

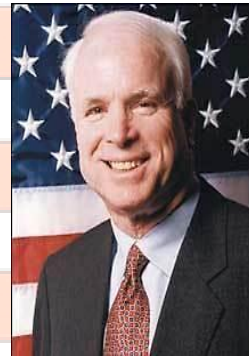


# Election 2008

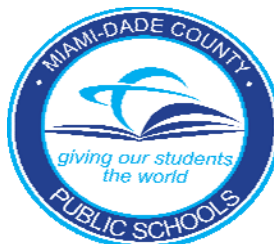
## BACKGROUND INFORMATION CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES GRADES K - 5

**Barack Obama- Democrat**

**John McCain- Republican**



**Curriculum and Instruction, Social Sciences  
Miami-Dade County Public Schools**



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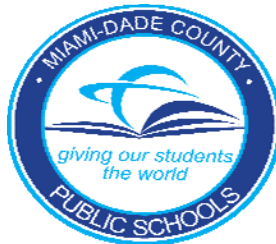
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## Election 2008: The Election of the President

**Candidates** announce that they are entering the presidential race

**Primary Elections** provide voters within a political party an opportunity to state a preference of candidate and choose delegates for the convention.

**Caucuses** permit party members to select delegates to the convention.

**National Conventions** are held the summer before the election. The purposes of a National Convention are to:

- Select a presidential candidate
- Select a vice-presidential candidate
- Decide upon a "party platform"

**Election Day** is the Tuesday following the first Monday in November. Voters choose a candidate. They are really choosing electors. In most states, all of the state's electoral votes go to the candidate winning the "popular vote."

The **Electoral College**, made up of each state's electors, meets in December to cast state votes. On January 6, Congress officially counts the votes and declares the winner.

**Inauguration Day** is January 20. At noon, the President and Vice President are sworn into office by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.



## **Election 2008: Political Vocabulary**

<b>Apathy:</b>	Lack of interest or concern
<b>Ballot:</b>	Printed form or other item used in voting
<b>Campaign:</b>	A series of actions to achieve a certain goal; in an election, actions designed to influence voters
<b>Candidate:</b>	Person who seeks or is nominated by others for political office
<b>Caucus:</b>	A closed meeting of political party members to make policy decisions and choose candidates for election
<b>Citizen:</b>	Person who is a member of a country, either by birth or by choice
<b>Convention:</b>	A formal meeting of a group of people for a certain purpose
<b>Delegate:</b>	A person chosen to speak and act for another person or group
<b>Democrat:</b>	A person who is a member of the Democratic Party
<b>Elect:</b>	To choose by voting
<b>Electoral College:</b>	A group of persons called "electors," selected by the voters in each state, that officially elect the president and vice president. The number of electors in each state is equal to its number of representatives in both houses of Congress
<b>Inauguration:</b>	The formal ceremony placing someone in office
<b>Incumbent:</b>	A person currently holding office

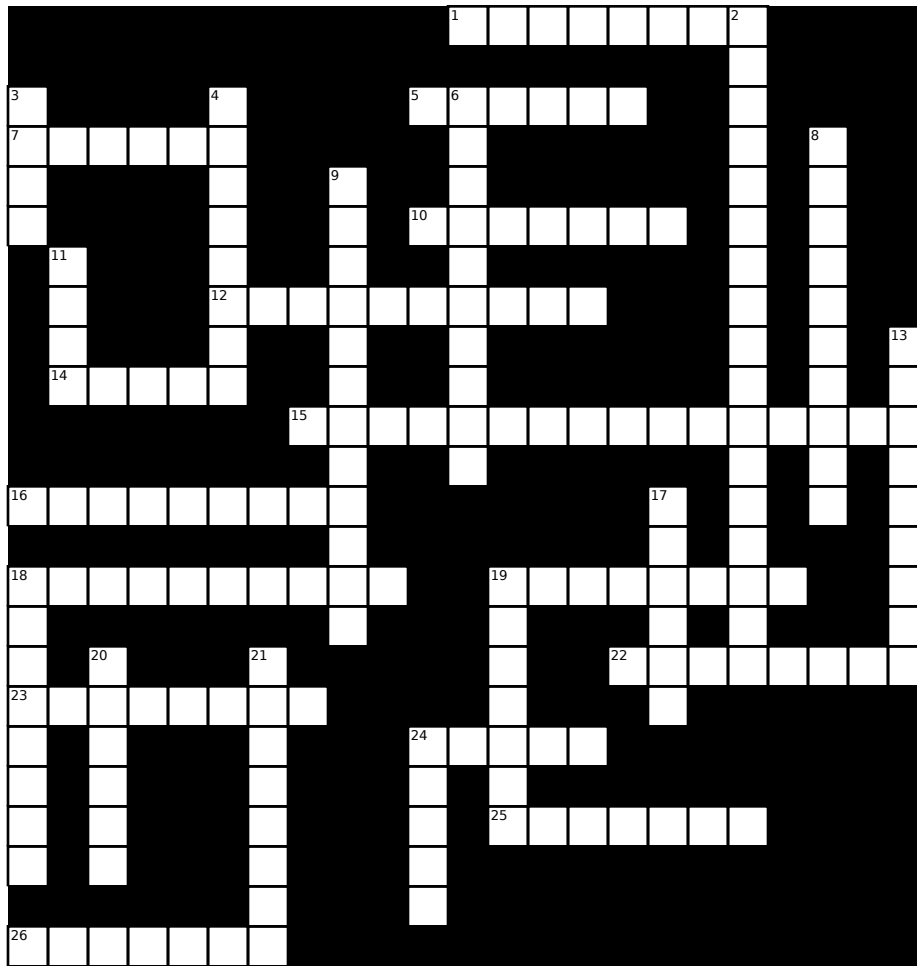


### **ELECTION 2008: Vocabulary (continued)**

<b>Initiative:</b>	An electoral procedure whereby citizens can propose legislation or constitutional amendments and refer the decision to a popular vote by obtaining the required number of signatures on a petition
<b>Issues:</b>	Problems and ideas to decide and vote upon
<b>Office:</b>	A position of trust or responsibility; a political position
<b>Party:</b>	A group organized for political activity
<b>Platform:</b>	A statement of beliefs
<b>Politician:</b>	Someone who runs for or holds a government office
<b>Poll:</b>	To collect opinions about issues and candidates
<b>Polls (or Polling Place):</b>	A place where votes are cast
<b>Precinct:</b>	Divisions within cities or towns for voting purposes
<b>Primary Election:</b>	An early election to choose a political party's candidate
<b>Register:</b>	The process by which a person's name is added to a list of those eligible to vote
<b>Republican:</b>	A person who is a member of the Republican Party
<b>Returns:</b>	The results of a vote
<b>Slogans:</b>	Phrases that express the goal or spirit of an organization or group
<b>Suffrage:</b>	The right or privilege of voting
<b>Vote:</b>	A method by which citizens choose their leaders and decide upon public issues

# Political Vocabulary Puzzle

## Curriculum and Instruction, Social Sciences



### Across

- 1 the right or privilege of voting.
- 5 lack of interest or concern.
- 7 a position of trust or responsibility; a political position.
- 10 person who is an official and legal member of a country, either by birth or by choice.
- 12 a person who is a member of the Republican Party.
- 14 to choose by voting.
- 15 an early election to choose a political party's candidate.
- 16 a person currently holding political office.
- 18 a formal meeting of a group of people for a certain purpose.
- 19 the process by which a person's name is added to a list of those eligible to vote.
- 22 a person chosen to speak and act for another person or group.
- 23 a statement of beliefs.
- 24 a group organized for political activity.
- 25 phrases that express the goal or spirit of an organization or group.
- 26 printed form or other item used in voting.

