspapers, and pamphlets (Monroe). Many candidates use problems facing the country as a platform for their campaign. They discuss ways on how they will either resolve the problems or how they will deal with the problems. That is exactly what the Whig Party did in 1840. They used the economic depression of 1837 as a platform to win the presidency (Monroe), focusing on positive economic legislation. Harrison and the Whigs went on to win the 1840 election (Monroe).

Campaigning techniques began changing rapidly. "Educational Campaigning" was taken over by a new method: advertising. Candidates recognized techniques in advertising of common household items, and came to the conclusion that cartoons, colorful illustrations, and catchy slogans could sell them as well (Dinkin 100). William Howard Taft appeared on 23,000 billboards in 1912, and an even greater number would be displayed for Woodrow Wilson (1916) and Warren Harding (1920) (Dinkin 101).

Of course I can't talk about the campaigns of the 19th century with out speaking on the most spectacular campaign of the century: *The Election of 1860*. This election was so important, because it was at a time where our country was divided into two sections. The U.S. needed a leader who was capable of reuniting the country. Four candidates brought diverse appeals to the voting public. Lincoln focused his campaign on the northern and western states. Breckinridge similarly built upon a strong base in the southern states, but was widely reviled in the North. Bell believed the sectional crisis would go away if they just ignored it. Douglas exhausted himself by delivering campaign addresses on his own behalf. In this era, candidates themselves maintained a dignified silence while party stump speakers delivered their message to the voters on the local level. Close electoral competition obliged the parties to rely on high voter turnout to secure elections. In an era before mass media, political parties relied upon stump speakers and mass publications like campaign books to inspire partisan picnics, parades and rallies. These events often provided the faithful with free food and drinks, served to whip up party enthusiasm, and encourage voter turnout (Vandecreek 1, 2).

The key to the Republican Party's success was its position on slavery. It opposed the expansion of slavery and called upon Congress to take measures, whenever necessary, to prevent its extension. Lincoln stood firm on his position on slavery, and refused to issue public assurances to the South that he would uphold slavery in its present confines. In the 1860 campaign, brightly colored banners, outrageous political cartoons, sentimental sheet music covers, and patriotic portraits were printed to win the vote. One slogan used in the 1860 Lincoln campaign was, "*Vote Yourself a Farm*", referring to the Republican party's promise in supporting a law granting free homesteads to settlers of western lands. Lincoln was elected president with a

mere thirty-nine percent of the popular vote. He carried no state south of the Mason- Dixon line (Vandecreek 2).

Presidential candidates used different methods in attempts to winning the election. In the election of 1868, the first presidential election since the end of the Civil War, the Republican Party turned to General Ulysses S. Grant. Since Grant was considered the “savior of the nation,” running the Union army extremely well, the Republicans thought he would do the same with the federal government (Dinkin 85). With no prior political experience, Grant ran his campaign on the concept of reconstructing America, bringing peace. Even with Grant giving no speeches, and only appearing in public on several occasions, he and the Republican Party managed to defeat Horatio Seymour and the Democrats (86). Now, some may say that once in office, Grant did everything but succeed. But he did succeed in winning the 1868 Presidential Election. How? Grant used his prior wartime achievement in the army to grasp the people of America. And because the United States was just coming out of war, Grant used that as a platform to ensure peace in America.

PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNING IN EARLY 20TH CENTURY

With advanced technology on the rise, it played an important role for potential candidates to gain access to voters. William Jennings Bryan began a new trend in campaigning when he was nominated for the presidency by the Democratic Party in 1896. Bryan not only used a campaign technique that appealed to the common man, but he was the first president to have his voice heard on the phonograph. “The humblest citizen in all the land, when clad in the armor of a righteous cause, is stronger than all the hosts of error. I come to speak to you in defense of a cause as holy as the cause of liberty – the cause of humanity,” (Whicher 35). This was really the birth of a new way of thinking in political parties – a party devoted in spirit, to human rights and human progress, to the welfare of the common people (37). Bryan also became the first White House hopeful to appear in a brief campaign movie (Dinkin 100). He was seen riding from the railroad station to a large auditorium where he delivered an address. Taft, Wilson, and Harding also used movie clips to show them working in office and at home to give a more personal affect (100). Buttons, badges, and the invention of the car made candidates more assessable to the public. Candidates were able to give more speeches and reach more people than ever before.

