The
Government and Politics
of the
United States of America

Sample Lesson
# Presidential Elections

We the People  
*The Government and Politics of the USA*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>President</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Birthplace</th>
<th>Birth Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Richard Nixon</td>
<td>1969-1974</td>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>1913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerald Ford</td>
<td>1974-1977</td>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>1913-2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jimmy Carter</td>
<td>1977-1981</td>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>GA</td>
<td>1924-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>President</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Birthplace</th>
<th>Birth Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bill Clinton</td>
<td>1993-2001</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>AR</td>
<td>1946-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George W. Bush</td>
<td>2001-2009</td>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>CT</td>
<td>1946-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barack Obama</td>
<td>2009-2017</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>HI</td>
<td>1961-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donald Trump</td>
<td>2017-</td>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>NY</td>
<td>1946-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key Words**

- seat
- to vacate
- to engage
- to select
- prominent
- intention
- to announce
- incumbent
- raucous
- demonstration
- to project
Presidential Elections

Every four years the nation goes to the polls on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. During the Presidential election year, 33 or 34 Senate seats (sometimes more if a seat has been vacated) will be up for election. All 435 seats in the House will also be up for election as will several governors.

During the months before the election, the political parties will engage in primary campaigns -- the process of selecting candidates to run for various offices. In each party, prominent party members announce their intention to be their party’s candidate in the November election. And then the campaign begins. A lot of money is spent on advertising. Signs sprout along roadsides. Ads on TV and radio are seen and heard daily. Candidates are interviewed on radio and TV. There may be debates between the candidates. Candidates fly to selected cities to give speeches and appear at “town halls,” a meeting where the candidate gives a talk and answers questions from voters.

The biggest event of the Presidential primary campaign is the convention, where delegates choose the Presidential candidate for their party. At conventions where the incumbent President is running for re-election and is not challenged by anyone in their own party, the conventions are not marked by a lot of controversy. When the incumbent president does not or cannot run again, the conventions can be very loud and raucous, with lots of signs, flags, and speeches. Often there will be demonstrations outside the convention hall.

After the Presidential candidate has been chosen, the candidate announces their choice for Vice President. The two of them will run in the November election as a ticket -- a single vote for two positions. “Ticket” can also mean all the candidates for the party. Another sometimes controversial event at the convention is creating the party platform, a statement on the goals the party wants to achieve for the next four years. Specific goals within the platform are called planks.

Most conventions are held in July or August, and then in the next few months a new campaign begins, with the Republican ticket and Democratic ticket appealing to the electorate. It all ends with the general (Presidential) election in November. After the polls close, the nation waits as TV and radio announcers say, “We project that (candidate) has won (state) with its (XX) electoral votes.” Usually by midnight they project the winner.
A. Match the word or phrase in Column A with a phrase in Column B.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. All the seats in the House</td>
<td>a. are backing the conservative candidate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. There are no vacant</td>
<td>b. has announced her retirement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The candidates engaged</td>
<td>c. four times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The Republicans have selected</td>
<td>d. the incumbent will not run.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Several prominent businessmen</td>
<td>e. in a very long debate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Senator Susan Longtime</td>
<td>f. their candidates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Representative Dogood</td>
<td>g. demonstration for Senator Smiley.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The candidates will debate</td>
<td>h. intends to run for re-election.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. After 20 years in the House</td>
<td>i. seats in the Senate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. There was a raucous</td>
<td>j. the winner is Mary Sanchez.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. WBXQ projects</td>
<td>k. are up for election.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Fill in each blank with the correct word.

- seats  selected  intend  raucous
- vacant  prominent  debated  demonstration
- engaged  announced  incumbent  projected

1. The ____________________ has ______________________ he will not run again.
2. The governor can appoint someone to the ___________________ seat.
3. Several ____________________ citizens are supporting the incumbent.
4. There was a huge ____________________ outside the convention hall.
5. The reporter described the wild scene as ____________________.
6. ”I do not ______________ to run,” said the Senator from Nebraska.
7. They ______________________ for over an hour.
8. The Presidential candidate __________________ Governor Golden as her running mate.
9. Illinois has nineteen ____________________ up for election.
10. The ____________________ winner is Olivia Santos.
11. ”We are ____________________ in a real battle for the soul of our city,” she said.
C. Choose the best word.

1. The caucus (selects, selected, selection) Mr. Thoroughgood as their choice.
2. The little-known representative is the (projector, projection, projected) winner.
4. The (announce, announcement, announcing) caught everybody by surprise.
5. Terry and Teresa announced their (engage, engaging, engagement). They will marry in June.
6. There were no (vacants, vacancies, vacancy) at the convention hotel.
7. They have finished doing the (seat, seating, seated) arrangement for the meeting.
8. That issue is very (debatable, debated, debating).
9. The incumbent announced her (intend, intention, intending) to run again.
10. The peaceful (demonstrate, demonstration, demonstrating) became (raucously, raucous, raucousness) when the police appeared.

D. Fill in each blank with a key word.

1. The candidates _____________________ for over an hour.
2. I don’t think the __________________ will win again.
3. Whomever the party________________ will certainly win. Senator Nimrod is a loser.
4. After the recount, the winner was _________________ as Montana’s representative.
5. We __________________ to vote for the incumbent.
6. His vote on the pipeline issue _____________ his support for the big oil industry.
7. The dictionary says “____________________” means loud, noisy, and, disorderly.
8. “Our _____________ is that the Republicans will lose three senatorial seats.”
9. She worked hard and became a __________________ member of the House.
10. The __________________ will be filled by the late Senator’s wife.
11. It was a very __________________ drama; millions followed it.

Think about and discuss

Ɇ Do you know who is up for election in your state? If not, will you find out?
Ɇ Are debates helpful or just a lot of hot air?
Ɇ Have you followed a presidential election?
Ɇ Why does the President select the Vice President?
We the People \* The Government and Politics of the USA \* Answers

Unit 11 Presidential
Elections 41

A.
1. k  5. a  9. d
2. i  6. b  10. g
3. e  7. h  11. j
4. f  8. c

B.
1. incumbent, announced
2. vacant
3. prominent
4. demonstration
5. raucous
6. intend
7. debated
8. selected
9. seats
10. projected
11. engaged

C.
1. selected
2. projected
3. prominent
4. announcement
5. engagement
6. vacancies
7. seating
8. debatable
9. intention
10. demonstration, raucous

D.
1. debated
2. incumbent
3. selects
4. announced
5. intend
6. demonstrated
7. raucous
8. projection
9. prominent
10. vacant, seat
11. engaging