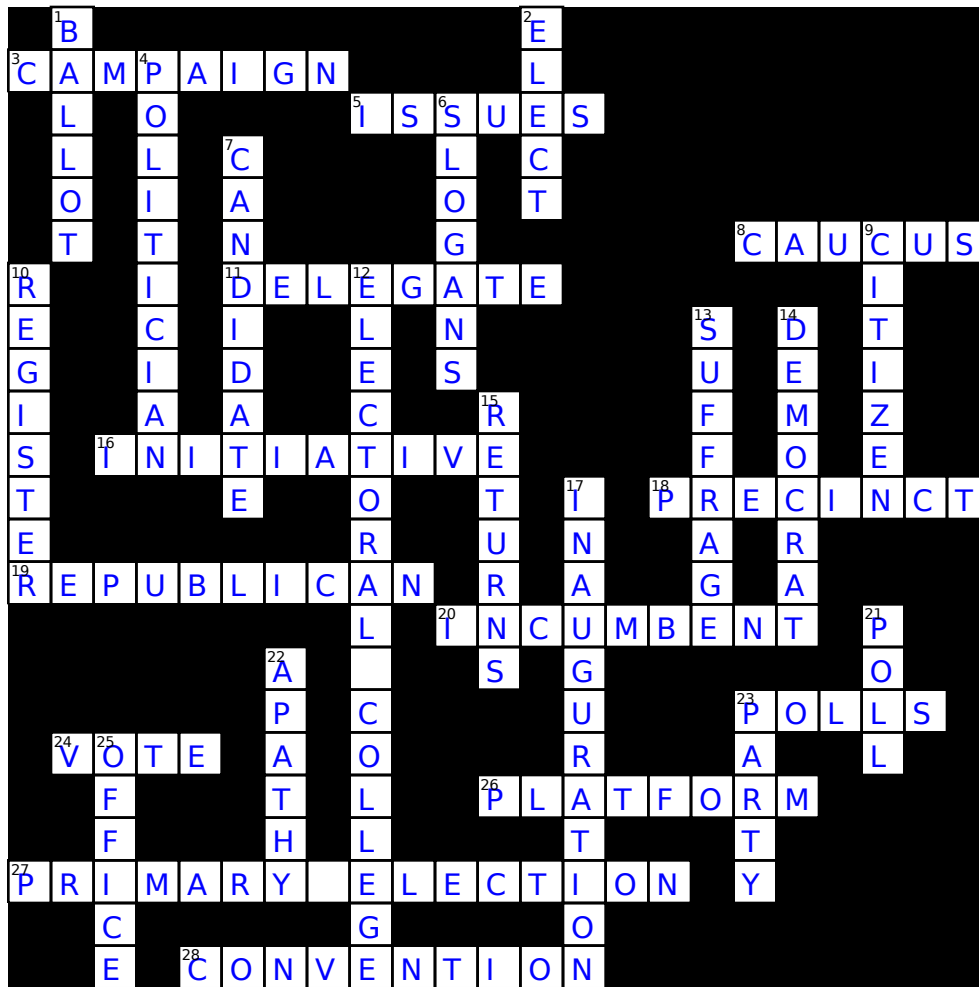
### Down

- 2 a group of persons called electors selected by the voters in each state, that officially elect the president and vice president.
- 3 to collect opinions about issues and candidates.
- 4 a person who is a member of the Democratic Party.
- 6 someone who runs for or holds a government office.
- 8 an electoral procedure whereby citizens can propose legislation or constitutional amendments and refer the decision to a popular vote by obtaining the required number of signatures on a petition.
- 9 the formal ceremony placing someone in office.
- 11 a method by which citizens choose their leaders and decide upon public issues.
- 13 person who seeks or is nominated by others for political office
- 17 problems and ideas to decide and vote upon.
- 18 a series of actions to achieve a certain goal; in an election, actions designed to influence voters.
- 19 the results of a vote.
- 20 a closed meeting of political party members to make policy decisions and choose candidates for election.
- 21 divisions within cities or towns for voting purposes.
- 24 a place where votes are cast



# Political Vocabulary Puzzle

## Curriculum and Instruction, Social Sciences



### Across

- 3 a series of actions to achieve a certain goal; in an election, actions designed to influence voters.
- 5 problems and ideas to decide and vote upon.
- 8 a closed meeting of political party members to make policy decisions and choose candidates for election.
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- 20 a person currently holding political office.
- 23 a place where votes are cast
- 24 a method by which citizens choose their leaders and decide upon public issues.
- 26 a statement of beliefs.
- 27 an early election to choose a political party's candidate.
- 28 a formal meeting of a group of people for a certain purpose.

### Down

- 1 printed form or other item used in voting.
- 2 to choose by voting.
- 4 someone who runs for or holds a government office.
- 6 phrases that express the goal or spirit of an organization or group.
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- 10 the process by which a person's name is added to a list of those eligible to vote.
- 12 a group of persons called electors selected by the voters in each state, that officially elect the president and vice president.
- 13 the right or privilege of voting.
- 14 a person who is a member of the Democratic Party.
- 15 the results of a vote.
- 17 the formal ceremony placing someone in office.
- 21 to collect opinions about issues and candidates.
- 22 lack of interest or concern.
- 23 a group organized for political activity.
- 25 a position of trust or responsibility; a political position.



## **Election 2008: Qualifications and Powers**

### **Presidential Qualifications:**

- Must be a natural-born citizen of the United States (can be born abroad of parents who are American citizens)
- Must be at least 35 years of age
- Must be a resident of the United States for at least 14 years (but not necessarily the 14 years preceding the election)

### **The Powers of the President:**

According to Article II of the Constitution, the president has the following powers:

- Serve as commander and chief of the armed forces
- Conduct foreign policy
- Make treaties
- Grant reprieves and pardons for federal offenses (except impeachment)
- Convene Congress in special sessions
- Receive ambassadors
- Ensure that the laws be faithfully executed
- Veto bills
- Approve legislation
- Appoint ambassadors, judges, and high officials
- Appoint officials to lesser offices
- Maintain order in the country
- Address Congress and the nation



## **Election 2008: An Introduction to the Executive Branch of the Federal Government**

### How did the Framers (writers) of the U.S. Constitution create the Executive Branch?

The executive branch of our government carries out and enforces the laws passed by Congress. For example, Congress might pass a law to build a highway across the country. The executive branch has to carry out the law.

The president of the United States is the head of the executive branch. The Framers had many discussions about how much power to give to the president. They did not want to make the executive branch too weak or too strong.