The old and new methods of campaigning shared a common factor: direct contact. Newer practices of campaigning played a significant part of the vote-getting process, but candidates still needed a personal connection to the people. Knocking on doors, shaking hands, and greeting people in public places still needed doing. In the 1930’s, Franklin Roosevelt and Huey Long did most of their campaigning by car, driving hundreds of miles and visiting numerous places (Dinkin 102-103).

CAMPAIGN FUNDING

Political campaigns in the United States are not merely a civic ritual and occasion for political debate, but a multi-million industry, dominated by professional political consultants using sophisticated campaign management tools. The first Federal campaign finance legislation was an 1867 law that prohibited Federal officers from requesting contributions from Navy Yard workers (“The Annual Statistical Report of Contributions and Expenditures” 161). Over the next 100 years, Congress enacted a series of laws that sought broader regulation of Federal campaign financing. These laws sought to limit contributions to ensure that wealthy individuals and special interest groups did not have a disproportionate influence on Federal elections, prohibit certain sources of funds for Federal campaign purposes, control campaign spending, and require public disclosure of campaign finances to deter abuse and to educate the electorate (161). In the aftermath of Watergate, Congress passed the Federal Election Campaign Act, a system of partial public financing for presidential primary candidates and full public financing for general election

candidates. There is a \$3 check-off on everyone's income tax forms (162). In the 1996 election, 52% of funds for primary candidates came from individuals (162).

It was not until the election of 1896 that the campaign trail took on a character familiar to modern voters. First off, Mark Hanna, the campaign manager for William McKinley, raised the then staggering sum of \$3.5 million, mostly from corporations fearful of economic disaster if William Jennings Bryan was elected.

MODERN ELECTION CAMPAIGNS IN THE U.S.

The first television campaign commercials appeared in 1952 (Norris 107). This changed public exposure to and perception of candidates and issues in the presidential campaign. Now, believe it or not, the printed press remains politically important, especially in newspapers. Television, however, has become an essential addition to the printed press, and probably the one that reaches the most voters. The media is the number one source of getting the names of the candidates out there to the people. In the modern era of campaigning, T.V. has not replaced the newspaper, but supplemented it. Commentators suggest that the focus on television campaign has strengthened the spotlight on the party leadership, moving towards a 'personalization' of politics (Norris, 108). Case studies suggest that this trend is particularly marked for presidential elections (108). It seems plausible that the shift in emphasis from newspapers to television has probably heightened the visibility of leaders (109).

In the 1952 contest between Dwight D. Eisenhower and Adlai Stevenson, there was no precedent in presidential elections for "spot" advertising, and most candidates favored 30 minute blocks of time for broadcasting speeches (*The Living Room Candidate*). Madison Avenue advertising executive Rosser Reeves convinced Eisenhower that spot ads placed before and after popular TV programs would reach more viewers at lower cost (*The Living Room Candidate*). The spots that followed were intended to portray him as a plain-speaking man of the people. Stevenson, however, who disdained the use of television for campaigning, proved less skillful at handling the new medium, and refused even to appear in his own ads (*The Living Room Candidate*).

The move from amateur to professional campaigns was marked by more frequent use of specialist experts, PR consultants, and professional fund-raisers influencing decisions formerly made by candidates or party officials (Norris 110). Increased use of paid consultants, public opinion polls, direct mail, and professional television broadcasts during the long campaign, led to rising costs and the shift from labor-intensive towards more capital-intensive campaigns (115).

