To the Teacher:

Americans have long taken pride in their self-made Presidents. By graduation, nearly every teenager knows the story of Abraham Lincoln, the Illinois rail splitter who taught himself to read and write by the light of an oil lantern. Such legends have fueled the dream that nearly any child can grow up to become President. But as of 2001, only 42 people have realized that dream—and a quick glance at a gallery of past Presidents will tell you that they may not look like students or their classmates. That’s why it’s more important than ever for students to get involved in the political process and to define for themselves the qualifications and attributes they would like to see in U.S. Presidents of the future.

Suppose students wish to pursue the dream. What steps will they have to take in the next 25 or 30 years to become a serious candidate for President? What experiences, skills and personal traits will qualify them to run? To find out, TIME Classroom has prepared The Election Game 2000, a series of activities for you to use with your class. Even if students never run for a single elective office, by walking in the shoes of a presidential hopeful, they will be better able to evaluate the candidates who compete for our votes every four years.

As a bonus, we also offer TIME’S POLLING GUIDE, a resource teachers and students can use beyond Election 2000. With special thanks to pollster John Zogby—a former high school teacher himself—we have designed articles, activities and resources to help students become attuned to the power of public opinion in a democracy.

We invite you to let us know how you use TIME Magazine to study Election 2000 and to share any polling ideas or poll results that your class generates. Write to us at the address above. We might even include some of your ideas in future class resources or on our website at www.timeclassroom.com.

Sincerely,

Keith Garton
Publisher, TIME School Publishing

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TIME’S Polling Guide

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SO YOU WANT TO BE PRESIDENT

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In 1794, George Washington said: “The powers of the Executive of the United States are more defined and perhaps better understood than those of almost any other country.” That’s because the founders wrote a job description into our plan of government. Read the help-wanted ad below, comprised of extracts from the Constitution. Then answer the questions on page 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Help Wanted: President of the United States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Job Description**
- The President shall be commander in chief of the army and navy of the United States, and of the militia of the several states ... and he shall have power to grant reprieves and pardons for offenses against the United States, except in cases of impeachment. (Article 2, Sec. 2, Clause 1)

- He shall have power, by and with the advice of the Senate, to make treaties ... and he shall nominate, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate ... ambassadors, other public ministers and consuls, judges to the Supreme Court, and all other officers of the United States whose appointments are not herein otherwise provided for. (Article 2, Sec. 2, Clause 2)

- He shall have the power to fill up all the vacancies that may happen during the recess of the Senate, by granting commissions which shall expire at the end of the next session. (Article 2, Sec. 2, Clause 3)

- He shall from time to time give to the Congress information of the state of the Union, and recommend to their consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient; he may, on extraordinary occasions, convene both houses, or either of them, and in case of disagreement between them, with respect to the time of adjournment, he may adjourn them to such time as he shall think proper; he shall receive ambassadors and other public ministers; he shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed, and shall commission all the officers of the United States. (Article 2, Sec. 3)

**Qualifications**
- No person except a natural-born citizen ... shall be eligible to that office who shall not have attained to the age of thirty-five years, and been fourteen years a resident within the United States. (Article 2, Sec. 1, Clause 5)

- The senators and representatives ... and all executive and judicial officers ... shall be bound by oath or affirmation, to support this Constitution; but no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States. (Article 6, Sec. 3)

**Salary**
- The President shall, at stated times, receive for his services, a compensation, which shall neither be increased nor diminished during the period for which he shall have been elected, and he shall not receive within that period any other emolument [valuable gift] from the United States, or any of them. (Article 2, Sec. 1, Clause 7)

**Term of Contract/Method of Selection**
- He shall hold the term for four years, and, together with the Vice President, chosen for the same term, be elected. (Article 2, Sec. 1)

- No person shall be elected to the office of the President more than twice, and no person who has held the office of President, or acted as President for more than two years of a term to which some other person was elected President shall be elected to the office of President more than once. (Twenty-second Amendment)

**Employee Agreement**
- Before he enter on the execution of his office, he shall take the following oath or affirmation: “I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the office of the President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States.” (Article 2, Sec. 1, Clause 8)
1. What types of tasks did the founders expect the President to perform?

2. Suppose you applied for the job of President. What three qualifications would you need?

3. What qualification could not be used to judge your application for President?

4. How would you be paid?

5. Who would do the hiring?

6. How long could you expect to hold the job of President?

7. What part of the Constitution limits how long you may hold your job?

8. If hired, what agreement would your employers expect you to make?
The founders allowed Americans to shape the presidency by leaving the qualifications vague. (The Constitution sets only three requirements.) By casting their ballots, voters over the past two centuries have established certain unwritten qualifications for the office. You may not agree with all these qualifications. But to see what stepping stones have traditionally led to the presidency, study the profiles in the chart entitled “Presidential Close-Ups” on pages 6 and 7. Then complete the following exercises.

**Comparing Past Presidents**

1. Gender
   a. How many Presidents have been men? ______
   b. How many have been women? ______

2. Education
   a. How many Presidents have attended college? ______
   b. How many have not? ______

3. Military Service
   a. How many Presidents have served in the military? ______
   b. How many have not? ______

4. Political Experience
   a. How many Presidents have been elected to Congress? ______
   b. How many Presidents have been elected governor? ______
   c. How many Presidents have been neither a governor nor a member of Congress? ______

5. Religion
   a. How many Presidents have been Protestants? ______
   b. How many have been Roman Catholics? ______
   c. How many have been non-Christians? ______
   d. How many have belonged to no specific church at all? ______

6. Ethnicity
   a. How many Presidents have been of northern or western European ancestry? ______
   b. How many have been of southern or eastern European ancestry? ______
   c. How many have been of non-European ancestry? ______

7. Early Career
   a. How many Presidents have worked as lawyers? ______
   b. How many have worked as professors or teachers? ______
   c. How many have worked as diplomats? ______
   d. How many worked as professional soldiers? ______

