

the.Vote

“Debates and the Race for the White House”
Social Studies and Language Arts
Curriculum

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is a feature of

the.News

A daily news broadcast for High School and Middle School students
now under development by MacNeil/Lehrer Productions



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“Debates and the Race for the White House”

Social Studies and Language Arts Curriculum

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Fall 2008

Dear Educator,

the.Vote is the newest feature of *the.News*. These online video reports provide middle and high school students with a valuable exercise in democracy. This video report on the debates (running 7 minutes, 13 seconds) is the second in the series with two more segments to air bi-weekly until the election. After Election Day, leading up to the Inauguration, the series will evolve from *the.Vote* to *the.Gov* and look at the process of forming a new government, identifying key issues for the new administration and new Congress.

Each video report is supported by a social studies and language arts curriculum. All videos and curricula have been informed by *the.News* instructional design that can be found on the website www.pbs.org/newshour/thenews. *the.Vote* is open-captioned. The curriculum includes content-based standards, discussion questions, student activities, vocabulary and primary reference sources. A complete transcript of each video report includes time codes to assist in isolating specific segments of the video. This material is presented as options to fit teachers' instructional needs.

YOU.edit, to launch early in 2009, gives students an online tool to remix the content of *the.Vote* reports (as well as all the other *the.News* videos), so they can create their own multimedia presentations. This editing tool will reside on our website so that it will be available to all students with an internet connection. It will be password protected so that it can serve as a viable educational asset that allows classroom teachers to assign multimedia projects within the security and content safety of *the.News* website.

A companion multimedia feature, *YOU.report* will provide an online home for student-generated content. The *YOU.report* feature will include a student competition. Details about the *YOU.report* competition will be posted on this website by September 15, 2008.

Funding for *the.Vote* has been provided by Adobe through the PBS Foundation.

For more information and questions about this material contact Lisa Denny at ldenny@newshour.org.

Sincerely,

Karen W. Jaffe
Manager, Education Projects, *the.News*
MacNeil/Lehrer Productions
2700 S. Quincy St., Suite 250
Arlington, VA 22206



“Debates and the Race for the White House” Social Studies Curriculum

This lesson has been designed to support *the.News* video “Debates and the Race for the White House,” the video can be found online at http://www.pbs.org/newshour/thenews/thevote/story.php?id=4436&package_id=634

Grade Level: Middle School/High School

Content Areas: Civics, social studies, and U.S. political history

Key Concept: At the conclusion of the lesson students will:

- Explain the impact Presidential Debates have had on the electoral process and defend their answers with specific historical examples
- Summarize major aspects of historical Presidential Debates
- Analyze major aspects of historical Presidential Debates
- Identify and classify political issues
- Take and defend a political position

Civic Literacy (Literacy for the 21st Century
www.21stcenturyskills.org)

- Participating effectively in civic life through knowing how to stay informed and understanding governmental processes
- Exercising the rights and obligations of citizenship at local, state, national and global levels
- Understanding the local and global implications of civic decisions

Key Vocabulary: **Definitions obtained from www.hyperdictionary.com**

- **Debate** - a discussion in which reasons are advanced for and against some proposition or proposal. The formal presentation of and opposition to a stated proposition (usually followed by a vote)
- **Moderator** - someone who presides over a forum or debate
- **Gaffe** - a socially awkward or tactless statement; a blunder
- **Critic** - a person who offers reasoned judgment or analysis; a position disagreeing with or opposing the object of criticism.
- **Articulate** - expressing yourself easily or characterized by clear expressive language.
- **Pivotal** - being of crucial importance.
- **Incumbent** - a person who is in present possession of any office.
- **Opinion Poll** - a survey of public opinion from a particular sample population

McRel Learning Objectives
www.mcrel.org - Historical Understanding (Era 10- Contemporary United States - 1968 to the present):
Standard 31: Understands economic, social, and cultural developments in the contemporary United States - Level IV
(Grades 9-12)



- **Position** - an opinion that is held in opposition to another in an argument or dispute; "there are two sides to every question"
- **Issue** - a point in debate or controversy on which the parties take affirmative and negative positions; a presentation of alternatives between which to choose or decide. An important question that is in dispute and must be settled.