During the last decade, television has transformed towards more diverse news sources including satellite and cable stations, talk radio, 24-hour rolling news bulletins, and party-voter interaction caused by the rise of the internet.

The heart of the political marketing concept is a shift from sales of existing products (advertising party policies, leaders, and images), towards a focus that puts the customer first, using research into voter's needs, wants and drives as revealed through polls, focus groups and similar techniques (Norris 116-117).

STUDENT RELEVANCY – MAKING THE TOPIC MEANINGFUL

After giving my students some background information on the trends of presidential campaigning, I will make the topic relevant to them. Students will be given examples of how they campaign for different goals in their life. If a student wants to apply for a scholarship to college, then they must convince that university they are worthy enough to receive the money. Not only are they campaigning for the university, but they are also campaigning against other students applying for the same scholarship. This is exactly what goes on in a presidential

campaign. In other words, they must assure the scholarship committee they will maintain a certain GPA. Now how will they do this? Well, the university will look at their prior achievements. The grades that student made in high school in their classes and on standardized tests will play an important role in determining whether or not that student will receive a scholarship. This is very similar to a presidential candidate. A potential candidate must convince the people of America they are the right person to be president. The people of America also look at the prior achievements of a candidate. This plays a major part in getting votes. The same applies to any individual who is applying for a job. They must convince the employer they are the finest person for the job. I think this is a very important part of the unit because this will tie the topic into the student's everyday lives, and will make the topic relevant to them. Now, I have their attention and they will have a better understanding of what is expected of them when assignments are due in this unit.

Studying about the President and different presidential campaigning techniques will enhance their overall academic knowledge. Students in fifth grade are expected to learn certain objectives of U.S. History. TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills) expect the students to know the role of the President and his powers/ duties. After completing this unit on *Election Campaigning*, students will have additional knowledge they can combine with what is already expected of them. Not only that, the subject matter of this unit will be extremely useful to my students because they will be apart of the election process in the future. They will also be able to take the skills learned in this unit and apply it to their everyday lives. Campaigning is not a term only used in elections. People campaign for themselves all the time (scholarships, jobs, promotions).

LESSON PLANS

Lesson One: Campaigning with Lincoln

Throughout this unit, students will complete a KWL chart. They will be responsible for keeping up with it and filling in the appropriate information. The students will write down what they already know about campaigning (K), and what they want to learn about campaigning (W). During the entire unit, they will write down everything they have learned about campaigning (L).

The purpose of lesson one will allow the students to become apart of Abraham Lincoln's 1860 election campaign. Students will go back in time, as they pretend they are working for Lincoln's campaign.

Students will work with a partner, assigned by the teacher, as they help Lincoln win the election of 1860. This will be an introductory lesson for students in getting them prepared to work on campaigns (which they will in lesson three). Students will create a campaign poster that has positive facts about Lincoln. Students will be required to conduct research on the election of 1860, including the stance Lincoln took on slavery and the expansion of slavery in the United States. Students should also know the climate of the country at this time and what the people of the United States wanted from their President.

They will be required to use two different sources when conducting their research. Students should gather important ideas, Lincoln quotations/slogans, information about the political issues of 1860, the Republican Party's platform and Lincoln's opinions. The poster should be accurate, persuasive and attention grabbing.

Students will be required to present their poster to the class. Students will be given 50 points for accurate information, 25 points for effective selections of important ideas and concepts, and another 25 points for the quality of the layout, neatness, design, and color.

As an extension, the class will look at Lincoln's opponent, Stephen Douglas, and compare and contrast the two candidates and their positions on the topics of 1860.

This activity will be done individually. Students will make a Venn diagram and look for similarities and differences amongst Lincoln and Douglas.

Finally, there will be a class discussion on the difference between the Lincoln and Douglas and what the deciding factor was in the election of 1860 that allowed Lincoln to come out with the victory.

