

# 2008 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION



A WNY/EISENHOWER/PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL PROJECT 2008-2009

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GRADES 5/6

LANGUAGE ARTS/SOCIAL STUDIES

PUBLIC SCHOOL #4

# **OVERVIEW**

This year, both the fifth and sixth grade classes will be learning as much about electing a new president as we can teach them. We will be learning about patriotism, democracy, the different political parties, the three branches of government, and how to vote using a genuine election booth on Election Day. We will watch movies, research material on the computer, color our Democratic and Republican symbols, make election posters, and discover what a real voting booth looks like and how it works. Our culmination of the entire first semester will be our mock election, where everyone in the school will have an opportunity to vote for their candidate.

When the election is over, we will discuss Inauguration day and what will happen on that cold day in January. We will also watch prior inauguration speeches so the students will know what to expect. We will then, hopefully, watch the entire process of the election of our 44<sup>th</sup> President on our televisions in our classrooms.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- Students will be able to demonstrate their knowledge of patriotism and democracy through conversation, discussion, and research.
- Students will be able to research biographies of the candidates on the web as well as through the media and write summaries on the traits and qualities of a good leader.
- Students will understand that presidential elections are decided by the Electoral College and not the popular vote.
- Students will be able to differentiate between the two political parties and explain the origin of the donkey and elephant symbols representing the two parties respectively.
- Students will be exposed to registration forms, propaganda, poster making, and campaign advertising.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to use technological instruments such as a video camera and a digital camera.
- Students will be able to monitor the results of the national elections creating graphs on the computer and analyzing the results.
- A polling booth demonstration will allow students to simulate the voting process.
- Students will be able to vote in a mock election for the candidate of their choice.

## **Lesson 1**

### **Objective:**

The students will be able to understand the meaning of Patriotism and Democracy.

### **Time Allotment:**

Two forty-minute periods

### **Materials:**

Computers with internet connection

### **Procedure:**

First, I will explain to students the definitions of both patriotism and democracy. We will discuss the ways we show patriotism in our everyday lives. We will also discuss the importance of a democracy and what would happen if we did not have one. When I feel students have an understanding of both, they will break up into groups and share their thoughts with each other and then complete a ditto which will show me if they now understand the material.

### **Assessment:**

Students will be able to lead a discussion with their peers and other teachers and complete a worksheet with little or no problems at all.

## **LESSON 2**

### **Objectives:**

Students will be able to explain to people the differences between the two main political parties, Democrats and Republicans.

### **Time Allotment:**

Two forty-minute periods

### Material:

Computer with access to the Internet; dittos of donkeys and elephants; crayons and markers

### Procedure:

First, check students' prior knowledge of political parties, through a discussion. After students have come up with their own ideas of how the Democratic Party began, what it stood for, and why they chose the donkey to represent them, we will go to the computer and research to see if any of our ideas were correct. When completed, we will do the same for the Republican Party. We will then take our results and write them on the board. Coloring and displaying our donkeys and elephants will conclude this lesson.

### Assessment:

Students will be able to lead a discussion with their peers and other teachers on the two major political parties.

## **LESSON 3**

### OBJECTIVES:

Students will learn about propaganda, political cartoons, and how to interpret each.

### Time Allotment:

Three forty-minute periods

### Materials:

Computers with Internet access, worksheets, and political cartoons from newspapers and/or magazines

### Procedure:

First, explain to class that propaganda is a message to persuade its audience to think and behave in a certain manner. Make a list of where and how we can be influenced by propaganda. Then bring in many different cartoons taken from both magazines and newspapers and have class brainstorm on what they mean and what they want us to believe. The class will work on making their own political cartoons to be displayed with the others.

### Assessment-

Teacher created worksheet analyzing a cartoon.

## **LESSON 4**

### Objective:

Students will be able to research both past and present information on Obama and McCain and through watching their debates on television be able to make a well informed decision on who they will vote for on election day and why.

### Time Allotment:

Three forty-minute periods

### Materials:

Computers with internet access, television, view-taped sessions of debates between the candidate, newspaper articles critiquing the debates

### Procedure:

Students will work with groups to research the past and present lives of Barack Obama and John McCain. Afterwards, we will watch the taped debates on the television, critiquing their body language and their views and focus for the future of the country.

Assessment:

Students should be able to determine who they will vote for in the mock election, by a verbal explanation of how well they know their candidates.

**Lesson 5**

Objective:

Students will be able to explain the necessary requirements and qualifications to run for the office of President of the United States.

Time Allotment:

One forty-minute period

Procedure:

During a class discussion, we will list the requirements and qualifications needed to run for the office of President of the United States. Then, we will discuss who in our classes may one day be able to run for president.

Assessment:

In a short open-ended question format, students will write the qualifications to become President of the United States.

**Lesson 6**

Objective:

Students will be able to explain how a voting booth works; to vote just like an adult does on Election Day.

Time Allotment:

One forty-minute period

### Procedure:

We were in touch with the Hudson County Board of Elections. They were kind enough to provide a demonstration for our fifth and sixth grade classes about how the voting booth works. The moderator even detailed how the votes are counted, recorded and saved in the machine. Each student was then able to go up and cast their vote for President in a mock election between Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, and Thomas Jefferson. Before the actual count was revealed, each student gave a prediction of the outcome of the election.

### **Lesson 7**

#### Objective:

Students will understand the concepts of the “Electoral College” and “popular vote”.