Background:

McRel Learning Objectives www.mcrel.org - Historical Understanding (United States History): Standard 30: Understands developments in foreign policy and domestic politics between the Nixon and Clinton presidencies - Level IV (Grades 9-12)

The Presidential and Vice Presidential Debates have become an important part of the fall general election campaign. They provide the candidates with the opportunity to distinguish themselves and give voters the chance to weigh their candidacies. The Debates are presently sponsored by the bi-partisan *Commission on Presidential*

Debates, who took over this responsibility from the non partisan *League of Women Voters* in 1988.

John Kennedy and Richard Nixon faced off in the first series of

televised debates in 1960. Since that



time, television has created a contest reliant on intellectual superiority, communication skill, political wit, personality and good looks. Observers of these debates tune in to see, not only how the President and Vice-Presidential candidates will respond to the reporter's questions, but also how they respond to each other as well.

Critical Thinking and Problem Solving (Literacy for the 21st Century www.21stcenturyskills.org)

- Exercising sound reasoning in understanding.
- Making complex choices and decisions.
- Understanding the interconnections among systems.
- Identifying and asking significant questions that clarify various points of view and lead to better solutions.
- Framing, analyzing and synthesizing information in order to solve problems and answer questions.

This lesson gives students the opportunity to examine major aspects of the earliest debates up through and including the 2004 election year. Students will also identify issues generally discussed in these debates while analyzing their impact on the electoral process. The expectation is that the historical knowledge gained in these activities will help students clarify the various political views expressed in this year's general election and ultimately help them become more informed voters.

Materials:

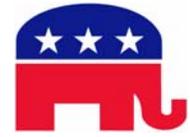
- *the.Vote* Video Segment #2
- Computer Access

Communication and Collaboration (Literacy for the 21st Century www.21stcenturyskills.org)

- Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively through speaking and writing
- Demonstrating ability to work effectively with diverse teams
- Exercising flexibility and willingness to be helpful in making necessary compromises to accomplish a common goal
- Assuming shared responsibility for collaborative work



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- Handout A (p.8)
- Handout B (p.9)
- Handout C (p.10)

Time Frame: 2/ 90 minute blocks

Lesson Day 1:

1. To introduce the lesson begin by having students view *the.Vote* news clip. After watching the video, organize students into cooperative groups of 3-5 students and distribute Handout C (p.10). Allow adequate time for discussion of each question.
2. When students have finished their discussion, review their answers and the following information presented in the video.

The Schedule for the 2008 Presidential Debates will be:

****Each debate will begin at 9:00 p.m. EST****

Friday, September 26

The University of Mississippi, Oxford, MS

Moderator: Jim Lehrer

Vice-presidential debate

Thursday, October 2

Washington University in St. Louis, MO

Moderator: Gwen Ifill

Second presidential debate (town meeting)

Tuesday, October 7

Belmont University, Nashville, TN

Moderator: Tom Brokaw

Third presidential debate

Wednesday, October 15

Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY

Moderator: Bob Schieffer

3. Next, direct students to the following site for The Commission on Presidential Debates, giving students time to read the information presented regarding the Debate format.

<http://www.debates.org>



4. Ask students if they have any questions about what they have read.
5. After a brief discussion, distribute Student Handout A (p.8) and direct students to complete it using the resources provided on the following web pages:

- <http://www.debates.org/pages/history.html>
- http://www.debates.org/pages/news_111908.html

McRel Learning Objectives www.mcrel.org
 - Civics: **Standard 1: Understands ideas about civic life, politics and government** -
 Level IV (Grades 9-12)

Students will complete the Handout for homework.

Lesson Day 2:

1. Begin class today by summarizing the major aspects of historical Presidential Debates using the information students have gathered on Handout A (p.8).

