

The Presidential Election Process

Six political parties form committees and
campaign for the White House



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Welcome to
The Presidential Election Process!

Your students are about to discover what it takes to run for president of the United States! In this exciting and challenging unit, students learn how the election process works while conducting their own campaign in the classroom.

Students are in a race for the White House as they form campaign committees, each representing one of the six major political parties in the United States. Each member of the committee takes on a unique role: candidate, campaign manager, publicity manager, or speech writer. As students learn about the Electoral College and how a candidate is elected president, they complete materials for their own campaign. Along the way, committees face unexpected national events, which they must address in their campaign through press releases. Committees write briefing papers, create advertising materials, and write a speech to be given during the final presentation on Political Rally Day.

Designed for grades 5–8, *The Presidential Election Process* includes a detailed lesson plan, as well as everything you need to run a successful presidential campaign in your classroom. Create excitement about upcoming elections and motivate your students with this fun and educational unit!

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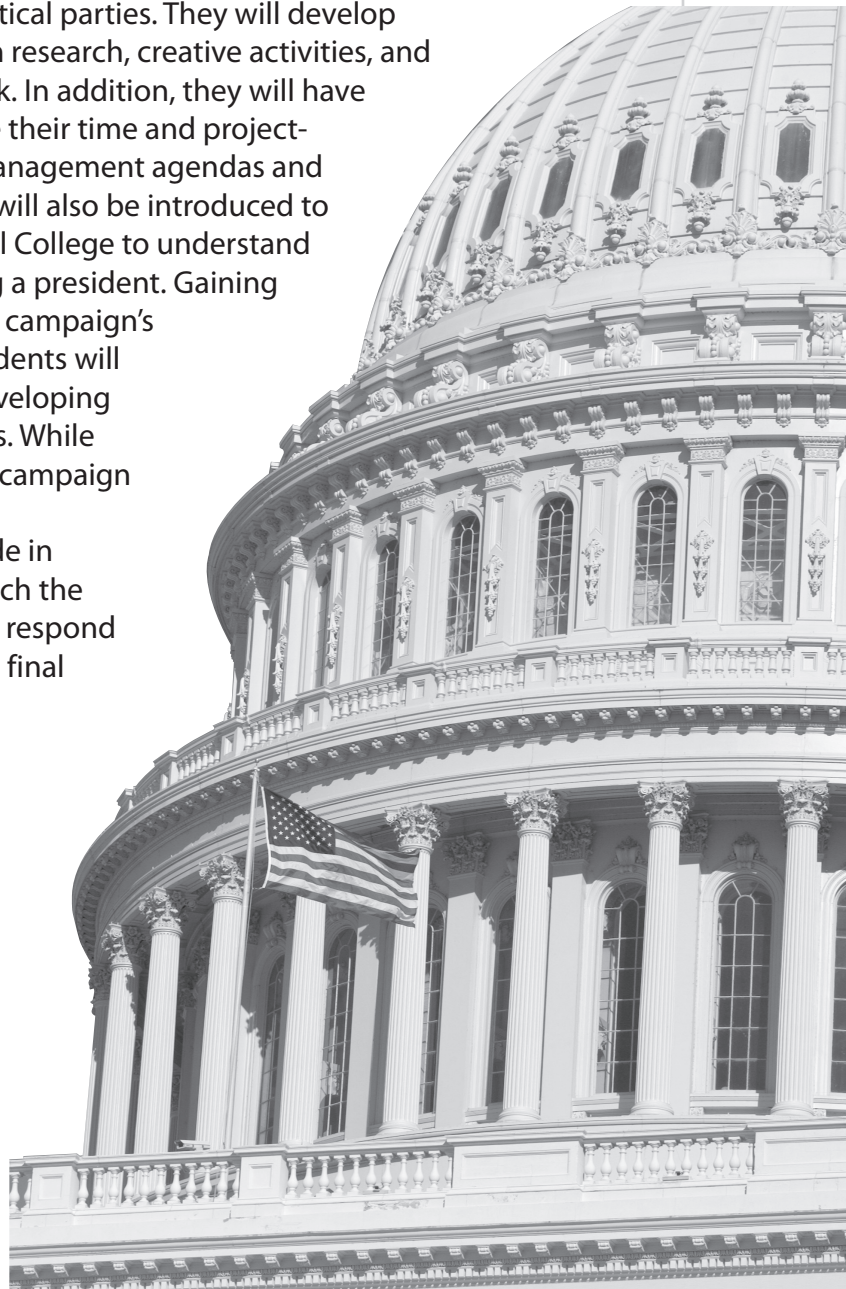
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Purpose and Overview

What is *The Presidential Election Process*?