Lesson Two: Readings

For the second lesson of this unit, students will read the *The Kid Who Ran for President*, by Dan Gutman. This will give students more insight on the requirements of what is needed to win a presidential election campaign. This book is a funny, exciting novel, students will enjoy reading. It will also prepare them for the third lesson of this unit.

Because the book has twenty-seven chapters, students will be assigned chapter readings. These readings will be done at home and in class. Students will be required to keep up with the readings because they will be given several chapter tests. These tests will test their comprehension of their reading. This is an excellent way to incorporate reading skills into the social studies lesson.

The social studies teacher may team up with the reading teacher to get assistance with vocabulary. Students will be given a vocabulary list before each sectional reading assignment is given. They will be responsible for knowing the vocabulary, including spelling and meaning of the word. There will be vocabulary quizzes given as well.

After reading, they will compare and contrast strategies of Lincoln's campaign to those strategies used by the kid in the book, using a Venn diagram.

As an extension to this lesson, students will take a look at all the parts in the novel that could not be true (the fictional parts). They will take these parts and make them realistic, replacing them with facts that could actually make the story true. This will be done in groups of three to four students.

Lesson 3 – Themes in Political Ads

Students will understand how certain themes are used in campaign commercials to manipulate the feelings of the voting public.

The teacher will give some background information on campaign commercials, using the website, www.livingroomcandidate.movingimage.us/index.php. This website identifies seven types of commercials: Backfire, Biographical, Children, Commander-in-Chief, Fear, Documentary, and Real People. One of these categories, Children, will be the focus of this lesson. When voters see the candidates with their children or grandchildren, they perceive them as family men, and that is something all people can relate to. The portrayal of anonymous or "real" but unrelated children can also play on a number of powerful emotions, including fear, anxiety, and hope for the future. Children in presidential ads serve as a lens through which to view the wider concerns of the nation. Their inclusion in ads is now standard in campaigns; what candidate would not want to be seen as concerned with the needs of America's youth?

The above information will be given to the students to start a discussion. The class will then use the website listed above to watch the following commercials: From 1964, Lyndon B. Johnson, "Daisy" and "Ice Cream Cone," and Barry Goldwater, "We will Bury You." From 1976, Gerald Ford, "Children/ Achievements," and from 1996, Bob Dole, "The Threat." Questions for discussion after viewing the commercials via the Internet are as follows: 1) Describe the age, gender and appearance of the children. What are they doing? 2) What setting, costumes, and props are used? What effect do they have? 3) What message is being communicated by each commercial? Is it the same message or different? Why are children included in these

commercials? 4) Is the presidential candidate shown interacting with the children? If so, how do you interpret this?

By the end of this lesson, students should be able to understand the emotional impact upon the viewer of using children in campaign ads.

Lesson 4 – Presidential Persuasive Speeches

The objective for this lesson requires students to pretend they are a presidential candidate from the following list: John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, and George H. W. Bush.

Students must find information about the presidential candidate, and make sure facts are used as a basis for the speech. Opinions about the candidate should not be used.

The speech should be about 2 – 4 minutes long, and students will be allowed to use note cards. Actually, note cards will be a requirement for the speech. Presidential candidates use them when they are giving speeches. The speech must include a minimum of five important facts about the candidate (may include, political beliefs, past political positions, environmental policies, etc.). The students must also have an appealing visual aid, but are not allowed to use video cameras. Computers may be used for Power Point as a visual aid.

Students will also be given a “Persuasion Worksheet,” where they will identify who they are and why they chose a particular candidate. They will describe who the audience is and why they chose that audience (for example, union workers, mom, etc).

Both the requirements for the speech and the *Persuasion Worksheet* will be assessed together to determine one overall grade for this lesson. This lesson will also provide students with a good foundation for the final lesson of this unit, where they will be required to write a persuasive campaign speech for themselves.