McRel Learning Objectives www.mcrel.org
 - Historical Understanding: **Standard 2: Understands the historical perspective** -
 Level IV (Grades 9-12)

2. Next explain to students that issues discussed in debates generally fall into 4 categories:
Fundamental issues issues that are confronted in every debate; examples: health care, tax plans, leadership qualifications)
Transient issues issues that are relevant only to a particular time period; examples: Watergate in 1976 and McCain’s age in 2008
Systemic issues issues that focus on the integrity of the democratic process not on a particular policy; examples: the excessive influence of special interest groups on Congress or human rights in foreign policy
Narrow issues issues that target a very specific voting population; examples: prescriptions drugs and farm subsidies

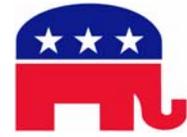
McRel Learning Objectives www.mcrel.org
 - Civics: **Standard 21: Understands the formation and implementation of public policy** - Level IV (Grades 9-12)

McRel Learning Objectives www.mcrel.org - Civics: **Standard 13: Understands the character of American political and social conflict and factors that tend to prevent or lower its intensity** - Level IV (Grades 9-12)

Distribute Student Handout B (p.9) and have students go to the Televised Debate History 1960 -2000 website at: <http://www.museum.tv/debateweb/html/history/index.htm>
 Instruct them to watch video clips from **at least three (3)** election year debates, while

McRel Learning Objectives www.mcrel.org - Civics: **Standard 12: Understands the relationships among liberalism, republicanism and American constitutional democracy** -
 Level IV (Grades 9-12)

identifying and classifying the issues presented in them. Allow students about fifty (50) minutes to complete Handout B (p.9) (please note: students do not have to complete the entire sheet.) Students will then complete the Handout by sharing and discussing their answers with the entire class.



3. Conclude the lesson by conducting a class discussion on whether the Presidential Debates are useful to the electoral process and assign one of the following assessments. Students will use the information they have gathered from Handouts A (p.8), B (p.9) and C (p.10) to complete their summative assessment.

Summative Assessment Options:

McRel Learning Objectives
www.mcrel.org - Civics: Standard 14:
Understands issues concerning the
disparities between ideals and reality in
American political and social life -
Level IV (Grades 9-12)

1. Portfolio of Political Cartoons: Students will produce a portfolio of no less than five (5) political cartoons satirizing any of the following:
 - a. a memorable debate gaffe
 - b. colorful presidential debaters or debates
 - c. the debate after the debate (controversy created by the debate)
 - d. a pivotal debate event
2. Debate the Debate Activity: Students will write a position paper on the question, “Should future Presidential Debates continue to be sponsored and produced by The Commission of Presidential Debates?”
3. Research Paper: Students will write a brief paper on one of the following topics:
 - a. An analysis of Presidential Debates that Changed American History
 - b. An analysis of the Political Issues discussed in Presidential Debates

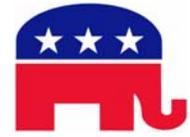
McRel Learning Objectives
www.mcrel.org - Civics: Standard 20:
Understands the roles of political
parties, campaigns, elections and
associations and groups in American
politics - Level IV (Grades 9-12)

Resources:

- Birdsell, David S., Jamieson, Kathleen Hall, Presidential Debates: The Challenge of Creating an Informed Electorate, 1990, Oxford University Press.
- La May, Craig L., Minow, Newton N., Inside the Presidential Debates: Their Improbable Past and Promising Future, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.
- Martin, John Bartlow, Mitchell, Lee M., Minow, Newton N., Presidential Television, Basic Books, 1973.
- Minow, Newton N., Sloan, Clifford M., For Great Debates: A New Plan for Future Presidential TV Debates (20th Century Fund Paper), Priority Press, 1987.
- MySpace - MyDebates, <http://www.myspace.com/mydebates>



