

## ELECTING A PRESIDENT

Learning Objectives: Students will:

1. Identify some of the roles of the President of the United States.
2. Decide on the qualities that a president should possess.
3. Explain the use of voting as a method for electing the President of the United States.
4. Participate in a mock presidential election in order to demonstrate an understanding of the democratic process.
5. Utilize creative and critical thinking skills.

TEKS: SS K.10C, 1.11A,B, 1.13C, 2.12B

Materials: If I Were President by Catherine Stier, copies of the “Wanted for President” poster attachment for each student, a ballot box (shoe box), copies of the “Ballots for Mock Presidential Election” attachment, cutouts of the graphics for the political parties, a large sheet of construction paper

Vocabulary: candidate, duties, election, mock, president, privilege, vote

Teaching Strategy:

1. (Note: This lesson is broken up into several activities so that they can be presented over a period of several days, if the teacher desires. In addition, any activity may be taught individually without utilizing the other activities.)
2. Day 1: Begin the lesson by asking students if they know what is important about the date of November 2nd. If students do not know, tell them that it is a special day for citizens of our country who are eighteen years of age or older, and it only happens once every four years (Presidential Election Day). Discuss the following questions:
  - Why do you think our country has a president?
  - Why do you think we only elect a president once every four years?
  - Why do you think that a person may not serve as president for longer than ten years?
  - What do you think are some of the president’s duties/responsibilities or special privileges? (The teacher should list responses on the board or an overhead transparency.)
3. Day 2: Read the book If I Were President by Catherine Stier to the class. Direct attention to the list of duties/responsibilities or special privileges students thought the president might have. Discuss which assumptions were correct and those that were incorrect. The teacher

should have students share the additional presidential duties/responsibilities and special privileges that they learned from the book that was read to them.

4. Day 3: Ask students to brainstorm a list of qualities they think the President of the United States should possess. The teacher should record student responses and ask students to defend their suggestions.
5. Give each student a “Wanted for President” poster attachment. Instruct students to complete the poster by composing three sentences that include the three qualities that they think are the most important when choosing a president. Students should refer the brainstormed list of qualities and defend each choice. (Example: I think a president should be honest because ...) After the posters are completed, students should share them with the class. Posters may be displayed on the classroom bulletin board.
6. Day 4: Ask students what it means to vote. Discuss the following questions:
  - Who is allowed to vote for President of the United States?
  - Why can't children under the age of 18 vote in elections?
  - Do you think the voting age should be changed? Why or why not?
  - Who are the candidates that are running for president this year?
  - What do you know about them?
7. Tell students that they are going to participate in a mock presidential election, even though their votes will not be counted for the national election. Explain that they may want to find out more about the men running for president/vice president before Election Day.
8. Election Day: Give each student a ballot and explain how they should mark an “X” in the box opposite the name of the person that they think should be the next president/vice president. Then have students insert their ballot in the “ballot box.”
9. The teacher should tally the votes for the candidates. To visually represent the voting results, the teacher should make a graph on a large sheet of construction paper. The number of votes for George W. Bush/Dick Cheney should be depicted by elephants, and the votes for John Kerry/John Edwards depicted by donkeys. After explaining the symbols for each political party, the teacher should display the poster. After the national election, students may compare the class election results to the national outcome.

# WANTED: FOR PRESIDENT

**I think a president should be**  
\_\_\_\_\_ **because**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

**I think a president should also be**  
\_\_\_\_\_ **because**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

**And I think a president should be**  
\_\_\_\_\_ **because**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

**OFFICIAL CLASS PRESIDENTIAL BALLOT**

Please place an "X" in the box beside the candidate of your choice.

GEORGE W. BUSH & DICK CHENEY (REPUBLICAN PARTY)

JOHN KERRY & JOHN EDWARDS (DEMOCRATIC PARTY)

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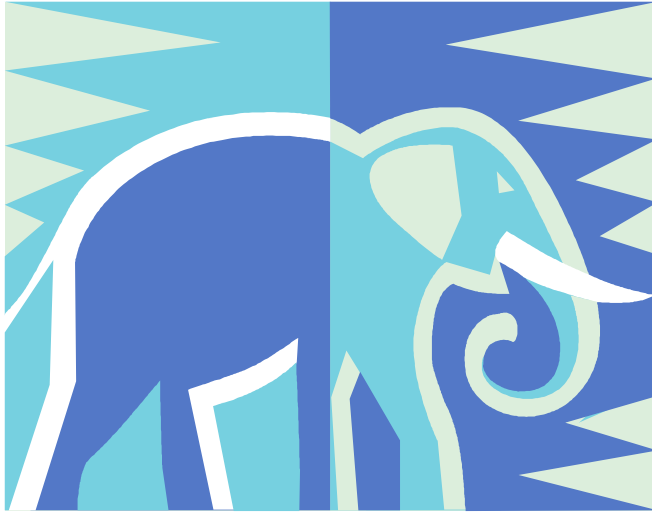
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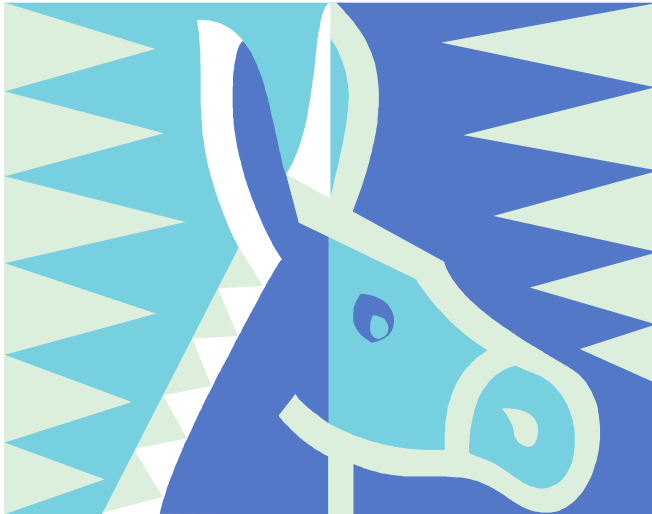
GEORGE W. BUSH & DICK CHENEY (REPUBLICAN PARTY)

JOHN KERRY & JOHN EDWARDS (DEMOCRATIC PARTY)

**Graphics of the Political Parties**



**George Bush & Dick Cheney  
(Republican)**



**John Kerry & John Edwards  
(Democrat)**