The Framers wanted to do two things. They wanted to give the president enough power to carry out and enforce the laws. But, they did not want to give the president too much power. If they did, a president might be able to gain unlimited power. With unlimited power, the president might become a dictator.

Article II of the Constitution establishes the executive branch. Article II lists the duties and powers of the president.

### What are the powers and duties of the president?

The Framers gave the president many powers and duties. Some of these powers and duties are listed below. The president has the power to:

- Act as the commander in chief of the armed forces. The military must obey the orders of the president.
- Make treaties. A treaty is an official agreement between two or more countries. Treaties must have the advice and consent of the Senate.
- Appoint ambassadors, with the consent of the Senate. The job of an ambassador is to represent the United States in another country. To appoint means to choose or name someone for an office or duty.
- Appoint judges to the Supreme Court, with the consent of the Senate; appoint other officials of the United States.

The president must protect the Constitution. The president must also carry out the duties of the office. The president has the duty to:



- Act as the head of the executive branch. There are many departments or offices, within the executive branch. The president must make sure that these departments carry out and enforce the laws.
- Suggest laws and policies. The president may ask the Congress to pass certain laws. Every year the president prepares a budget. The budget is a plan for how to spend the nation's money. The budget goes to Congress for approval.
- Set policy dealing with other countries of the world. The president is responsible for dealing with other countries.

#### How does the Constitution limit the powers of the president?

The Framers were careful to limit the powers of the president. They made the president share most powers with Congress. Here are some examples of how Congress can check the powers of the president:

- Appointment. The president has the power to appoint people to important jobs in the executive and judicial branches. The Senate has to

approve the person before he or she may have the job.

- Treaties. The Senate must approve any treaty, agreed to by the president, before it can take effect.
- War. The president can conduct a war. Only Congress, however, can declare a war. The president commands the armed forces, but Congress controls the money needed to support the armed forces.
- Veto. The president has the power to veto a bill. Congress has the power to approve the same bill in spite of the president's veto, if two-thirds of each house agrees.
- Impeachment. To impeach means to charge a public official with wrongdoing in office. It also means to bring the official to trial. The House of Representatives has the power to impeach the president. If tried and found guilty by the Senate, the president can be removed from office.

#### How is the executive branch organized?

George Washington was elected the first president of the United States. The Framers knew that the president would need help in



running the executive branch. But, the Framers did not have a plan. The Constitution does not say how the executive branch should be organized. Instead, the Framers left it up to President Washington and Congress to decide how to organize the executive branch.

Washington and Congress worked together to decide what advisors the president would need. Congress created four departments to help the president.

- Department of State- to handle relations with other countries
- Department of the Treasury- to handle the money of the federal government

- Department of War- now called the Department of Defense, to handle the defense of the nation
- Attorney General- now the head of the Department of Justice, to be the chief law enforcement officer

Since the creation of these original four departments, many more have been added. The most recent was the Department of Homeland Security, added after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Currently there are a total of 15 executive departments that assist the president in running the executive branch of government.

Information taken from: We the People...The Citizen and the Constitution Level 1 2003, Center for Civic Education.

Review the lesson: Using the information above, have students answer the following questions:

1. What are some duties and powers of the president of the United States?
2. Explain four ways that Congress can check the power of the president.
3. What does the president's cabinet do?
4. Explain two things the Framers considered concerning how much power to give to the president.
5. What might the president be able to do if Congress did not check the actions and powers of the president?



## **Election 2008: The Electoral College**

The Electoral College can potentially affect the outcome of a presidential election. In 1888, President Grover Cleveland, a Democrat, received 100,000 more votes than his Republican opponent, Benjamin Harrison. However, President Cleveland was not reelected. Benjamin Harrison, who appeared to have lost the popular vote on Election Day, became president because he received a majority of votes in the Electoral College. In 2000, Democratic candidate Al Gore won the popular vote nationally with 560,000 more votes than George W. Bush. The final tabulation came from Florida with both candidates ending in a virtual dead heat. After a final recount, Florida's electoral votes went to George Bush. Once again, the winner of the popular vote was denied the presidency. The system that made this possible is still part of the election process in the United States.

### What is the Electoral College?

Voters in the United States do not directly elect the President or the Vice-President. Instead, they actually choose electors who support a candidate. The winning electors meet in their state capitals in December after the November presidential election and cast their votes for President and Vice President. A candidate must receive a majority of the 538 total electoral votes in order to win the election. This means a candidate needs at least 270 electoral votes to win the election. What if no one gets a majority of votes? This could result if there is a popular third-party candidate to challenge the candidates from the two major political parties. If this happens, the House of Representatives chooses the President from among the top three candidates, with each state delegation receiving one vote.

### How Winners Can Lose

Could the Electoral College play the same trick in 2008 that it played on Al Gore eight years ago and on Grover Cleveland over one hundred years ago? Yes! Each state has as many electors as it has senators (2) and representatives (based on population). For example, Florida has two senators and 25 representatives, so it has 27 electors in the Electoral College. Montana, a less populated state than Florida, has only three electoral votes because it has two senators and only one representative in the House of Representatives. (The District of Columbia, which is a federal district and not a state, is also entitled to 3





electoral votes.) Presidential candidates generally focus their campaigning on the states that are larger in population because that is where they will receive the most electoral votes.

In nearly all states, the candidate who receives the most popular votes (votes of the people) gets all of the state's electoral votes. A candidate, who wins the popular vote in a state by only a small margin, will receive all of that state's electoral votes with the opposing candidate receiving no electoral votes at all. This situation may result in the candidate with the most popular votes ending up with fewer electoral votes and consequently, losing the presidential election.

Many people have argued that the Electoral College should be eliminated, and that the President and Vice President should be elected directly by the people. Those in favor of elimination of the Electoral College in presidential and vice presidential elections generally point out that it is possible to elect a president who has received fewer popular votes. Those who favor keeping the Electoral College often point out that it prevents the candidates from ignoring the less populated states. Electing candidates solely by the popular vote would encourage candidates to concentrate on the states with the largest populations. Do you think that the Electoral College should be eliminated or remain as it is?

### **Electoral College Map**

Even though registered voters will cast their ballots to elect the President and Vice President on November 4, 2008, the actual presidential election is not over until the electors from each state cast their votes. It will take at least 270 of the 538 total electoral votes to win the election.

Directions:

Using the map on the following page, color the states that are won by John McCain in red and color the states that are won by Barack Obama in blue on Election Day as the results are reported in the news.