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- Newshour with Jim Lehrer, Debating Our Destiny, <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/debatingourdestiny/index.html>
- PBS NOW, <http://www.pbs.org/now/politics/debatehistory2.html>
- Schroeder, Alan, Presidential Debates: Forty Years of High –Risk TV, New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.
- Televised Debate History 1960 -2000, <http://www.museum.tv/debateweb/html/history/index.htm>
- The American Presidency Project, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/debates.php>
- The Commission on Presidential Debates
 - <http://www.debates.org>
 - <http://www.debates.org/pages/history.html>
 - http://www.debates.org/pages/news_111908.html
- The Informed Citizen: Citizen Joe, <http://www.citizenjoe.org/>
- Video Event from Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars: Discussion about the book, Inside the Presidential Debates: Their Improbable Past and Promising Future, www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic_id=1427&fuseaction=topics.media&group_id=447848

Activity Designer:

Winona Morrissette-Johnson,

Winona Morrissette-Johnson is a social studies teacher and educational media consultant.





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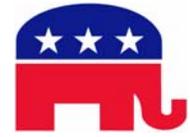


Handout A

Election Year	Moderator	Democratic Candidate	Republican Candidate	Third Party Candidate
1960				
1976				
1980				
1984				
1988				
2000				
2004				

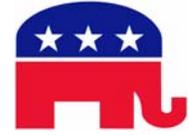


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Handout B

Election Year	Issue #1	Type*	Issue #2	Type*	Issue #3	Type*	Issue #4	Type*	Issue #5	Type*
1960										
1976										
1980										
1984										
1988										
2000										
2004										



“Debates and the Race for the White House” Language Arts Curriculum

This lesson has been designed to support *the.News* video “Debates and the Race for the White House,” the video can be found online at http://www.pbs.org/newshour/thenews/thevote/story.php?id=4436&package_id=634

Grade Level: Middle School/High School

Content Areas: Language Arts/Media Literacy

Key Concept: Students will explore in depth some of the issues that will be featured during the presidential and vice-presidential debates and develop a summary document of the candidates’ stand on the issues. They will use this information to evaluate the candidates’ performance during the presidential and vice-presidential debates.

Key Vocabulary:

- **Rhetoric**
- **Infomercials**
- **Formal debate format**
- **Town hall debate format**
- **Party philosophy**

Background:

In presidential elections, it is the issues that people are most interested in because it is issues that most affect them: the economy, jobs, inflation, unemployment. OR foreign policy, the war on terror, relations with allies. OR education, vouchers, standards, drop-out rates, preparation for the next century. OR social issues, pro life or pro choice, gay marriage. But during the heat of campaigns, these issues can get lost amongst the

McRel Learning Objectives www.mcrel.org: **Standard 8 - Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes**

Level III (Grades 6-8)

- Listens in order to understand topic, purpose and perspective in spoken texts (e.g. of a guest speaker, of an informational video, of a televised interview, of radio news programs)
- Evaluates strategies used by speakers in oral presentations (e.g. persuasive techniques, verbal messages supported by nonverbal techniques, effect of word choice, use of slanted or biased material)

Level IV (Grades 9-12)

- Uses criteria to evaluate own and others’ effectiveness in group discussions and formal presentations (e.g. accuracy, relevance and organization of information; clarity of delivery; relationships among purpose, audience and content; types of arguments used; effectiveness of contributions)

Learning Skills linked to Information and Communication Technology Literacy

K-12 (Literacy for the 21st Century

www.21stcenturyskills.org)

- Accessing information efficiently and effectively, evaluating information critically and competently and using information accurately and creatively for the issue or problem at hand.
- Possessing a fundamental understanding of the ethical/legal issues surrounding the access and use of information.



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barrage of rhetoric, slogans, campaign signs, personality and media coverage. Often times, the information that is most predominant in an election campaign is that which is the least useful.

Although the presidential and vice-presidential debates are held so that voters can make a side-by-side comparison of the candidates' positions on the issues, they can be seen more as infomercials presenting nothing more than platitudes and campaign slogans. To prevent this, the public must demand more specificity from the candidates about their plans for addressing the issues.