**Forming Generalizations About the Presidents**

8. Based on your answers to the preceding questions, how would you describe the typical American President?

   _____________________________________________

   _____________________________________________

**Making Ethical Judgments**

9. What unwritten qualifications for President do you think should be kept in the 21st century?

   _____________________________________________

   _____________________________________________

10. What unwritten qualifications would you like to see eliminated or added by 2020?

    _____________________________________________

    _____________________________________________

# Presidential Close-Ups, 1789–2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>President</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>Military Service</th>
<th>Elected to Congress</th>
<th>Elected Governor</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Early Career</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George Washington (1789-1797)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>surveyor, planter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Adams* (1797-1801)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>teacher, lawyer, diplomat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Jefferson* (1801-1809)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes (VA)</td>
<td>No Specific Church</td>
<td>Welsh</td>
<td>writer, inventor, lawyer, diplomat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Madison (1809-1817)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>lawyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Monroe (1817-1825)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes (VA)</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>Scotch</td>
<td>lawyer, writer, diplomat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Quincy Adams (1825-1829)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>lawyer, diplomat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Jackson (1829-1837)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>Scotch-Irish</td>
<td>race horse owner, soldier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin Van Buren* (1837-1841)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes (NY)</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>lawyer, diplomat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Henry Harrison (1841)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>soldier, diplomat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Tyler§ (1841-1845)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes (VA)</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>lawyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Polk (1845-1849)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes (TN)</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>Scotch-Irish</td>
<td>lawyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zachary Taylor (1849-1850)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>planter, soldier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millard Fillmore*§ (1850-1853)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>teacher, lawyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin Pierce (1853-1857)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>teacher, lawyer, diplomat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Buchanan (1857-1861)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>Scotch-Irish</td>
<td>lawyer, diplomat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abraham Lincoln (1861-1865)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No Specific Church</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>storekeeper, lawyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Johnson*§ (1865-1869)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes (TN)</td>
<td>No Specific Church</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>tailor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulysses S. Grant (1869-1877)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>Scotch-Irish</td>
<td>soldier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rutherford B. Hayes (1877-1881)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes (OH)</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>Scotch</td>
<td>lawyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James A. Garfield (1881)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>lawyer, college president, preacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chester A. Arthur*§ (1881-1885)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>Scotch-Irish</td>
<td>teacher, lawyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grover Cleveland (1885-1889/1893-1897)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes (NY)</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>English, Irish</td>
<td>teacher, lawyer, mayor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>Military Service</td>
<td>Elected to Congress</td>
<td>Elected Governor</td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Early Career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
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<td>---------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
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<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benjamin Harrison (1889-1893)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>lawyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William McKinley (1897-1901)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes (OH)</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>Scotch-Irish</td>
<td>teacher, lawyer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theodore Roosevelt*§ (1901-1909)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes (NY)</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>writer, rancher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Howard Taft (1909-1913)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>lawyer, judge, diplomat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodrow Wilson (1913-1921)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes (NJ)</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>Scotch-Irish</td>
<td>professor, college president, lawyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren G. Harding (1921-1923)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>English, Dutch</td>
<td>newspaper editor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calvin Coolidge*§ (1923-1929)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes (MA)</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>lawyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herbert Hoover (1929-1933)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>Swiss-German</td>
<td>engineer, diplomat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin D. Roosevelt (1933-1945)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes (NY)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>lawyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry S Truman*§ (1945-1953)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>English, Scotch-Irish</td>
<td>bank clerk, haberdasher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwight D. Eisenhower (1953-1961)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>Swiss-German</td>
<td>soldier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John F. Kennedy (1961-1963)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>reporter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyndon B. Johnson*§ (1963-1969)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>English, Scotch-Irish</td>
<td>rancher, teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard M. Nixon (1969-1974)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>English, Scotch-Irish</td>
<td>lawyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerald R. Ford*§ (1974-1977)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>lawyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ronald Reagan (1981-1989)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes (CA)</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>English, Irish</td>
<td>radio announcer, actor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Bush (1989-1993)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>oilman, diplomat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William J. Clinton (1993-2001)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes (AR)</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>English, Irish</td>
<td>law professor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What do you think the standards and criteria should be for selecting the Presidents who will lead our country in the 21st century? Decide by completing the following two activities.

**Playing the Right Card** Your teacher will give you the profiles of nine candidates. To focus your attention on their qualifications, the names of these people have been omitted from the cards. You may guess some of their identities on your own, but try not to let prior impressions influence your opinion. Along with some of your classmates, use the following steps to decide which of these candidates you would back in the next presidential election.

- **Step One** Make sure each of the candidates meets the three basic constitutional requirements for President.

- **Step Two** Rate the candidates in terms of their electability—that is, their appeal to voters. Arrange the nine cards on a continuum from least electable to most electable. Record the order in which you arranged the cards, and write down the criteria that you used to judge the candidates.

- **Step Three** Set aside established conceptions of who can become President. Which candidate do you think is best suited to lead the nation in the century ahead? (You may want to do some outside research on these topics: the demographic makeup of the country based on the 2000 census, current problems facing the nation, the current global situation, and so on.) Arrange the nine cards on a continuum from least suited to best suited. Record the order in which you arranged the cards, and write down the criteria that you used to judge the candidates. Were the standards the same as in Step Two, or did you introduce some new qualities? Why or why not?

- **Step Four** Reach a consensus on the candidate that your group would back in the next election. Would you go with the most electable candidate? Or would you push forward some “dark horse,” a long-shot candidate who might help rewrite the unofficial qualifications for President? Be prepared to defend your decision.

**Extra Credit** Figure out the identity of each of the nine candidates in the cards. (Your teacher will confirm your answers.) Pick one of the long shots, and give him or her a shot at winning the presidency in 2000. Design a campaign slogan, brochures and a platform that you think will claim the “glittering prize,” Benjamin Harrison’s nickname for the presidency. Be sure to highlight the new qualities that you want voters to value in a President.