On the back of the map, make one column for John McCain and one column for Barack Obama. In each column, list each state won by the candidate and its corresponding number of electoral votes. Total the electoral votes at the bottom of each column.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# United States of America







## Election 2008: Meet the Candidates (in alphabetical order)

### John McCain- Republican Presidential Candidate



#### **Quick Facts:**

**Born:** August 29, 1936 (Panama Canal Zone)

**Lives in:** Phoenix , Arizona

**Zodiac Sign:** Virgo

**Height:** 5'7"

**Family:** wife Cindy, 4 sons Douglas, Andrew, John IV, and James and 3 daughters Sidney, Heghan, and Bridget

**Parents:** Admiral John Sydney McCain Jr. (from Indiana) and Roberta (Wright) McCain (from Oklahoma)

**Religion:** Episcopalian

#### **Education:**

-Graduated: United States Naval Academy (1958)

-National War College (1974)

#### **Career:**

-U.S. Representative from 1983 to 1987

-U.S. Senator from 1987- present

#### **Government Committees:**

-Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

-Chair, Committee on Indian Affairs, 1995-1997, 2005-2007

#### **Additional Facts:**

- Graduated from flight school in 1960
- Volunteered for combat duty during the Vietnam War- flew carrier-based attack planes
- October 26, 1967- plane was shot down during a bombing run over the North Vietnamese capital of Hanoi. He broke both arms and one leg during the crash. McCain was moved to Hoa Loa prison and he eventually spent five and a half years in various Vietnamese prison camps, three and a half of those in solitary confinement and was repeatedly beaten and tortured before he was finally released on March 14, 1973.
- First elected to political office on November 2, 1982 (House of Representatives)
- In 1986, he won election to the U.S. Senate.
- During his time in the Senate, he has worked diligently in support of increased tobacco legislation, for the reform of the campaign finance system, and has earned the reputation of being complex since some of his views tend to be liberal rather than a straight-ahead conservative.
- He has supported the Iraq War but has criticized The Pentagon several times, especially about low troop strength.

Information gathered from: [biography.com](http://biography.com)



## **Barack Obama- Democratic Presidential Candidate**



### **Quick Facts:**

**Born:** August 4, 1961 (Hawaii)

**Lives in:** Chicago, Illinois

**Zodiac Sign:** Leo

**Height:** 6'1"

**Family:** Married wife Michelle in 1992, 2 daughters Malia and Sasha

**Parents:** Barack Obama, Sr. (from Kenya) and Ann Dunham (from Kansas)

**Religion:** United Church of Christ

### **Education:**

-Graduated: Columbia University (1983) – Major: Political Science

-Law Degree from Harvard (1991)- Major: J.D.- Magna Cum Laude

-Attended: Occidental College

### **Career:**

-U.S. Senator from Illinois sworn in January 4, 2005

### **Government Committees:**

-Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee

-Veterans Affairs committee

-2005-2006: served on the Environment and Public Works Committee

### **Additional Facts:**

- First African-American to become the presidential nominee for a U.S. major political party
- In 1967, his family moved to Jakarta, Indonesia where he studied in Indonesian.
- Obama first became conscious of racism and what it meant to be African-American when he was one of three black students enrolled in the prestigious Punahou Academy in Hawaii in 1979.
- In 1985, he moved to Chicago and worked as a community organizer with low-income resident in Chicago's Roseland community.
- During his time in Chicago, although he admits he was not raised in a religious household, he joined the Trinity United Church of Christ.
- During his time in Harvard Law School, he was the first African-American editor of the Harvard Law Review.
- After law school, he returned to Chicago to practice as a civil rights lawyer.
- Obama's advocacy work led him to run for the Illinois State Senate as a Democrat. He was elected in 1996 from the south side neighborhood of Hyde Park.
- In 2005, he was elected to the U.S. Senate from Illinois.
- Following the 9/11 attacks, Obama was an early opponent of President Bush's push to war with Iraq. He stated, "I am not opposed to all wars. I'm opposed to dumb wars."

Information gathered from: [biography.com](http://biography.com)



## Election 2008: Presidential Candidate Web

**Directions:** Read each candidate's description below and draw a line from the candidate's picture to the appropriate description. Use different colored lines for each candidate. Refer to the biographical information provided in this packet for assistance if needed.

Harvard  
Law  
School

1986  
U.S.  
Senate



Served on  
Transportation  
Committee

Vietnam  
POW

Supports the Iraq War but has  
criticized the Pentagon's  
approach

Episcopalian

Flew carrier based attack planes

Elected Senator in 2005

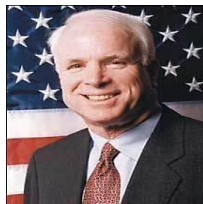
Worked as a community  
organizer with low-  
income residents in  
Chicago

In 1967, his  
family moved to  
Jakarta,  
Indonesia

First Elected to the  
House of  
Representatives in  
1982

Born in  
Hawaii

United Church of  
Christ



Worked on campaign  
finance reform

Graduated from flight  
school in 1960.

Stated: "I am not  
opposed to all wars..."

Served on  
Health  
Committee

Educated  
in the U.S.  
Naval  
Academy



## Election 2008: The Office of the Vice President

**Vice-Presidential Candidates:** At the time of writing this instructional packet, no vice-presidential candidates had been chosen for either the Democrats or the Republicans. Below are some activities that you can use to engage your students in getting to know more about each major political party's vice-president candidate once they have been chosen.

- Research on the Internet ([www.biography.com](http://www.biography.com) is a good place to start) basic biographical information about the Democratic vice-presidential candidate and the Republican vice-presidential candidate and make a list of "Quick Facts" following the categories that were outlined in this packet for the presidential candidates.
- Make your own vice-presidential candidate web worksheet, modeled after the one provided in this packet for the presidential candidates, and bring it to class. Share your worksheet with a classmate and complete each other's worksheet. Be sure to check for accuracy.
- Typically, vice-presidential candidates are chosen by each major political party candidate for political reasons. Research Obama's and McCain's reasons for choosing their respective vice-presidential candidate. You may want to refer to the political analysis section of current newspapers or watch the news (e.g., CNN) for the most updated analysis regarding each candidate's vice-presidential selection. Be prepared to share and discuss your findings with the rest of the class.
- Research information about the office of the vice-president. Find answers to the following questions: What are the official duties of the vice-president? How many vice-presidents have moved on to become president? How many vice-presidents have become presidents due to assassinations? Who are some of the more famous vice-presidents throughout history and why are they so famous? Feel free to include notes on anything else you find interesting from your research about the Office of the Vice-President. Be prepared to share your information with the rest of the class during class discussion.



### Election 2008: Candidates and the Issues

**Directions:** Identify several issues from the current presidential campaign. Outline the position held by the two major candidates on each issue and indicate in the last column who you agree with most and why.

Issue	John McCain	Barack Obama	I agree with . . .



## **Election 2008: The Role of Political Parties**

The two major political parties in the United States, the Democrats and the Republicans, give voters a choice among candidates and ideas. These two major parties mainly differ in their belief about how much the government should be involved in the lives of Americans. Democrats tend to believe that the federal government should be more directly involved in regulating the economy and providing for the poor. Republicans tend to believe that if they help the economy grow, poor people will have a better chance of finding jobs and providing for themselves. They believe in less regulation. Both parties try to appeal to as many voters as possible. As a result, they tend to adopt mainstream, moderate positions and avoid extremes. The parties are also similar because the American people generally agree about many issues.

Political parties are active year-round, not only during presidential election time. They keep people informed and interested in issues and candidates. They try to see that the party's elected officials do a good job. They politically criticize actions of the opposing party. Political parties also play a "watchdog" role. The party of out power watches the actions of those in power for mistakes and misuse of power. Competition between parties forces the party in power to pay attention to the will of the people.