This lesson is divided into two parts. The Opening Activity has the class construct a summary document of where the candidates stand on the issues. The Main Activity has students watching the presidential and vice-presidential debates (one or all) and composing a written evaluation on the candidates' performance.

Materials:

- Student Handout: "Where the Candidates Stand on the Issues" (p.16)
- Student Handout: "Evaluating the Presidential Debates Chart" (p.18-19)
- Barack Obama's campaign website <http://my.barackobama.com/page/content/actioncenter>
- John McCain's campaign website <http://www.johnmccain.com/dashboard/>
- Articles from political analysts on the presidential and vice-presidential debates

McRel Learning Objectives www.mcrel.org:
Standard 4 - Gathers and uses information for research purposes

Level IV (Grades 9-12)

- Synthesizes information from multiple research studies to draw conclusions that go beyond those found in any of the individual studies

Time Frame: 2 to 3 class sessions

Opening Activity: "Know the Issues"

Procedure: In this opening activity, students begin with the candidates' stand on the issues. It is important that they have a basic understanding of the issues in order to get the most out of the debates.

Learning Skills linked to Information and Communication Technology Literacy

K-12 (Literacy for the 21st Century

www.21stcenturyskills.org)

- Using digital technology, communication tools and/or networks appropriately to access, manage, integrate, evaluate and create information in order to function in a knowledge economy.
- Using technology as a tool to research, organize, evaluate and communicate information and the possession of a fundamental understanding of the ethical/legal issues surrounding the access and use of information.

1. Divide the class into student pairs. Distribute the student handout "Where the Candidate's Stand on the Issues" (p.16) and review with students. (This could be distributed as homework the night before.)
2. Have students go to both Barack Obama's and John McCain's campaign websites and click on the "Issues" pull down menu. Many issues will be listed.



3. Have each pair select one of the issues (or assign them to get maximum coverage of issues).
4. Have students read through the policy statements on their issue topic and summarize how each candidate sees or defines the issue, how it aligns with their political philosophy, what goal they want to address, and what actions they will take to address the goal.
5. Next, have students compare these policy statements between the two candidates, pointing out similarities and differences in how each candidate would address the problem and how their policies or courses of action follow the philosophy of their party.
6. Finally, have students write a one page summary of what they've discovered. Compile all essays and make copies available to all students

McRel Learning Objectives www.mcrel.org: Standard 1 - Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process

Level III (Grades 6-8)

- Writes expository compositions (e.g. states a thesis or purpose; presents information that reflects knowledge about the topic of the report; organizes and presents information in a logical manner including an introduction and conclusion; uses own words to develop ideas; uses common expository structures and features such as compare-contrast or problem-solution)

Level IV (Grades 9-12)

- Writes expository compositions (e.g. synthesizes and organizes information from first- and second-hand sources including books, magazines, computer data banks and the community; uses a variety of techniques to develop the main idea [names, describes or differentiates parts; compares or contrasts; examines the history of a subject; cites an anecdote to provide an example; illustrates through a scenario; provides interesting facts about a subject]; distinguishes relative importance of facts, data and ideas; uses appropriate technical terms and notations)

Main Activity – “Evaluate the Debates”

Procedure: In this activity, students will watch one or more of the presidential debates presented September 26, October 7 and October 15 and the one vice-presidential debate presented on October 2. Students will rate the performance of the candidates as they watch and make some general observations as to each candidate's performance. In the next class session, they will review transcripts of the debates to gain a more in-depth analysis.