**Help Wanted: President of the United States**

In 2000, when the job of President once again opened up, two of the candidates on the cards—political insiders Al Gore and George W. Bush—applied for the job. What do voters need to know to make what executive recruiters call a “good hire”? Decide by completing the “Help Wanted” activity given to you by your teacher. Then discuss: whom would you hire? If you wanted to run for President in the 2020s, what qualities would you seek to develop? What candidates would you work to elect in the years ahead? Consider your answer to this last question carefully. Elections, as you have learned, are the most effective tools that we have for rewriting the job description of President.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Born</th>
<th>Birthplace</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Military Experience</th>
<th>Work Experience</th>
<th>Personal Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Candidate 1</td>
<td>September 7, 1924</td>
<td>Honolulu, Hawaii</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>B.A. University of Hawaii, government and economics; J.D. George Washington University, law</td>
<td>combat duty U.S. Army; Distinguished Service Cross, Bronze Star, Purple Heart</td>
<td>U.S. Representative; Senate Select Committee on Intelligence</td>
<td>married, one child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate 2</td>
<td>April 13, 1933</td>
<td>Alburn, California</td>
<td>no organized religious affiliation</td>
<td>B.A. San Jose State, physical education</td>
<td>noncombat duty U.S. Airforce</td>
<td>artist; captain of 1964 U.S. Olympic Judo team; state senator; U.S. Representative; U.S. Senator; chairperson, Indian Affairs Committee</td>
<td>married, two children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate 3</td>
<td>March 28, 1953</td>
<td>Yabucoa, Puerto Rico</td>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>B.A. University of Puerto Rico, political science; M.A. New York University, political science</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>professor, city council member, secretary of Department of Puerto Rican Affairs, U.S. Representative, ranking Democrat on the House Small Business Committee</td>
<td>divorced, no children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate 4</td>
<td>March 26, 1930</td>
<td>El Paso, Texas</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>B.A. and J.D. Stanford University, law</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>lawyer, assistant state attorney general, advisor to Salvation Army, member of U.S. Supreme Court</td>
<td>married, two children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate 5</td>
<td>July 6, 1946</td>
<td>New Haven, Connecticut</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>B.A. Yale University; MBA Harvard Business School</td>
<td>pilot for Texas Air National Guard</td>
<td>founder of gas and oil company, advisor for 1988 Republican presidential campaign, managing general partner of Texas Rangers baseball franchise, state governor</td>
<td>married, two children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate 6</td>
<td>April 5, 1937</td>
<td>Harlem, New York</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>B.A. City College of New York, geology</td>
<td>combat duty in U.S. Army; wounded in action</td>
<td>National Security Advisor, career soldier and general, Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff</td>
<td>married, three children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate 7</td>
<td>June 22, 1933</td>
<td>San Francisco, California</td>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>B.A. Stanford University</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>member of state parole board; member of city board of supervisors; city mayor; U.S. Senator; member of three Senate committees, including the Judiciary Committee</td>
<td>married, four children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate 8</td>
<td>March 3, 1948</td>
<td>Washington, D.C.</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>B.A. Harvard University; attended Vanderbilt Divinity School and Vanderbilt Law School</td>
<td>U.S. Army, including service in Vietnam</td>
<td>reporter, U.S. Representative, U.S. Senator, Vice President of the United States</td>
<td>married, four children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate 9</td>
<td>June 6, 1939</td>
<td>Bennettsville, South Carolina</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>B.A. Spelman College, Russian Studies (valedictorian); J.D. Yale University, law; recipient of more than 20 honorary degrees</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>lawyer, civil rights worker, author, founder/director of children’s advocacy organization</td>
<td>married, two children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As the mock ad at right implies, it’s the voters who hire and employ the CEO of our nation. Ideally, the selection process should follow the three basic steps used by most executive recruiters.

- First, draw up a list of “specs,” or duties, for the job.
- Second, determine the indicators, or types of experiences, that show whether a candidate can successfully fulfill these duties.
- Third, research the résumé and background of each applicant to see if she or he possesses these experiences.

Use the same steps to evaluate the two top candidates for the CEO position opening up in January 2001. The chart on this page will help you to organize information. Some job specs have been provided, but you may add others. We’ve also added a column that puts you in the race for 2028. What experiences would you, a serious contender for President, hope to have on your résumé? If you need more room to complete your chart, copy it onto a large piece of paper.

### JOB SPECS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chief of State (represents and symbolizes the U.S.)</th>
<th>Chief Executive (enforces federal laws, supervises various executive departments and agencies, appoints federal judges)</th>
<th>Chief Legislator (sponsors major legislative packages, approves or vetoes bills passed by Congress)</th>
<th>Chief Diplomat (negotiates treaties)</th>
<th>Chief Financial Officer (submits budgets to Congress, monitors economic progress)</th>
<th>Commander-in-Chief (orders military units into battle)</th>
<th>Chief Party Leader (campaigns for other party members)</th>
<th>Chief Visionary (tries to influence people to follow an agenda for the future)</th>
<th><strong>ELECTION 2000</strong></th>
<th><strong>ELECTION 2028</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Gore Experiences** | **Bush Experiences** | **Your Experiences** | **Help Wanted: President of the United States of America**
A large, diverse, powerful capitalist democracy, in the midst of dramatic technological and social change, seeks a chief executive officer (CEO). Must be at least 35 years old, native born, and long-term resident. Frequent travel and evening/weekend work required. Annual salary of $200,000. Benefits include housing, pension, private jet, and generous expense account. Interested applicants should contact U.S. voters by November 7, 2000.
“What I want to get done is what the people desire to have done, and the question for me is how to find that out exactly.” — Abraham Lincoln

Perhaps it is no surprise that polling developed in a nation where government derives its power from “the consent of the governed.” From the start, political leaders in the United States recognized the need for some means to determine what the people were thinking and saying. So did the many businesses that flourished under the nation’s free-market system. From the United States, the practice of polling reached around the world. However, polling, like public opinion itself, is usually most powerful in democratic societies that protect freedom of communication and expression. Today polls are very much a part of our everyday life, but quantity does not necessarily mean quality. In a free market, nearly anybody can sell polling services at a competitive price. And because of constitutional safeguards of freedom of speech and the press, there are few restrictions on the wording of questions or the release of survey data. As a result, you need to learn to become an informed reader, user and participant in polls. Some polls result in meaningful data; others mean nothing at all. In this polling guide, you’ll find the tools to distinguish valid from invalid survey data and to conduct polls yourself. As you’ll discover, its use extends far beyond analyzing the political polls published during elections. Pick up this guide the next time you click your mouse in an “instant” Internet poll.

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Polls: It’s a Matter of Opinion

Are you between the ages of 6 and 21?
Then there’s a good chance that you use a computer, shop on the Web and talk to your friends by cell phone or Instant Messaging. You probably love hip-hop, extreme sports, Cuban shirts and anything with polka dots. Like most of your friends, you listen to your parents, dream of owning your own business, and think your generation just might change the world.

Who says? The pollsters who have made it their business to survey the more than 77.6 million kids, teenagers and young adults who make up Generation Y—people born between 1979 and 1994. In the years ahead, the “Gen-Yers” will have the numbers to influence everything from the marketplace to the ballot box. Pollsters—and the businesses and politicians who hire them—are already looking for clues about how you and your friends might flex your economic and political muscle.

In this article and the rest of Time’s polling guide, you will get a chance to meet the pollsters—the professionals who earn a living by finding out what people think or do. You will also have the opportunity to act as a pollster yourself, conducting a survey in your own school or community.

How do you feel?
Pollsters have their fingers on the popular pulse. They measure public opinion—the attitudes or ideas held by a significant number of people about a specific subject or issue. Because of their work, many pollsters refer to themselves as “public opinion analysts.”