#### Time Allotment:

Two forty-minute periods

#### Materials:

Computers with internet access, crayons, copies of U.S. maps

#### Procedure-

Explain the Electoral College system to students and how it works in the election process. When students have researched the numbers for each state from the National Archives Website, students will fill in the number of votes each state will have for the upcoming election on their copy of a U.S. map.

#### Assessment:

Students will complete their map and write a short explanation of the Electoral College.

## **Lesson 8**

### **Objective:**

Students will learn about the three branches of the government in the United States and explain the responsibilities.

### **Time Allotment:**

Two forty-minute periods

### **Materials:**

Red, white, and blue construction paper





### **Procedure:**

Begin to explain, and outline for the students the three branches of government and their responsibilities. The Executive Branch enforces the laws, the Legislative Branch makes the laws, and the Judicial Branch translates the laws. Discuss with students who is involved with each group and their responsibilities. Then give each student a red, blue, and white piece of paper. Write Executive on the white, Legislative on the red, and Judicial on the blue. Ask a series of questions and have the students respond by holding up the card that applies to the question. We could play as teams or as individuals, or students can even take turns being the teacher and asking the questions.

### **Assessment-**

A final test on the Three Branches of the government will be given.



CATEGORY				
<p>ABILITY TO IDENTIFY, REMEMBER, AND UNDERSTAND IMPORTANT INFORMATION</p>	<p>STUDENT IS ABLE TO CONVEY MAIN POINTS OF THE LESSON ORALLY AND THROUGH WRITTEN COMPREHENSION ASSESSMENTS.</p>	<p>STUDENT IS ABLE TO LIST SOME OF THE MAIN POINTS OF THE LESSON WITH SOME TEACHER GUIDANCE.</p>	<p>STUDENT IS ABLE TO LIST ONE OR TWO MAIN POINTS OF THE LESSON WITH OR WITHOUT TEACHER GUIDANCE.</p>	<p>STUDENT CAN NOT IDENTIFY IMPORTANT POINTS OR INFORMATION FROM THE LESSON WHETHER ORALLY OR WRITTEN.</p>
<p>ABILITY TO PARTICIPATE IN DISCUSSIONS AND CLASS PROJECTS</p>	<p>STUDENT EAGERLY PARTICIPATES IN TOPIC DISCUSSION OFFERING IDEAS, PRIOR KNOWLEDGE, AND STORIES TO ENRICH LESSON.</p>	<p>WHEN REQUESTED, STUDENT CAN OFFER SOME IDEAS TO CONTRIBUTE TO CLASSROOM DISCUSSIONS AND PROJECTS.</p>	<p>STUDENT OFFERS MINIMUM PARTICIPATION IN CLASSROOM DISCUSSION, AND MINIMAL INFORMATION WITH TEACHER GUIDANCE.</p>	<p>STUDENT WILL NOT PARTICIPATE IN CLASSROOM DISCUSSIONS OR COMPLETE PROJECTS.</p>
<p>ABILITY TO ANALYSE AND CREATE THEIR OWN OPINIONS</p>	<p>STUDENT CAN READILY DISTINGUISH BETWEEN DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW AND FORMULATE AN OPINION OF THEIR OWN.</p>	<p>STUDENTS CAN DISTINGUISH BETWEEN SOME POINTS OF VIEW AND FORMULATE AN OPINION WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE TEACHER.</p>	<p>STUDENT STRUGGLES WITH DISTINCTION BETWEEN POINTS OF VIEW AND FORMULATING OPINIONS OF THEIR OWN.</p>	<p>STUDENT IS UNABLE TO DISTINGUISH POINTS OF VIEW AND ARE UNABLE TO FORMULATE THEIR OWN OPINION.</p>
<p>ABILITY TO COMPLETE ASSESSMENT</p>	<p>STUDENT SUCCESSFULLY AND INDEPENDENTLY COMPLETES ALL PORTIONS OF THE LESSON'S FINAL ASSESSMENT.</p>	<p>STUDENT SUCCESSFULLY AND INDEPENDENTLY COMPLETES ALL BUT ONE OR TWO OF THE FINAL ASSESSMENT COMPONENTS.</p>	<p>STUDENT COMPLETES ABOUT HALF OF THE ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY.</p>	<p>STUDENT COMPLETES LESS THAN HALF OR NONE OF THE ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY.</p>

NJCCC STANDARDS:

LANGUAGE ARTS AND LITERACY

3.1 3.2 3.3 3.4 3.5

SOCIAL STUDIES

6.1 6.2 6.2C3 6.2D

TECHNOLOGY

8.1.83 8.18.10 8.1B.6

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## SELF EVALUATION

As a first year Eisenhower participant, at the very start of this process I was filled with anxiety and the fear of the unknown. As time went on, I started to relax, enjoy, and realize that understanding technology and integrating it into the school curriculum is essential in this fast paced technological world. Both the students and I learned so much about our political system and each and every one of them were involved. Whether they were researching facts on the computer, making campaign posters, interpreting political cartoons, painting our voting booth, taking pictures, videotaping, or just arguing about who would be best for the country, they were learning. Our third floor hallway looked like the campaign trail, and our media center looked better than a real polling place. I think the students, through our mock election, felt that they, not just their teachers and parents, had a say in who would run their country for the next four years. I have to say that my computer skills have improved, and I did enjoy working on this project. Most of the students and many of the teachers as well were involved and showed excitement towards this endeavor.