The Presidential Election Process is a unit in which fifth to eighth-grade students conduct a presidential election campaign. In the first two days of the unit, they will review the structure of elections in the United States and the process for potential candidates to make their bid for the White House. Students will also be introduced to the histories and political philosophies of the country's six leading political parties: the America First Party, the Constitution Party, the Democratic Party, the Green Party of the United States, the Libertarian Party, and the Republican Party. As the unit continues, students will form campaign committees representing one of the political parties. They will develop campaign materials through research, creative activities, and cooperative committee work. In addition, they will have the opportunity to schedule their time and project-manage their tasks using management agendas and task assignments. Students will also be introduced to the workings of the Electoral College to understand its important role in electing a president. Gaining electoral votes is crucial to a campaign's success, and in this unit, students will be completing tasks and developing materials to gain these votes. While committees are developing campaign materials, important news announcements will be made in the form of Event Cards, which the campaign committees must respond to with press releases. In the final days of the unit, students complete their campaign materials and make presentations to other members of the class on Political Rally Day.



What do students learn?

The activities within this unit are correlated to national and state education standards. To obtain specific standards information for this title, go to www.teachinteract.com or contact us at 1-800-359-0961.

In this unit, students gain and experience the following:

Knowledge

- Identify and describe the different levels of elections in the United States —national, state, county, city, school district, and student government
- Describe the steps in running for president
- Understand the history and philosophies of the six main political parties in the United States
- Understand the operation of a political campaign committee
- Understand the history and operation of the Electoral College

Skills

- Accomplish a common goal working in a group
- Understand the application of political theory to real issues
- Research and develop ideas to support a political position
- Set up and manage a project plan
- Understand effective methods of persuasion and advertising techniques

Attitudes

- Gain an appreciation for the political diversity of the United States population as reflected in the political parties
- Develop confidence in planning and carrying out a group project
- Acquire a desire to build a competent political campaign to promote its ideals

Experiential Learning

Students learn best through experience. Research shows that student retention and understanding increase as students become more involved and engaged in the learning process, regardless of whether they are high achievers, reluctant learners, or second-language learners. They will complete some tasks alone and they will need to work cooperatively to complete others. They will control their learning and will sometimes teach others.

How are students organized?

Students are divided into committees, with four to eight members per committee.

How much time is required?

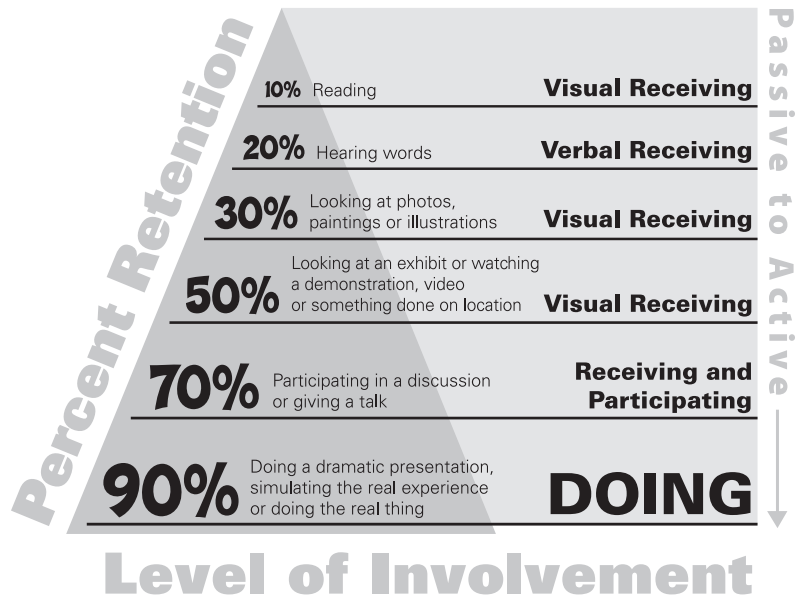
The Presidential Election Process is designed to take 10–11 class days. This schedule can be adjusted to fit your individual class needs.