Through the use of numerical surveys, pollsters identify the way people feel or act at a particular point in time. However, they know better than most of us that people change their minds. So they view any poll as a snapshot of public opinion at the moment the poll was taken. A new poll, taken later, can present an entirely different picture.

Why are you asking me?
As any pollster would tell you, “You can’t survey the whole universe.” In poll-talk, a universe is all the people who make up the group that is to be studied, such as teenagers in Generation Y. So how did pollsters discover that most Gen-Y teens like e-mail better than snail mail? They selected what is known as a representative sample—a group small enough to survey but similar in makeup to the larger group (universe) to which they belong.

Pollsters pick members of a representative sample through a process known as random sampling, a technique in which everyone in a universe has an equal chance of being selected. In the past, pollsters chose addresses at random, mailed out surveys, or even sent pollsters to interview people in person. Today, however, 95 percent of all households have telephones. So most pollsters use “random-digit
Harry S Truman had the last laugh in the 1948 election. Ever since the 1930s, before every presidential and congressional election, Newsweek magazine had taken a poll of 50 of the nation’s top political reporters. The group had correctly predicted the winner every single year and had come even closer than the national polls in predicting the percentages of victories. In 1948, the journalists handed the election to Thomas E. Dewey by a margin of 50 to 0.

When an aide handed the results of the poll to President Truman, he grinned and said: “Forget it, they’re always wrong.” Truman knew what pollsters know today—you have to get a representative sample for accuracy. The magazine had polled journalists, not registered voters. As the embarrassing headline above shows, Truman was right. The blunder convinced political pollsters to adopt the random sampling methods widely used today.

dialing,” a method in which computers generate call lists based upon household exchanges (the first three digits in a phone number).

A sample does not have to be as big as you might imagine. As pollsters are quick to point out, a chef does not have to drink a whole pot of soup to find out if it’s salty. A taste, or sample, will do. The same holds true for a poll. In fact, the larger a universe, the better the chance for picking a small but representative group of people. In national surveys, for example, pollsters aim for 1,200 to 1,500 successful responses. In statewide polls, they look for 600 to 1,200 responses.

Of course, sampling isn’t perfect. Answering machines can complicate the sampling process. So can popular resentment of telemarketing, or use of the telephone to sell everything from car insurance to credit cards to political candidates.

To estimate how much sample results may differ from the opinions of the population under study, pollsters use a statistical formula to calculate a margin of error (MoE). In most carefully conducted national surveys, the margin of error, or “sampling error,” is usually plus or minus 3 percentage points. If a poll shows that 77 percent of teens value “having people’s respect,” with an MoE of 3 percent, then between 74 and 80 percent of teens hold this value.

In 1948, Harry Truman defied pollsters’ predictions

That’s a good question

When it comes to questions, pollsters pick their words as carefully as they pick their sample. Poorly worded questions, the use of loaded words, or even the order in which questions are asked can influence the responses people give. To get accurate answers, pollsters must write questions in a neutral, balanced and fair way.

Pollsters give similar thought to the responses offered in multi-choice questions. They not only word answers carefully, but they often vary the order of answers from caller to caller. Research indicates that people may give special meaning to whatever option comes first and that they may remember the last option more clearly. To prevent a pattern from developing, pollsters present the options randomly.

Accurate responses also depend upon the ability and willingness of people to answer the questions in the first place. Interviewers use screening questions to ensure that respondents belong to their sample. In polling Gen-Y teens, for example, they might say: “Hello. I’m conducting a survey of teenagers for Time Magazine. Could I speak with someone in your home between the ages of 13 to 19?”

If no teenagers live at the home or if the answer is “no,” the interviewer tries another random number. Once a respondent does agree to take the survey, the work of polling begins. The interviewer asks the questions in a pleasant but neutral tone, records the answers, and, last but not least, thanks the respondent. If that respondent is you, don’t be surprised if you see your answers or opinions repeated in descriptions of Gen-Y teens like the ones at the start of this article.

Just the FAQs

The following are some frequently asked questions (FAQs) about polls. For more questions and answers, see the interview with pollster John Zogby on page 6.

How did polls get their start?

The earliest counterparts to modern opinion polls are traced back to 1824. At that time, many states left the selection of presidential electors up to state legislators. To prove how out of touch legislators were with the voters, several newspapers and magazines conducted “straw polls.” (The name “straw polls” may have come from the phrase “tossing straws to the wind.”) By asking people to clip out “straw ballots” and mail them in, journalists were tossing the election to the people. The straw polls showed what state legislators did not yet realize in 1824—the people wanted Andrew Jackson as President.

Who was the first President to use a pollster?

Because we live in a democracy, politicians have always been interested in the moods and opinions of the people. After all, they’re the ones who elect politicians. Probably the first President to hire an informal pollster was George Washington. He paid a friend to mingle among the “ordinary folks” to find out what they thought of his presidency. However, Franklin Roosevelt was the first President to use a “scientific” pollster. He choose Elmo Roper, a pioneer in statistical surveys, to use modern techniques to find out what people thought.

“AS I SEE IT, THE TECHNIQUE OF PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH MAY BE CAPABLE OF BEING USED TO EFFECT THE GREATEST CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS SINCE THE SECRET BALLOT.”

—Elmo Roper, research director of Fortune’s Surveys of Public Opinion
Who conducts most of the polls today?

Almost anyone can conduct a straw poll. Opinions can be registered by call-ins, write-ins, or even the click of a mouse. However, these “self-selected” polls are not very accurate. They measure the opinion of people who choose to respond. As a result, they always have what is referred to as a “biased sample.”

The work of scientific polling belongs to professional polling organizations or to academic and non-profit research centers such as the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press. Major newspapers and networks—for example, Time/CNN, The New York Times/cbs, and ABC News/Washington Post—constantly conduct polls so that they can report the latest findings revealed in responses to questions about current issues.

Who pays for most of the polling that is done in the United States?

When people hear the word “polls,” they tend to think of political surveys. But by far the biggest users of public opinion research are business and industry. Companies attempt to measure everything from the effects of advertising, to controlled tests of new products, to efforts to improve their public image.

Can pollsters be trusted?