Third party or other political parties also exist in U.S. politics but have rarely been influential in electing their candidates to the office of the president. Some of the third parties that exist today are: the Green Party, the Libertarian Party, the Reform Party, the Socialist party, and the Independent Party. Ross Perot, a Reform party presidential candidate and successful businessman, gained a great deal of support and votes during two previous presidential elections (1992 and 1996). In fact, he gained so much support that had those votes gone to another candidate, we may have had a different president elected during each of those years. Therefore, the importance of third party candidates should not be overlooked.

For a complete list of all political party presidential candidates for election 2008, go to <http://www.dcpoliticalreport.com/pres08.htm>.





## Election 2008: Campaign Buttons

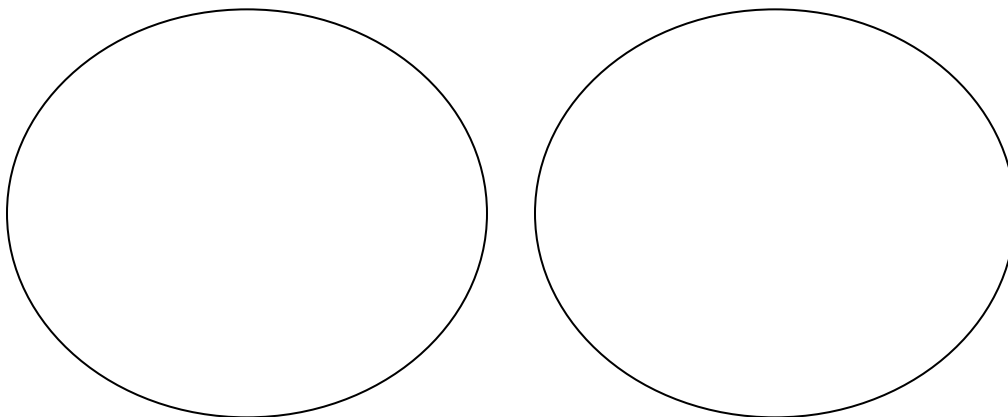
Political campaign buttons were first used in the 1896 presidential campaign between William McKinley and William Jennings Bryan.

Political slogans, pictures, and names have been used on campaign badges to promote candidates, issues, and causes.

Choose an issue or several issues shaping the race the 2008 Presidential Elections and create a campaign button for each major candidate. Think of the campaign issues and the position each candidate takes on the issue. Develop a slogan that you can put on your button. Be creative! Be prepared to present and explain your button to other students in your class.



You may cut out the circles below, use them as a guide or draft, or create your own.





## Election 2008: Elections and the Media

Most information about political candidates is conveyed through the media, including television, radio, newspapers, magazines, and the Internet. This information is presented in many ways, including news stories, advertisements, political cartoons, interviews, speeches, and debates.

Besides outlining a candidate's position on key issues, television, radio, and newspaper advertisements are often used to "sell" a certain image of a candidate. For example, an ad might show a candidate with his/her family in order to convince the viewer that the candidate is a strong family person with traditional values.

Choose an advertisement (radio, television, newspaper, magazine, Internet) to analyze.

1. In the space provided below, write a brief summary of the advertisement.

---

---

---

---

---

2. Does the ad help you understand the candidate's stand on the issues? Or, does the ad concentrate on the candidate's image?

---

Which type of ad would you prefer? \_\_\_\_\_

Why?

---

---

---

3. Has any advertisement influenced your choice in the election? \_\_\_\_\_  
How?

---

---

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4. Has any advertisement angered or annoyed you? \_\_\_\_\_  
Why?

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5. Which candidate's ads do you think are more effective?

Why?

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6. Have you viewed any ads that have attacked the candidate's opponents?

Were these ads effective? \_\_\_\_\_ Why or why not?

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7. If you could change how candidates use advertisements, what would you change and why?

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Create Your Own Advertisement: Now that you have viewed several advertisements and analyzed their impact on elections, create your own advertisement. Use the space below to describe your idea for an advertisement that would help your favorite candidate. Be prepared to share your ideas with the rest of the class. (Optional: videotape or digitally record your advertisement with students role playing the candidate.)



## **Election 2008: Parent/Guardian Activity with Political Cartoons** (This could also be done in school with the teacher)

### **What do people really think about the issues?**

By Madella Williams , Marilyn Kretzer and Marlene Slobin Source: Scholastic Parents

#### **What you need:**

- political cartoons (from newspapers and magazines)
- spiral notebook
- glue or tape
- pen or pencil

#### **What to do:**

1. Gather political cartoons from newspapers and magazines about the 2008 presidential elections to look at with your child. Remove some of the captions and ask him/her to make up his/her own caption. What does he/she think the cartoons are about?
2. Choose favorite cartoons to put in the notebook. Underneath each cartoon, have your child describe the main idea of the cartoon, the issue it addresses, and the cartoonist's point of view. Do you think the cartoon does a good job of communicating the point of view? Do you agree or disagree with the point the cartoonist is trying to make?
3. Encourage him/her to look for more cartoons to add to his notebook.
4. As an extension, have him/her create his/her own political cartoon. This could be about a political, environmental, or other community issue, or it could even be about a situation in your own family, such as bedtime, meals, or rules!

#### **Learning benefits:**

- promotes interest in political issues
- develops analytical-thinking skills
- encourages creativity

From **Making Social Studies COME ALIVE!** by Marilyn Kretzer, Marlene Slobin, and Madella Williams (Scholastic Professional Books)



## **Election 2008: Campaign and Bumper Stickers**

Political campaigns often use automobile bumper stickers as advertisements. Bumper stickers usually have a “catchy phrase” intended to sway or reinforce the voter’s opinion of the candidate or the other.

Bumper stickers may present the candidate in a positive manner. Bumper stickers may also be used to depict an opposing candidate in a less than positive manner.

After researching the candidates for President of the United States, choose one candidate and complete the following:

1. Create a slogan appropriate for a bumper sticker.
2. Design a bumper sticker for your candidate which will attract potential voters.
3. Develop a slogan and bumper sticker with a negative viewpoint for an opposing candidate.
4. You may choose to complete this assignment using an election issue rather than a candidate.
5. You should be prepared to share and explain your bumper stickers with the rest of the class.

Use the space below to design a draft of your bumper sticker.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for students to draw a draft of their bumper sticker.



## **Election 2008: Every Vote Counts**

Everyone has a civic responsibility to vote. All citizens over the age of 18 who meet certain state requirements may vote in Federal elections. It has taken some time for this right to be available to all people. When the United State was first formed, only white male landowners over the age of 21 could vote in some states. The 15<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, and 26<sup>th</sup> Amendments to the Constitution have granted voting privileges to more citizens. People are often heard to say, "Why should I vote? I'm only one vote, I can't really make a difference." To see how erroneous these statements are, read the excerpts below from the Florida Department of State - Division of Elections website:

### **"The Importance of One Vote"**

- In 1649, **one vote** cost King Charles I of England his head (The vote to behead him was 68 for and 67 against).
- In 1776, **one vote** made English the official language of the United States instead of German (at least according to folk lore).
- In 1850, **a one vote** margin admitted California to the Union.
- In 1868, **one vote** in the U.S. Senate saved President Andrew Johnson from impeachment.
- In 1941, **a one vote** margin saved the Selective Service Act (the draft) - just weeks before Pearl Harbor was attacked.