McRel Learning Objectives www.mcrel.org: Standard 9 - Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media

Level III (Grades 6-8)

- Uses a variety of criteria to evaluate and form viewpoints of visual media (e.g. evaluates the effectiveness of informational media such as websites, documentaries, news programs; recognizes a range of viewpoints and arguments; establishes criteria for selecting or avoiding specific programs)

Level IV (Grades 9-12)

- Uses a variety of criteria (e.g. clarity, accuracy, effectiveness, bias, relevance of facts) to evaluate informational media (e.g. websites, documentaries, news programs)



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1. Make sure that each student receives a copy of the research conducted in the opening activity. Make sure they have time to review the different issue statement analyses.
2. Distribute the student handout “Evaluating the Presidential Debates Chart” (p.18-19) to all students and review the directions.
3. Have students take their charts home to watch the debate(s) as homework, rating the candidates’ performance for each criteria and providing reasons for their rating.
4. On the next class day, have students look up the transcripts of the debates online or in the local newspaper. You can also provide copies of these for students.
5. Have students review the transcripts for a closer look at the debates and make any revisions or changes to their rating and/or reason comments.
6. Have students write up a review of the debate reviewing each debater’s performance in the criteria listed on the chart. Have students determine who they believe won the debate and why.

Assessment: Evaluate students on both their policy statement summaries and the review of the debaters’ performance during the debate. Students should be assessed on their grammar, spelling and depth of details in the policy statement comparisons and the reasoning for their debate ratings.

Extension Activity: Have students compare their evaluation of the candidates during the debates with political pundits or columnists, reviewing their assessment of the candidates’ performance and commenting on whether the political analyst agrees or disagrees with their assessment.

McRel Learning Objectives www.mcrel.org: Standard 7 - Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts

Level III (Grades 6-8)

- Uses reading skills and strategies to understand a variety of informational texts (e.g. electronic texts; textbooks; biographical sketches; directions; essays; primary source historical documents including letters and diaries; print media including editorials, news stories, periodicals and magazines; consumer workplace and public documents including catalogs, technical directions, procedures and bus routes)
- Uses new information to adjust and extend personal knowledge base
- Draws conclusions and makes inferences based on explicit and implicit information in texts

Level IV (Grades 9-12)

- Uses reading skills and strategies to understand a variety of informational texts (e.g. textbooks, biographical sketches, letters, diaries, directions, procedures, magazines, essays, primary source historical documents, editorials, news stories, periodicals, catalogs, job related materials, schedules, speeches, memoranda, public documents, maps)

Resources: In addition to the websites mentioned in the lesson, the following websites are recommended for further information.

- Commission on the Presidential Debates, <http://www.debates.org/> - The official website of the presidential debates, this site provides information on the upcoming presidential and vice-presidential debates. Transcripts and analysis of past debates and information on holding your own debate are featured.



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- Democratic National Party, <http://www.democrats.org/index.html> - This website covers up-to-the-minute information on the Democratic presidential candidates and information (albeit slightly slanted) on the opposition.
- MySpace - MyDebates, <http://www.myspace.com/mydebates>
- Politics1.com, <http://www.politics1.com/parties.htm> - This is a solid, nonpartisan online guide to American Politics. The site contains a directory of the major political parties, up-to-date information on the 2008 race, state and federal candidates, news links and more.
- Project Vote Smart, http://www.votesmart.org/election_president.php - This is a great website for election information for each state. The site contains information on party politics, candidates' voting records and public statements.
- Republican National Committee, <http://www.gop.com/> - This website covers up-to-the-minute information on the Republican presidential candidates and information (albeit slightly slanted) on the opposition.
- You Decide 2008, <http://www.youdecide2008.com/> - This website is full of information on the upcoming election; the latest news, upcoming events, commentary, and video highlights of recent events are featured.

Activity Designer:

Greg Timmons,

Greg Timmons is a former social studies teacher now freelance writer and educational consultant.





Student Handout: Where the Candidates Stand on the Issues

To fully understand where the presidential candidates stand on any issue, it is important to understand their party's philosophy that helped shape their position. Below are general descriptions of the political philosophies of Republicans and Democrats.* It is important to note that these are generalizations and that the people who make up any political party are a composite of many different beliefs.* Not all Republicans or Democrats follow these philosophies to the letter. These philosophy points are presented here only as a guide. Review the information then go through the directions that follow.

Republicans:

Each person is responsible for their place in society and their own actions good or bad. People should benefit from good decisions or pay the price of bad decisions.