Generally, yes. An organization’s credibility depends upon the accuracy of its results. Clients pay professional pollsters to supply them with reliable information so that they can make informed decisions. That does not mean, however, that polls do not have their flaws or that people should not study them carefully. Readers owe it to themselves to look at polls with a critical eye. They should ask questions:

■ What is the purpose of this poll?
■ Who sponsored the study?
■ Who was interviewed?
■ How large was the sample?
■ How was the sample chosen?
■ What is the margin of error?
■ What questions did interviewers ask and in what order did they ask them?
■ How was the survey conducted?
■ What is the track record of the group conducting the survey?
■ Was anything going on in the nation or world that might have influenced results?

Do people lie to pollsters?

Most pollsters say a majority of people do not lie on surveys because there is no clear incentive to do so. Nonetheless, some pollsters suspect that respondents hesitate to give answers that they think may be cast in a bad light. For example, in the New York City mayoral campaign of 1989 involving African-American candidate David Dinkins, and in the Virginia gubernatorial race of the same year involving African-American candidate Douglas Wilder, there was evidence that voters were less likely than usual to be candid in reporting their choices because they risked the appearance of voting based on racial preferences.

“MORE AMERICANS ARE FOOLED BY POLL RESULTS THAN GET TRICKED BY INTEREST RATES.”

—Christopher Matthews, syndicated columnist and author of Hardball: How Politics Is Played
Polling: An Insider’s View

An Interview with John Zogby

John Zogby, an independent pollster based in Utica, New York, had been in the polling business only since 1985 when he bewildered other pollsters with his dead-on forecasts in the 1996 presidential race. Since that time, the firm of Zogby International has gone on to forecast correctly the outcomes in more than a dozen elections, including the 2000 presidential race in Mexico. To get an insider’s view of polling, we invited John Zogby to talk with Time Classroom. Here are some excerpts from the interview.

TC: You were once a high school and college teacher. What led you to become a pollster?
JZ: I have always been fascinated by the whole concept of public opinion and the fact that whether we live in a democracy or the most despotic tyranny, public opinion still plays a role. Even the worst tyrant can’t afford to be contemptuous of the public.

TC: Suppose you were still a teacher. What kind of training would you tell students to get if they wanted to be a pollster?
JZ: I love to tell kids this, because I’m fairly successful now, but I got a D in statistics! So it’s not the ultimate prerequisite, although it certainly doesn’t hurt. I know statistics, and I’m pretty good at it—and smart enough to hire people who are even better.

Here’s what I recommend to students all the time. Number one, get a solid social science background, any mix of sociology, psychology, economics and political science. Number two, read novels. Novels give you the insight into the depths of human character and emotions better than anything else. Ultimately, [a pollster] measures people. So you must understand people to know just what all those statistics mean.

TC: When students see an ad on TV or in a magazine, is polling usually attached to it?
JZ: You can be absolutely certain that polling is behind it. Although we do traditional political surveys, the bulk of our business is really consumer market research.

TC: Here’s a popular caricature: Political candidates use polls to decide their position on issues. Do polls have that kind of influence?
JZ: I know that’s what many people think. But I believe they would be surprised to learn that most politicians really use polls for what they were designed to do—indicate popular feeling on an issue or policy. Polls generally confirm what the politicians already know or lead them to do more research before acting.

TC: What are the most important technological changes since the development of scientific polling in the 1930s?
JZ: What revolutionized the business were two inventions. One was the telephone and its proliferation so that 95-96% of all households have them. The other was the home computer. The computer allowed us to do polls faster, efficiently, and, in many ways, more accurately.

TC: How do you feel about the current debate over the use of the Internet to poll?
JZ: We are among the polling firms that are heavily into research and development on the use of the Internet. We are collecting a database of pre-screened respondents and creating a large enough database so that we can draw representative panels from the larger database. And then we e-mail surveys to this group. But, as I said, we are still in the research and development phase, so we use a telephone-based survey to confirm the results.

TC: Are the critics of Internet polls right when they say that this form of surveying might produce headlines similar to the “Dewey Defeats Truman” headlines of the 1948 election?
JZ: That’s a good question. Let me put it this way. The Internet will dominate our field [public opinion research] sooner rather than later. So we want to be prepared. . . . I believe we will be able to work out the kinks—ensure privacy, prevent people from voting twice, and other obstacles to good research. I’m also of the belief that the Internet, starting in the United States and then spreading to other parts of the world, will one day be as universal as the telephone. We’re not there yet, but we need to go the extra mile and be ready when that day comes. Here’s something else. I foresee the blending of history with the future, when people’s faces appear on computer screens as they talk to each other. Maybe we’re actually bringing back the traditional face-to-face interview.

TC: One last question. You’re earning a great deal of fame for the accuracy of your political predictions. Do you have some secret ingredient for your success or you’re not telling?
JZ: (Laughter) I’m not telling. But here’s a clue: sampling is everything.
Statistics from polls show up in the news media all the time. But what do they mean? Maybe nothing if the survey was not conducted correctly. As a result, you need to evaluate the poll data found in news reports and advertisements carefully to determine whether or not it’s reliable. To practice interpreting poll-driven news, read the press release on this page. Then answer the questions that follow.

**Questions**

1. What is the subject of the press release?

2. What poll data are used to support the claim made in the headline?

3. Who conducted the poll?

4. What was the universe surveyed?

5. How many people were interviewed, and how were they selected?

6. Based on the margin of error, how many people in the population studied prefer SUVs?

7. Why do you think the telephone interviewers did not offer respondents “not sure” as a choice?

8. Suppose these figures had come from a self-selected Internet poll. Would they be as reliable? Explain.

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**PUBLIC OPINION HEADLINES**

Wednesday July 5, 2000, 3:29 PM ET

**Sport Utility Vehicles Are Today’s Rage for the Road**

**UTICA, N.Y. (Reuters/Zogby)** — A red-hot convertible or a pristine luxury car no longer is the dream vehicle for most Americans. A recent Zogby America survey of 1,264 adults nationwide* reveals that sports utility vehicles (SUVs) have become the favorite driving choice.

SUVs were chosen by 35% of Americans as the most popular choice if they had the option of choosing any vehicle. Second on the list were sedans with 24.3%. Another 20% wanted a sports car.

At the same time, 14.4% wanted a van, and 4.4% preferred a station wagon.

Young adults between the ages of 18-29 overwhelmingly picked sport utility vehicles (62%), while more than half (56%) of Americans over the age of 65 preferred a sedan. Sedans were also more popular among women (26%) than men (23%), while 40% of men favored SUVs and 22% liked sports cars. Thirty percent of women also wanted an SUV.

Married and single people agree that SUVs were the most desired automobile, but they split on other favorite vehicles. Married couples next preferred sedans at 26%, then vans (18%), and sports cars (15%). Single Americans favored a sports car (30%) and then sedans (18%).