### **To register to vote in Florida, you must:**

- be a U.S. citizen.
- be a Florida resident.
- be 18 years old (you may pre-register if you are 17).
- not now be adjudicated mentally incapacitated with respect to voting in Florida or any other state.
- not have been convicted of a felony without your civil rights having been restored pursuant to law.
- not claim the right to vote in another county or state.
- provide your current and valid Florida driver's license or Florida identification card.

**Activity: Create a "Get Out and Vote" campaign in your school and run advertisements about your campaign during morning announcements.**



## **Election 2008: FCAT Article**

**Directions:** Read the following passages about each major presidential nominee and answer the questions that follow.

### **Meet John McCain Republican presidential nominee**

By Dante A. Ciampaglia

Source: Scholastic News Online

At 72 years old, Arizona Senator John McCain is older than most people who have won the presidency. But that doesn't mean he's ignoring young people and young voters.

The Senator's family has been instrumental in getting people, especially young people, involved with McCain's campaign. His daughter Meghan has brought younger voters into the political process through blogging.

She runs the blog McCain Blogette along with two of her friends. On the blog, Meghan writes about pop culture—music, art, fashion—in relation to her father's campaign for President. Meghan even writes about how she might improve the White House if her father becomes President. "It is everything people say it is and more. Just truly, absolutely breathtaking," Meghan blogged about the White House on March 6. "However, I do think it's in need of some modern art. I was an art history major after all and love everything Andy Warhol has done—there should be one in the White House!"

McCain's adopted daughter Bridget supports her father from their home in Phoenix. She told *Scholastic News* that she traveled on the campaign trail during McCain's previous run for President in 2000, but it was hard being away from her friends.

So this time, she's staying home and going to high school, where she is a sophomore. "School is awesome because of my friends," Bridget told *Scholastic News*. "It's important for kids to be respectful to each other and help one another to make school better for everyone."

Senator McCain has his ideas on how to make schools better, too. He would limit the federal government's involvement in schools and put the responsibility on states and local authorities.



A major educational focus for McCain has been on the increasing price of college tuition.

"We obviously have to make college affordable and available to all Americans who make the grades," McCain told *Scholastic News*. "We're going to have to keep the prices down and reward, particularly, science and engineering students because that's a great need of ours."

McCain also thinks young people should get more involved in politics. "First they should become informed on the issues and the candidates, and then become involved in a campaign," McCain told *Scholastic News*. "There is no better or exciting experience than to become involved in a political campaign."

Certainly, McCain must find campaigning exciting. This is his second bid for President, and he has served in public office since 1982!

### **Meet Barack Obama Democratic presidential nominee**

By Dante A. Ciampaglia

Source: Scholastic News Online

During a run for the presidency, candidates have a lot to think about: the economy, foreign policy, the concerns of the American people. In between making speeches and meeting potential voters, however, candidates do find time to relax and think about other things.

"I dream about playing basketball," Senator Barack Obama said in a 2007 television interview.

Obama was on his junior varsity high school team in Honolulu, Hawaii. He also played between classes at Harvard Law School and while running for Senate in 2004. Basketball is so much a part of his life that the Senator played a game on the morning of each primary vote for good luck.

Of course, the strains of running for President have cut into the time he has to shoot hoops. This election has even more importance because Obama is running to be the first African-American President in U.S. history. If he becomes President, he says he's going to have a basketball court constructed at the White House. He wouldn't be the first President to add on to the presidential mansion in order to play sports. In 1969, Richard Nixon, an avid bowler, had a bowling alley constructed in the basement.





Obama says his top priority is neither the game nor the campaign, however. It's his family. According to his wife, Michelle, the Obama family, which also includes two daughters, travels together as much as possible during the campaign. When they can't be together, though, they have a webcam hookup that allows the Senator to stay in constant contact with his wife and children.

Obama's family has been vital in how he thinks about the big issues in this campaign.

"I've got two young girls at home, Sasha, who's 6, and Malia, who's 9," Obama told *Scholastic News*. "Every day on the campaign trail I'm thinking about how we can make this world a better place for their generation. And every day in the White House, I'll fight for children—whether it's by improving our schools or cleaning up our environment."

Regardless of the outcome of Obama's historic bid to become President, the Obama family will grow by one member when all is said and done. "The girls requested when we got in this race that win or lose, we get a dog," Michelle Obama told *Scholastic News*. "So no matter what, we will be welcoming a four-legged friend to our house." Or maybe to the White House!





### Election 2008: FCAT Article

1. Read the following sentence from the article: "The Senator's family has been **instrumental** in getting people, especially young people, involved in McCain's campaign." What does "instrumental" mean in this sentence?
  - (A) musical
  - (B) uninvolved
  - (C) melodic
  - (D) important
2. Which of the following is an issue that McCain feels is important regarding education?
  - (A) The federal government should be more involved.
  - (B) There should be more sports programs in schools.
  - (C) Students should be encouraged to go into the sciences.
  - (D) Students should be required to be involved in a campaign.
3. Read the following sentence from the article: "Obama's family has been **vital** in how he thinks about the big issues in this campaign. What does "vital" mean in this sentence?
  - (A) unimportant
  - (B) Influential
  - (C) Insignificant
  - (D) unessential
4. What has Obama promised his daughters after the campaign is over?
  - (A) To adopt a little brother
  - (B) To build a basketball court
  - (C) To get new webcams
  - (D) To get a family dog
5. What is the main idea of these articles?
  - (A) To provide some interesting facts and opinions of each candidate
  - (B) To outline each candidate's education policies
  - (C) To outline each candidate's viewpoint about the war in Iraq
  - (D) To outline each candidate's environmental policies



1. Explain how Obama's daughters are influencing his campaign. Use details and information from the article to support your answer.

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2. Explain McCain's attitude about young people being involved in politics. Use details and information from the article to support your answer.

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## **Election 2008: Elementary Instructional Activities**

### **Grades K-2**

#### Electing a Class Pet:

- Inform students that they will be selecting an animal to be the class mascot. Take nominations from the students regarding what type of animal they would like to adopt as their class mascot. If possible, get pictures of the types of animals that the students have selected and place them around the room. Ask the students why they think a certain animal is a better choice for class mascot compared to another. Have the students vote on which animal they would like to elect as their class mascot.
- Now, show the class a picture of Barack Obama and John McCain and read to the class some of the biographical information and political experience information available in this instructional packet. Inform the students that just like they elected a class mascot, the nation will soon be voting for a new president. Ask the students what they think one should consider when picking who should be the next president. Finally, have the students vote for who they think should be the next president.

### **Grades 3-5**

#### What My Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Think:

- Inform students that there are several major campaign issues being debated by the presidential candidates (e.g., the war in Iraq, health care, the environment, and education). Ask the students to pick one of the major issues and find out each major candidate's stance on the issue. Next, tell the students that they will be interviewing their parent(s)/guardian(s) to find out what they feel about the issue and which candidate they support and why. Students should be prepared to share the information that they learned from their interviews with the rest of the class.