How is learning assessed?

In the process of participating in this unit, students will be assessed on their understanding of key aspects of the election process. In addition to the campaign materials and final presentations, students will complete the following (answer keys are provided in the teacher materials):

- **Election Matching Activity**—In this activity, student groups match the terms for different levels of elections held in the United States with their correct descriptions.
- **Six Major Political Parties Review Sheet**—This quick, multiple-choice quiz can be used as a review test or reinforcement tool to check on students’ understanding of the political parties’ histories and philosophies.
- **Electoral College Note-Taking Handout**—This document is designed to help you assess how well students are recording notes from lecture and written documents. You can opt to have students record the information only from the lecture or allow them to have the notes before, during, or after the lecture.

Several rubrics are provided for students to use when preparing their work and for your use in scoring the work. The rubrics focus on “student work,” which includes, in addition to written work, demonstrated skills, oral exchanges, individual and cooperative group behavior, processes, strategies, and any other evidence that proves the students have learned the targeted content or skill and can apply what they know.



Adapted from Edgar Dale’s “Cone of Experience”

What do Rubric Scores Mean?

- 4 Exceeds Expectations**—This rating describes work that exceeds the standard for the activity. The descriptors include words such as “careful,” “complete,” “excellent,” “effective,” “involvement,” and “enthusiasm.” Students who earn a “4” demonstrate leadership and knowledge during participation in contract activities. Their performance and/or products are significantly better than what was required or expected.
- 3 Meets Expectations**—This rating describes work that meets the standard with quality. The descriptors lack some of the positive adjectives of a “4,” but these students have mastered the content or skills and can demonstrate their understanding in application settings.
- 2 Nearly There**—This rating describes work that almost meets the standard. Inconsistent effort, evidence of little involvement, or a misconception of content will result in a “2” rating. These students need to try harder or revise their work in order to meet the standards.
- 1 Incomplete**—This rating describes work that has not met the standard in content and/or skill. It is incomplete and ineffective. These students will need more instruction and another opportunity to demonstrate knowledge or skill, or will require alternative instruction and assessment.

Why use *The Presidential Election Process*?

The Presidential Election Process offers teachers and students a motivating and challenging setting for the study of the presidential election process in the United States.

Differentiation

This unit, like all Interact simulations, offers differentiated instruction through its various learning opportunities. Students learn and experience knowledge, skills, and attitudes through all domains of language (reading, writing, speaking, and listening).

Here are some ways to differentiate using this unit:

- Adjust the level of difficulty to best fit your students.
- Assist special needs students in selecting activities that utilize their strengths and allow them to succeed.
- Work together with the Resource Specialist teacher, Gifted teacher, or other specialist to coordinate instruction.

Motivation

The study of the presidential election process can be exciting and challenging for students. The competitive aspects of the simulation will motivate students in the learning process and inspire them to put forth their best effort.

Flexibility

The Presidential Election Process allows you to adjust the schedule according to your individual class needs. Students can work at their own pace during class time and complete projects as homework whenever necessary.

Ease of Use

- Once the simulation is established, teachers will be able to focus on assessment and monitoring individual students.
- The step-by-step Lesson Plan makes it easy for teachers to plan ahead and set up daily lessons.
- Teaching tips discuss simple techniques for managing time, adjusting the unit to fit your students' needs, adding extension activities, and clarifying ideas and concepts for students.

One of the main goals of this unit is to give students the opportunity to work independently on a class project and learn to manage their project. Built into the campaign committee procedure are several checkpoints to help students manage their committee's operation and help you oversee their management.

Components

The Presidential Election Process Package

The Presidential Election Process complete package includes:

- Teacher Guide
- Set of Six Major Political Parties Placards

Teacher Guide

The **Teacher Guide** has all of the information you need to run a successful simulation, including scripted lessons, a set of reproducible Event Cards, reproducible student handouts, and rubrics.

Six Major Political Parties Placards

The **Six Major Political Parties Placards** introduce students to the six major political parties and are perfect for creating a campaign bulletin board.