**What we asked:** If you had the option to choose any type of car, which of the following would you choose?

1. SUV
2. Sports car
3. Sedan
4. Van
5. Station wagon
6. Not sure (Do not read)

*Respondents randomly selected by region using CATI (Computer Aided Telephone Interview) software; MoE ±3%.

Adapted and used with permission of Zogby International, Utica, NY.
Will online polling destroy the survey business? Are pollsters worried? Not yet. But most of them have plenty to say—pro and con—about the subject. Some pollsters believe accurate surveys can still be produced, even though polls administered over the Internet admittedly only reach a select group of people—those with computers. Others, like the Gallup Organization, refuse to throw the telephone book out the window until use of the Internet becomes more widespread. Still others are taking a wait-and-see attitude, using a combination of telephone and Internet polls.

Explore the debate over Internet polls yourself by researching the pros and cons of the three main types of online surveys listed in the following table. Find out who’s using them (one name has already been listed) and how pollsters feel about each type of poll. Record information in the table or copy the table onto a larger piece of paper. Add your own pro and con arguments as well.

To find articles on this topic, use the words “polling,” “online polls,” or “Internet polls” to search the Web or the more traditional *Reader’s Guide to Periodical Literature*. You might also check websites...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>“Instant” Internet Polls</th>
<th>Online Survey Panels</th>
<th>Combination Telephone/Online Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHO’S USING IT</td>
<td>1. Net Votes</td>
<td>1. Harris Interactive</td>
<td>1. InterSurvey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PROS**

**CONS**

*New slang for people who spend a lot of time at the computer; similar to “couch potato.”
maintained by polling organizations and/or the media. (A list of polling sites has been supplied.)

When you have completed your research, compare your findings with those of your classmates. Compile a complete list of pros and cons for each type of poll. Then answer these questions.

Questions

1. Which of the three types of polls do you think produces the most accurate results? Explain.

2. Which of the three types of polls do you think produces the least accurate results? Explain.

3. Which would you trust more—a traditional poll conducted by telephone or one of the polls in the table? Explain.

4. Humphrey Taylor of Harris Interactive says, “We believe online research will be a huge part of the survey research industry’s future.” Do you agree? If you were an investor, would you buy stock in Harris Interactive? Why or why not?

ABC News Poll Vault
http://more.abcnnews.go.com/sections/politics/pollvault/pollvault.html

Alliance for Better Campaigns
www.bettercampaigns.org

American Association for Public Opinion Research
www.aapor.org

CBS News Polls
http://cbsnews.cbs.com/now/section/0,1636,215-412,00.shtml

Center on Policy Attitudes
www.policyattitudes.org

Eagleton Institute of Politics/Center for Public Interest Polling
http://eagletonpoll.rutgers.edu

The Gallup Organization
www.gallup.com

Harris Poll Online
http://vr.harrispollonline.com

InterSurvey
www.intersurvey.com

Los Angeles Times Polls
www.latimes.com/news/timespoll

Marist College Institute for Public Opinion
www.mipo.marist.edu

National Council on Public Polls
www.ncpp.org

NetVotes
www.netvotes.com

The New York Times
www.nytimes.com

Opinion Dynamics Corporation
www.opiniondynamics.com

The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press
www.people-press.org

PollingReport.com
www.pollingreport.com

The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research
www.ropercenter.uconn.edu

TIME Magazine
www.time.com

USA Today/CNN/Gallup Polls
www.usatoday.com/news/pollindex.htm

The Washington Post
www.washingtonpost.com

Zogby International
www.zogby.com

“If you want to survey people who do not have computers or who are not online, you cannot do that online.” Warren J. Mitofsky, President of Mitofsky International

“This is an unstoppable train. Those who don’t get on board run the risk of being left far behind.” Humphrey Taylor, Chairman of Harris Interactive, formerly Louis Harris & Associates
How high do politicians jump when they read the polls? That depends on whom you ask and the kind of poll that you are talking about (see below). Critics say that polls have an undue influence on the policies and positions adopted by politicians, especially during elections. Supporters say polling allows elected officials to stay in touch with the people they represent. Analyze this issue for yourself by completing the following exercises.

Questions
1. What type of political poll forms the subject of this cartoon?
2. What is the cartoonist’s opinion of how politicians use these polls?
3. How does the cartoonist get this message across?
4. Suppose you wanted to poll people in your community to find out whether they agreed with the cartoonist on this issue. How would you word your question and responses?

Bonus Activity: Have a classmate review your question and responses. Then use them to conduct a poll, following suggestions in this polling guide.

**TYPES OF POLITICAL POLLS**

- **benchmark polls**—polls taken at the beginning of a campaign to provide a baseline against which the campaign’s effectiveness can be measured.

- **tracking and brushfire polls**—quick surveys done in the last few weeks of a campaign to determine how voters are reacting to the positions and messages of candidates.

- **push polls**—polls designed specifically to influence the opinion of voters during the last few weeks of a campaign. Professional pollsters and the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) consider push polls unethical.

- **exit polls**—polls designed to give an early indication of the results of an election by asking people how they voted as they leave the election booth. Many critics claim exits polls influence voter behavior.
Measuring Public Opinion: Try It Yourself

One of the best ways to become an informed user of polls is to design, conduct and evaluate your own poll. You may not be able to produce a computer-generated sample like those used by professional polling organizations. But you can still prepare a reasonably accurate survey based on suggested steps that have been tested by students all across the country.

**STEP 1** Familiarize yourself with poll results from several different sources. A good place to start is PollingReport.com. This independent, nonpartisan organization maintains an online journal of recent polls conducted by a variety of organizations and members of the media. Its website can be found at http://www.pollingreport.com

**STEP 2** Set your standards high.
Commit yourself to three basic polling principles:
1. Generate the best sample possible.
2. Word and sequence questions to eliminate as much bias as possible.
3. Conduct the poll under conditions that maximize reliability. It may be easier to poll friends and relatives, but you will get richer and more accurate results from a random, anonymous sampling of your community.

**STEP 3** Write forced-response questions (also known as closed-ended questions). Phrase questions so respondents must make choices that are easy to tabulate. Do not slant the questions in any way, and make sure you do not use any loaded words. Even details such as a person's title can influence a respondent's opinion. For example, using the word “Senator” for one candidate when no other candidates have similar titles may create an unbalanced set of responses. Examples of questions that might be used in polling opinion of political candidates include:

1. If the election were being held today, whom would you vote for?
   - Candidate X
   - Candidate Y

2. How important is Candidate X's wartime record in winning your vote?
   - very important
   - somewhat important
   - unimportant

3. How much has Candidate Y's voting record on environmental issues influenced your opinion of him/her?
   - strongly influenced
   - somewhat influenced
   - hardly influenced at all
   - not influenced at all

**STEP 4** Devise high-quality response sheets.
Use the preceding models to word questions so that answers may be easily checked or circled. Produce enough copies so that you can record the answers of each respondent on a separate sheet.