## **Election 2008: Create an Election Scrapbook**

**Gathering Information:** Collect newspaper articles, Internet articles, political cartoons, notes on televised debates and election advertisements, and any other resources you can find about the upcoming presidential election. Your collection should cover at least a two-week period.

**Organizing Your Scrap Book:**

You can use an actual scrap book available at your local school supply store or simply use construction paper to create your own scrap book. If you use construction paper, make sure you bind your scrap book effectively. It's up to you!

Organize your scrap book into the following sections: candidates, election issues, political cartoons, editorials, political advertisements, debates, and the winner. This last section will remain blank until after the elections in November. You may use section dividers and/or tabs to identify the various sections in your scrap book.

Look at the aforementioned information you have gathered and divide it into the categories. Creatively and artistically organize the various articles and other information in your scrap book. You may use clip art or headlines and other artwork gathered from newspapers and other sources to make your scrap book as visually appealing as possible.



**Analyzing Your Information:**

You must have the following written analysis for each section of your scrap book: candidates: a brief biographical summary of each candidate; election issues: pick 5 articles from 5 different issues and write a three paragraph summary for each article; political cartoons: pick 5 political cartoons and write a statement explaining the cartoonist's viewpoint; political advertisements: pick 5 advertisements and write a statement agreeing or disagreeing with its content; debates: watch at least one televised debate and write an editorial about which candidate you felt was more convincing in their arguments; and the winner section: write a brief summary of the winner's acceptance speech. Include your written analysis in the appropriate section in your scrap book.

**Extension Activity:**

Hold a presidential debate on the major campaign issues and have students use their scrap books as a resource during the debate.

**Evaluation:**

You will be graded on the following aspects of this assignment: written analysis, organization, creativity, and depth/completeness.



## **Election 2008: Student Mock Election Instructions**

Curriculum and Instruction, Social Sciences, will be conducting a District-wide student mock presidential election. Students will be able to vote for their favorite presidential candidate through the Internet. District-wide voting results will be announced on or about November 5, 2008.

In order to participate in Miami-Dade County Public Schools' 2008 Student Mock Presidential Election, teachers will have to allow each student to vote individually using a computer with Internet access. Specific instructions about the mock election along with the specific web link will be forwarded to schools via the Weekly Briefing Communication System sometime during October 2008. Schools will have a one-week opportunity to allow students to vote. Teachers and students should also keep in mind the following important facts regarding the student mock election:

- Results will be reported for the District as a whole as well as by totals for elementary, middle, and senior high schools.
- Individual school results WILL NOT be reported.
- ONLY students who vote via the Internet will be counted in the District-wide election. If teachers have difficulty accessing the Internet with their students, they are encouraged to run their own student mock election and inform their classes of the results. This will ensure participation by all students.
- Teachers are encouraged to replicate the real voting process as much as possible in order to provide students with an authentic learning experience. Activities should include: holding a mock-voter registration, requiring students to have their voter registration card in order to vote, and/or simply pointing out the difference between the mock election process and the actual voting process.



## **Election 2008: Cross Curricular Connections**

Curriculum and Instruction has created the following list of learning activities for the presidential election 2008 that are applicable to Language Arts/Reading, Mathematics, and Science. Social studies teachers are encouraged to share this list with the appropriate teachers.

### Language Arts/Reading:

- Write a poem, rap, song, or create a slogan and advertising campaign that encourages people to exercise their right to vote.
- Create a pamphlet about your favorite U.S. presidential candidate's views on major election issues.
- Write a persuasive speech trying to convince your audience that your favorite candidate should be the next president.

### Mathematics:

The purpose of this lesson is for students develop an understanding of the voting process during presidential elections where the winner of the popular vote may not actually be the winner of the electoral vote and, therefore, not win the election. Data collection and graphs will be used to show the results of the voting. Students will compare results of the popular vote and the electoral vote.

Place students into groups of varying sizes. Each group should elect one representative. Use ballots for each student in every group to vote for the presidential candidate of their choice. The group representatives will tally the individual votes. Next, have only the group representatives have cast one vote to represent the Electoral College votes. Then poll the class to reveal the results of the individual votes. Determine and discuss whether the popular vote and the electoral vote produced the same result or different results. The result of each method of voting for the groups should then be tallied and represented on a bar graph to reflect how the class voted. The percent of votes for each candidate may also be calculated and shown on a pie graph. This activity may be done on Election Day to compare the votes of the students with the actual results of the Presidential Election.





## Science

1. Read the following articles: related to energy, the environment, and the U.S. space policy. Barack Obama, the democratic candidate, and John McCain, the republican candidate, debate these issues.
  - A. Simberg, R. How Clinton , Obama and McCain Could Change U.S. Space Policy: Geek the Vote guest Analysis. Popular Mechanics, 1-3.  
([http://www.popularmechanics.com/science/air\\_space/4260504.html](http://www.popularmechanics.com/science/air_space/4260504.html))
  - B. Whittington, M. McCain vs. Barack Obama on the Issues. Associated Content, 1-2.  
([http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/804207/john\\_mccain\\_vs\\_barack\\_obama\\_on\\_the.html?cat=62](http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/804207/john_mccain_vs_barack_obama_on_the.html?cat=62))
  - C. Harnden, T. John McCain and Barack Obama trade barbs on Big Oil.  
([http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newsttopics/uselection2008/barack\\_obama/2511944/John-McCain-and-Barack-Obama-trade-barbs-on-Big-Oil.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newsttopics/uselection2008/barack_obama/2511944/John-McCain-and-Barack-Obama-trade-barbs-on-Big-Oil.html))
2. Conduct a class debate on the issues of the energy, the environment, and U.S. Space policy discussed in the articles.

Alternative Fuels and Vehicles:  
(<http://www.nef1.org/ftf/sa.html>)
3. Divide students into groups. Have each group research and make a presentation on an alternative fuel (propane, ethanol, petroleum, or electric). Examples: They can produce a chart, diagram, or picture and create an "Alternative Fuel" bulletin board or conduct a debate on the different types of fuels.  
(<http://www.nef1.org/ftf/sa.html>)
4. Plan a field trip to a car dealership that has one or more alternative fuel vehicles in inventory, or to a business in your community that has alternative fuel fleets. Assign each student to have a different question to ask experts about alternative fuels and alternative fuel vehicles.  
(<http://www.nef1.org/ftf/sa.html>)





5. Organize a class debate using the facts presented below. The class could be divided into several teams with each team concentrating on a different fact. (<http://www.nef1.org/ftf/sa.html>)

#### Transportation Fuel Facts

- Relying on the Middle East for energy compromises national security. The U.S. could move closer to energy independence with alternative fuels. Converting to an alternative fuel vehicle economy could create thousands of jobs. Building plants, manufacturing parts, selling equipment, and developing technology would all be U.S. investments that stimulate U.S. jobs and economic growth.
  - Fossil fuels are nonrenewable. Some alternative fuels are renewable and, therefore, unlimited. Solving energy supply problems today will ensure our nation's stability tomorrow.
  - Pollution from cars and other mobile sources has created air quality problems across the country. Alternative fuels emit fewer pollutants.
  - Billions of dollars are spent every year on oil exploration and to militarily defend access to oil in the Middle East. Oil spills, though less common, still cause environmental problems with long-term, far-reaching effects.
6. Research newspapers and magazines to find articles about the environment, natural resources, air quality, and/or the economy. Create a collage of headlines accompanied by a brief summary of the associated articles. (<http://www.nef1.org/ftf/sa.html>)



## **Election 2008: School- Wide Activities**

Following is a list of ideas that can be used to organize school wide educational activities for the upcoming presidential election season.