The free market system works best when businesses are free to make products and services, allowing the people to accept or reject. The market, not government policy, should determine whether an enterprise is successful.

Government should stimulate free enterprise through less regulation and fewer taxes.

Government should take action only when people are unable to care for themselves or are committing immoral acts. Any government intervention is best conducted at the local level where people are closest to their government and where it is most accountable.

When government does step in to help those who can't help themselves, it should not waste the people's money on services the people can provide for themselves. Government spending should be limited, authorized by the people, and placed only on the essential things society needs.

A strong defense is essential to protect American freedoms and prosperity. Defending the nation against its enemies must be a fundamental commitment of the federal government. Security comes from strength of character to act collaboratively, when possible, and alone when necessary.

Democrats:

Each person has rights of life, liberty, property, security, equality of opportunity, justice and privacy without interference from the government or other citizens.

Government has a role to help those who can't help themselves or have been denied rights by others or the government. Government programs and regulations can help the poor and less fortunate to gain back what they may have lost and protect the rights listed above.

Government must not interfere with people's basic rights of privacy, liberty, self-expression and opportunity. Laws that deny personal choice, access to information, political and personal expression and economic opportunity are not beneficial to the people.

The free market system is the best in the world. But free markets can run off course denying people equal opportunity or endangering their safety and sometimes need to be corrected. Government has a duty to make sure businesses and industries operate by the rules and do not infringe on the rights of others.

National defense is essential to protect the freedom of the people. The United States must serve as a leader in protecting the rights of all people and use its military strength carefully and in concert with its friends and allies.

* This information was adopted from the Republican and Democratic Party position statements and state party resources.



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Activity Directions:

1. After you have reviewed the information on the political philosophies of Republicans and Democrats, go through the following activity.
2. Go to Barack Obama's and John McCain's campaign websites and click on the "Issues" pull down menu. Many issues will be listed.
3. Select one of the issues and read through the policy statements. Summarize how each candidate sees or defines the issue, how it aligns with their political philosophy, what goal they want to address and what actions they will take to address the goal.
4. Compare these issue statements between the two candidates, pointing out similarities and differences in how each candidate would address the problem and how their policies or courses of action follow the philosophy of their party.
5. Write a one page summary of what you've discovered for sharing with the entire class.



Evaluating the Presidential Debates Chart*

Name _____

Circle the debater John McCain	Date of Debate ___/___/___	Circle the debater Barack Obama	Date of Debate ___/___/___
Sarah Palin		Joe Biden	
Evaluation Criteria	Rating the debater	Evaluation Criteria	Rating the debater
Issue Analysis How well did the debater explain the issues?	_____ 1 2 3 4 5 Reasons for your rating:	Issue Analysis How well did the debater explain the issues?	_____ 1 2 3 4 5 Reasons for your rating:
Specificity How directly did the debater answer the questions?	_____ 1 2 3 4 5 Reasons for your rating:	Specificity How directly did the debater answer the questions?	_____ 1 2 3 4 5 Reasons for your rating:
Evidence How well did the debater support points made with evidence?	_____ 1 2 3 4 5 Reasons for your rating:	Evidence How well did the debater support points made with evidence?	_____ 1 2 3 4 5 Reasons for your rating:
Reasoning How well did the debater's conclusions align with the evidence presented?	_____ 1 2 3 4 5 Reasons for your rating:	Reasoning How well did the debater's conclusions align with the evidence presented?	_____ 1 2 3 4 5 Reasons for your rating:



the.Vote



<p>Rebuttal How well did the debater counter the arguments of the opponent?</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>Reasons for your rating:</p>	<p>Rebuttal How well did the debater counter the arguments of the opponent?</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>Reasons for your rating:</p>
<p>Delivery How well organized and understandable was the debater?</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>Reasons for your rating:</p>	<p>Delivery How well organized and understandable was the debater?</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>Reasons for your rating:</p>

*Adopted from the National Forensic League Debate and Speech Honor Society