**STEP 5** Select a random sample.
Take a local telephone book and tear out all the white pages. Shuffle these pages, and highlight every 7th, 9th or 11th name on the list. (If you come from a huge city, make the number higher.) Skip over any businesses that turn up in the white pages. Divide the highlighted numbers among class members, and make arrangements for telephone time either at home or at school. (Be aware that your sample excludes unlisted numbers.)

**STEP 6** Team up with someone else.
You'll work faster and have more fun if you pair up. One person can read off numbers, while the other dials. Ten pairs of students with a three-minute survey can make 100-120 successful contacts in one or two hours.
**STEP 7 Plan your call.** You will be more comfortable and consistent if you script an introduction, such as the one on the sample form below. Open every call by introducing yourself. End every call by saying “thank you” and “good night.”

**STEP 8 Conduct the survey.** Choose the hours and/or days of the week when respondents are most available. Avoid interrupting meals or calling late in the evening. If possible, call back unanswered numbers or numbers connected to an answering machine. Do not be discouraged by non-participants. Be courteous and accept a person’s decision not to take part in the survey.

**STEP 9 Add up the results.** Give response sheets to a committee of students who will do the tallies. The committee should record the data in both absolute numbers and percentages. (Absolute numbers might be: 20 said “yes” and 60 said “no.” The following math will show the same figures as percentages: 20 + 60 = 80 respondents; 20 ÷ 80 = 25% who said “yes”; 60 ÷ 80 = 75% who said “no.”) Decide if one method of presentation seems more meaningful than another.

**STEP 10 Analyze the results.** As a class, see what generalizations, conclusions and/or predictions you can make on the basis of your poll.

**EXTRA CREDIT** Math whizzes (Mathletes) can figure out a margin of error (MoE) by using this formula: \( \frac{1}{\sqrt{N}} \), with \( N \) equaling the sample size. The following math will show you how to estimate the margin of error for a sample of 1,600. The square root of 1,600 = 40, and \( \frac{1}{40} = .025 \), or 2.5%. Thus, the margin of error for this survey is 2.5%.

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**SAMPLE SURVEY FORM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Phone number called</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- ____ no answer
- ____ answered and participated
- ____ answered but did not participate
- ____ number not in service, business, other problems

**Special Interviewer Instructions:**
Remain courteous and polite.
Read questions and responses in a balanced and neutral voice.

**Introduction:** Hello. I’m a student at (name of your school). As a class project, we are conducting a poll to determine public opinion on (subject of survey). We have only a few quick questions. Could I please speak with (type of respondent sought, such as voting-age member of the household or teenager aged 13-19)?

**Tip:** Alternate asking for male and female respondents to get a better gender balance. Studies have shown that women household members tend to answer the phone more often than male members.

**Questions and Responses** (Add questions and responses as needed.)

**Question 1**

- ○ response A
- ○ response B
- ○ response C
- ○ response D

**Closing:** Thank you very much for your time. Have a good evening.
Begin tracking election 2000 by identifying the hottest issues—topics like Social Security, anti-ballistic military defense, the death penalty or protection of the environment. Over a one-week period, follow the campaigns closely to identify key points of debate. Check the newspapers, local and national television news, *Time* and other newsmagazines, radio and television talk shows, and the Web. What issues are grabbing the attention of voters? How does each candidate address these issues? Is any third-party candidate forcing the two major candidates to defend their records on a key issue? How would the policies recommended by each person affect you? Summarize your findings in the following charts. If necessary, add a chart or expand the charts to include a third-party candidate who has made one or more issues newsworthy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISSUE</th>
<th>AL GORE</th>
<th>GEORGE W. BUSH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How does the candidate define the problem?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What solution does he propose?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would proposed policy affect you?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you support or oppose? Why?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISSUE</th>
<th>AL GORE</th>
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<tr>
<td>How would proposed policy affect you?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you support or oppose? Why?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ISSUE</td>
<td>AL GORE</td>
<td>GEORGE W. BUSH</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you support or oppose? Why?</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Increasing numbers of today’s voters receive most of their information about candidates through paid political advertisements on radio and, most influentially, on television. What makes these ads effective, and what messages do they convey? You will become a better consumer of carefully packaged political messages if you stop to examine them with a critical eye. Watch for televised paid political ads over the next few weeks and log your impressions on the chart below. When you have collected a sufficient number of ads for President and other candidates, complete the writing and research activities on page 14.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paid Political Advertisement</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paid Political Advertisement</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For Writing and Research

1. **Ad analysis.** Write a detailed analysis of any one of the ads you entered into your log. How does it make use of spoken text, written text, visuals, music? How well do the elements work together, and what is their effect? What is the goal of the ad, and does it succeed? Conclude by commenting on whether or not you found the ad persuasive.

2. **The selling of the President.** Compare paid political ads to commercial product advertising. What techniques are commonly used in product ads to entice you to buy the particular product? Cite specific ads. Are any of these elements present in political ads? Are there real differences between the Gore vs. Bush ad war and the one between Coke and Pepsi? Conclude with your thoughts on how paid political ads affect the nature of national political campaigns.

3. **The well-informed voter.** If you were a voter whose only source of information was paid political advertising, what would your impression of each candidate be? Whom would you see as a more effective leader? A more compassionate President? A person of stronger character? Write a description of each candidate from this thinly informed voter’s point of view. Read your descriptions aloud with those of others. What information is missing? What are the dangers of candidates’ growing reliance on television advertising in campaigns?

**Extra Credit: Design an ad.**
Select the ad from your log that you rate as the least effective. How would you redesign it to make it more persuasive?

---

Paid Political Advertisement | Date
--- | ---
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---

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Paid Political Advertisement | Date
--- | ---
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
Since 1960, when the first televised presidential debate helped put John F. Kennedy in the White House, a candidate’s ability to perform under the glare of TV lights has become a large factor in the outcome of American presidential elections. What will be the outcome when Al Gore and George W. Bush face off this fall? Will a decisive “win” make a difference? Should it? Tune in to the first presidential debate of 2000 and “score” the match using the chart on this page. Then summarize the value and impact of the debate by answering the questions that follow. (If a third-party candidate takes part in the opening debate, copy and expand the chart on a separate piece of paper.)