Lesson 5 – Mock Election

With all of this in mind, this curriculum unit will be based on a fifth grade mock-campaign/ election. I have three U.S. History classes I see twice a week. In each class, I have five groups. Each class will hold its individual campaign and election. I will give the students some background information about the two major parties, Democrats and Republicans, but I will allow the students to create their own political party. So, there will be five political parties in each election. Each party will elect a nominee to run for the presidency. That nominee will select two to three people to help them campaign and win the election. Because the students will already be equipped with the knowledge of campaign techniques, they will use those techniques to persuade the others in the class to vote for them.

Students will be allowed to use cameras and camcorders to promote their party using media resources for commercials, pictures, pamphlets, etc. Each political party will have certain criteria they must follow in their campaign. Students must:

- Have a name and symbol for their political party (something other than Democrats and Republicans).
- Promote a positive campaign. There won't be any negative campaigning towards opponents.
- Write out a campaign plan, which will describe all strategies used by the party.
- Speak about current issues that will better the school environment (at least three). They must address the issue and describe how they will fix it or make it better.

They will be required to also prepare a two to three minute speech to give in front of the class, explaining why they should be president and address the three issues they have selected to talk

about. The students will be given a rubric so they know what is expected of them. During the campaign, students can make posters, buttons, give “treats” to the other students, or even have pep rallies if they would like. Nominees will be reminded they want to publicize themselves, but not in a vain and conceited manner. This unit will not just be a “social” activity. Students will have to seriously think about their campaign strategies and come up with a plan for their campaign.

Once the speeches are made, the students will vote using a secret ballot. The secret ballot is a process in elections where the choice of the voters is kept confidential (Davies 1). The main purpose of this process is to ensure the voter records a sincere choice by preventing the attempts to influence the voter by intimidation or bribery. This system is one means of achieving the goal of political privacy. Secret ballots are suitable for many different voting systems. There are at least four possible levels of ballot secrecy used by Americans in the latter half of the 19th Century: (1) At its strongest, a vote can be *untraceable*, meaning that a voter’s recorded vote cannot be known by anyone including the voter. (2) A weaker form of secrecy is *anonymous* voting, wherein a voter’s recorded vote can be known by the voter but not by others, making it possible for the voter to claim that their vote was mis-recorded. (3) Still an even weaker voter method is *privacy* voting, in which a voter can keep their recorded vote a secret but can both know and reveal it to others verifiably (Davies 2). (4) *Confidential* voting is where a voter can keep their recorded vote a secret from the general public, but the mapping between voters’ identities and their recorded votes is knowable either by one or an ensemble of officials (Davies 2). Confidential voting makes it possible to audit an election. In the United States, the practice became known as the “Australian Ballot,” a voting procedure developed in Australia that the United States began using in the 1890’s (“Secret Ballot” *Wikipedia*). The first president of the U.S. elected under the Australian ballot was president Grover Cleveland in 1892 (“Secret Ballot” *Wikipedia*). Today, in the age of electronic voting, many conditions that led to ballot secrecy are no longer present in “advanced democracies” (Davies 2). Ballots are now standardized for all voters, and partisans are generally kept from exerting influence in the locations where voting takes place (Davies 2).

I will count the votes and the two nominees with the highest number of votes will participate in a run-off election. These two candidates will be required to participate in a debate moderated by the teacher. Because the last presidential election was such a publicized one and the debates were of extreme importance, I will give the students a lot of information and examples on debates in past elections. I will show one of the Kerry/Bush debates and discuss debate strategies. This will prepare them for their mock debate.

Again, the students will be encouraged to stay away from negative comments toward their opponent. This debate should give the students a little more information about the candidates and their position on certain issues. Each candidate will be allowed thirty seconds to a minute to answer questions given by the teacher. The teacher will supply the candidates with a list of questions that will be asked at the debate, prior to the debate. This will give the students a chance to prepare and really address issues dealing with school improvement.

Students should have a better understanding of what a presidential nominee goes through during the campaigning process after finishing this unit.

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