- Work with the media center, television production department, or whomever is in charge of your school's morning announcements to provide a daily election update news segment during your school's morning announcements.
- Organize a school-wide election debate where students representing each major presidential and vice-presidential candidate discuss and debate the issues that are shaping the election. Hold the debate in the school auditorium and invite other classes to view the debate and ask the student representatives questions about the candidate's proposed policies and solutions to problems.
- Organize a poster contest in your school to encourage voter participation. Set a deadline for submitting the posters and organize a group of teachers to be the judges of the contest. Identify first, second, third place winners, as well as students deserving honorable mention and show the posters on the morning announcements with the student winners.
- Organize a homeroom door decorating contest about the 2008 presidential. The decorations should be of an informative nature and include information about the issues, not endorsing any particular candidate.
- Organize a political cartoon drawing contest about the 2008 presidential election. Set a deadline for submitting the cartoons and organize a group of teachers to be the judges of the contest. Identify first, second, third place winners, as well as students deserving honorable mention and show the cartoons on the morning announcements with the student winners.



## Election 2008: Useful Internet Resources

<http://www.johnmccain.com/?s=gopconv> The official website of John McCain's 2008 campaign for president.

<http://www.barackobama.com/index.php> The official website of Barack Obama's 2008 campaign for president.

<http://www.biography.com/featured-biography/john-mccain/index.jsp>  
Biography.com's biography about John McCain.

<http://www.biography.com/featured-biography/barack-obama/index.jsp>  
Biography.com's biography about Barack Obama

<http://uspolitics.america.gov/uspolitics/elections/issues.html> A quick look at the most important issues shaping the 2008 presidential elections.

<http://www.democrats.org/index.html> The Democratic Party's official website.

<http://www.gopconvention2008.com/default.aspx> The Republican Party's official website.

<http://www.factcheck.org/> A nonpartisan, nonprofit, "consumer advocate" for voters that aims to reduce the level of deception and confusion in U.S. politics. The factual accuracy of what is said by major U.S. political players in the form of TV ads, debates, speeches, interviews, and news releases is monitored.

<http://online.wsj.com/public/page/election2008.html> The *Wall Street Journal's* official 2008 election coverage website.

<http://politics.nytimes.com/election-guide/2008/index.html> The *New York Times'* official 2008 election coverage website.

[http://www.miamiherald.com/political\\_currents/](http://www.miamiherald.com/political_currents/) The *Miami Herald's* official 2008 election coverage website.



[http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/scholasticNews.jsp?FromBrowseMod=true&Ns=Pub\\_Date\\_Sort|1&CurrPage=scholasticNews.jsp&TopicValue=Scholastic%20News](http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/scholasticNews.jsp?FromBrowseMod=true&Ns=Pub_Date_Sort|1&CurrPage=scholasticNews.jsp&TopicValue=Scholastic%20News) Scholastic News' website- click on Campaign Coverage" for the latest, very kid friendly, news about the 2008 Presidential Election Campaign.

[http://www.crf-usa.org/election\\_central/election\\_central.htm](http://www.crf-usa.org/election_central/election_central.htm) Election Central: Resource to help teacher and students explore the electoral process past and present.

<http://www.kidsvotingusa.org/> A national leader in civic education, **Kids Voting USA® (KVUSA)** gets students involved and ready to be educated, engaged citizens. Students learn about democracy through a combination of classroom activities, an authentic voting experience and family dialogue.

<http://www.pollingreport.com/> Polling Report.com is an independent, non-partisan resource, about trends in American public opinion.

<http://www.vicepresidents.com/> Vice Presidents.com- Everything you ever wanted to know about vice presidents and the vice presidency.

<http://www.americanpresident.org> American President.org- Non-partisan resource on the history and function of the American presidency.

<http://bensguide.gpo.com/> Ben's Guide to Government- Excellent K-12 site for U.S. Government classroom ideas.

<http://www.c-span.org> C-Span's background information on Election 2008.

[http://www.crt-sua.org/election\\_central](http://www.crt-sua.org/election_central) Election Central- Resource to help teachers and student explore the electoral process past and present.



### **Election 2008: Great Websites for Elementary Schools**

[www.timeforkids.com](http://www.timeforkids.com) Time for Kids offers a variety of games, lesson plans, and other instructional activities for elementary students. Just click on the "Your Election Connection" to see the fun and exciting activities that students can do.

<http://pbskids.org/democracy/educators/donkeys.html> PBS's Democracy Project is a great online lesson plan that explains often difficult concepts to young students about the federal government.

[www.scholasticnews.com](http://www.scholasticnews.com) Scholastic news has an entire section of its website dedicated to Election 2008. Students can play election games, get the latest campaign news, and discuss the election issues with other young people.

<http://www.teachablemoment.org/middle/electiondecisions2.html> Teachable Moment provides an excellent series of lessons that allows students to consider the qualities they look for in a political candidate.

<http://bensguide.gpo.gov/3-5/election/president.html> Ben's Guide to U.S. Government outlines in simple language the process for electing a new president.

[http://www.congressforkids.net/Elections\\_index.htm](http://www.congressforkids.net/Elections_index.htm) Congress for Kids provides an outline of the major steps for electing a president.

[www.brainpop.com](http://www.brainpop.com) Provides animated lessons and information about the U.S. Federal Government.



The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, adheres to a policy of nondiscrimination in employment and educational programs/activities and programs/activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department of Education, and strives affirmatively to provide equal opportunity for all as required by:

**Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964** - prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, or national origin.

**Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964**, as amended - prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, or national origin.

**Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972** - prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender.

**Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (ADEA)**, as amended - prohibits discrimination on the basis of age with respect to individuals who are at least 40.

**The Equal Pay Act of 1963**, as amended - prohibits sex discrimination in payment of wages to women and men performing substantially equal work in the same establishment.

**Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973** - prohibits discrimination against the disabled.

**Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)** - prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in employment, public service, public accommodations and telecommunications.

**The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA)** - requires covered employers to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to "eligible" employees for certain family and medical reasons.

**The Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978** - prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions.

**Florida Educational Equity Act (FEEA)** - prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, gender, national origin, marital status, or handicap against a student or employee.

**Florida Civil Rights Act of 1992** - secures for all individuals within the state freedom from discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicap, or marital status.

**School Board Rules 6Gx13- 4A-1.01, 6Gx13- 4A-1.32, and 6Gx13- 5D-1.10** - prohibit harassment and/or discrimination against a student or employee on the basis of gender, race, color, religion, ethnic or national origin, political beliefs, marital status, age, sexual orientation, social and family background, linguistic preference, pregnancy, or disability.

*Veterans are provided re-employment rights in accordance with P.L. 93-508 (Federal Law) and Section 295.07 (Florida Statutes), which stipulate categorical preferences for employment.*

Revised 5/9/03