For each category, assign a rating from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORIES</th>
<th>GORE</th>
<th>BUSH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening statement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength of argument</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depth of knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Use of evidence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Logic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Responsiveness to questions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery/articulateness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presidential quality</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal appeal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Closing statement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall impression</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL SCORE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For Analysis and Discussion

1. On a scale of 1–5, rate the value of this debate as a source of information for voters: 

   Explain your rating. (Continue your answer on page 16.)
2. On a scale of 1–5, rate the value of this debate for you as a viewer: .................................................................
Explain your rating.

3. How did the debate change your impression or opinion of each candidate (for better or worse)?
   **Gore**

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   **Bush**

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4. Predict the impact. Will either candidate get a “bounce” (upward surge) in the polls as a result of the debate? How much? Check your prediction against next week’s polls.

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A map will show you at a glance how the nation voted in the 2000 presidential election. Wrap up the campaign by recording the outcome of the electoral vote as reported by the media. You can use the map to track televised results on the night of November 7th—but be sure to confirm tallies the next day. Begin by completing the map key. (You will need to choose a color for each candidate named.) Shade in states and the District of Columbia according to which candidate won it. When you are done, think of a title for your map. Based on this map, what generalizations can you form about the election results?
**INTRODUCING THE UNIT**

You might want to introduce this unit by calling on students to brainstorm a list of traits they think best qualify a person for President. Have students, either as a class or in cooperative-learning groups, rank these qualities to identify the top five traits. Save this list for revision at the end of the unit.

**DEVELOPING THE UNIT**

All lessons in this unit, including the special Polling Guide, require little teacher direction. Materials can be photocopied and handed out to students for use. Encourage students to save the Polling Guide for a reference source throughout the year and for conducting special surveys on topics that interest them.

Exercises in the Election Game 2000 fit naturally into chronological U.S. history courses and into civics or government units on the executive branch. The Polling Guide also can be used in economics classes or in government or civics units on public opinion and/or citizenship participation.

The following strategies can introduce or build on activities and readings provided in this package.

**SO YOU WANT TO BE PRESIDENT**

1. **What the Constitution Says (page 3)** Review the three legal requirements for President. Then have students write amendments changing one or all of these requirements. Expect heated debate on any amendment that would allow naturalized citizens to become President. (You might trigger such a debate by saying, “All of these Presidents were British subjects at birth: George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, John Quincy Adams, Andrew Jackson and William Henry Harrison. Shouldn’t we allow exemplary naturalized citizens to run for President?”)

2. **What History Says (page 5)** Use this activity to link suffrage to past voting patterns. Have students stand up. Then ask each of these groups to sit down: women, Native Americans, African Americans, people living in a rented home or apartment, anybody under age 21. Tell students that in the late 18th century only white male landowners age 21 and older were able to vote in federal elections. Ask: What effect might this have had on the selection of President? Challenge students to find provisions in the Constitution that have expanded the electorate. Ask: How do changes in suffrage expand the number of candidates who in theory may run for office?

3. **What You Say (page 8)** After students complete “Playing the Right Card,” ask them to develop another set of cards to repeat the activity.* To enable students to complete “Help Wanted: President of the United States” on page 10, ask them to create a time line starting with the year of their birth and ending with 2028. Instruct them to plot steps that have already put them on the road to the Oval Office, and fill in steps they might have to take in the future if they want to run for President in 2028.

**CAMPAIGN TRACKING KIT**

1. **The Big Issues (page 11)** Introduce, or distribute copies of, the following terms to students:
   - **bread-and-butter issue** an issue that affects voters’ personal budgets; also known as a *pocket-book issue*
   - **burning issue** pivotal, or central, issue to be resolved in a campaign; also known as *paramount issue*
   - **gut issue** a campaign theme that reaches beyond rational discussion and appeals instead to voters’ emotions, such as a fear of crime
   - **magnet issue** an issue intended to build a coalition of voters through its broad appeal, such as aid to education...
switcher issue a gut issue intended to appeal to a specific group of voters, such as gun control
wedge issue an issue that splits a constituency, such as the kind that might split liberal and conservatives within a party

Ask students to classify the issues in their charts according to these popular political-science terms. If any issues do not fit, encourage students to coin new issue-related terms and definitions.

2. Paid Political Advertisements (page 13) Ask students to call or visit the campaign headquarters of each of the major candidates. Have them request campaign paraphernalia, such as brochures, bumper stickers and pins. Analyze the message and the propaganda techniques (endorsements, name calling, glittering generalities, bandwagon, plain-folks appeal, slanted ideas) used to get the message across.

3. The Presidential Debates (page 15) Call on volunteers to get transcripts or excerpts of the opening presidential debate. Suggest that they check newspapers or the websites of TV networks broadcasting the debate. Then assign teams of students to reenact highlights of the debate, referring to data in the charts from the Campaign Tracking Kit.

4. Mapping the Returns (page 17) A short time before the election, assign students to research the predictions by pollsters. Ask: Who is projected to win and by what margin? Which regions and/or states is each candidate expected to carry? Direct students to clip these polls, then post them in the classroom. After students have completed their electoral maps, have them compare the predictions with the actual outcome. How close were the pollsters? Were any of the projections better than others? If so, which ones?

5. Political Poll Vaulting (page 10) As an extension, evaluate the effect of polls on voter behavior. Ask: Do you think political polls, particularly exit polls, influence voter behavior? Have students express their opinions in the form of political cartoons.

6. Measuring Public Opinion (page 11) To contrast non-scientific straw polls and scientific polls, have students find the results of an “Instant” poll on the Internet. Challenge students to test the accuracy of this poll by conducting their own poll, following the steps listed in “Measuring Public Opinion.” Ask: How did your methodology differ from the techniques used in the electronic straw poll? How would you defend your results?

**WRAPPING UP THE UNIT**
If you opened up the unit by brainstorming the most desired qualities in a President, review this list. Otherwise, you might ask students to write an inaugural address for the winning candidate. By now, students should have a feeling for the character and beliefs of the President-elect. Any address should reflect these attributes. Students should also be aware that anything the President says will undoubtedly have an effect upon public opinion. In writing their addresses, students should begin with these words: “As the first President of the 21st century, I offer today my vision for a new America. The America of the 21st century will …”

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- United States Government: Democracy in Action ©2002
- Civics: Responsibilities and Citizenship ©2002

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