Candidate Evaluation

Name:

How do voters decide between candidates on election day? There are many different things that people consider when voting; some seem silly and some make sense. Check the things YOU would do or want to know about the candidates before making your final decision in the voting booth.

❑ Listen to both candidates' speeches.

❑ Find out what kind of pet he/she owns.

❑ Watch a debate between the candidates.

❑ Decide how you feel about the issues.

❑ Find out...

    ❑ the candidates' favorite sport

    ❑ if the candidates have kids

    ❑ what the candidates did before he or she ran for office

    ❑ the candidates' voting records

❑ Ask friends and family what they think.

Pick ONE thing that you checked and share why you think it is helpful in choosing a candidate.

Pick ONE thing that you did not check and share why you think it isn't helpful in choosing a candidate.

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Grading the Candidates

Responsible voters usually go through five steps before they are ready to vote. Once you understand the steps, you are ready to go out there and have your opinion heard on election day!

To Do List:

✅ Take a position. What do I think about the issues? What do I care about?

✅ Research the candidates' positions on issues.

✅ Learn about the candidates leadership skills & qualifications.

✅ Listen. Find out what other people think and why.

✅ Grade the candidates & decide for yourself.

Candidate Evaluation

Name: _____

Step One: What do I think? It is hard to evaluate where a candidate stands on an **issue**, or topic, if you don't know where you stand! Comparing your opinions with the opinions of the candidates is a great way to get started. Check *three* issues you care about in the first column and *three* qualities you look for in a candidate in the second column.

Three issues I care about:

❑ Education

❑ The Environment

❑ The Economy

❑ Crime

❑ Healthcare

❑ Taxes

❑ Children's Issues

❑ Animal Rights

❑ Other: _____

Three qualities I look for in a candidate:

❑ Good Communicator

❑ Brave

❑ Intelligent

❑ Creative

❑ Experienced Leader

❑ Cooperative

❑ Honest

❑ Trustworthy

❑ Other: _____

Step Two: Research the Candidates. Create a 'library' of information on each candidate. This information can be found in many different places. Below is a list of some good sources to consider. Circle the *three* examples that you would be most likely to use.

The Candidates

Each candidate has a team that works on his or her campaign. Their job is to inform the public about the candidate and work to get the candidate elected.

Positive: you can get information about the candidate directly

Negative: the material is only going to focus on what is good about the candidate and bad about the opposition

Examples:
Campaign websites
Campaign mailings
Town Hall meetings
Campaign ads on the TV/radio

The Media

Most of the information people get about an upcoming election is on some form of media (TV, internet, radio, newspapers, magazines).

Positive: there are lots of sources available for you to choose from

Negative: watch out for bias in reporting and know the difference between *facts* and *opinions*

Examples:
News reports
Recorded candidate interviews
Candidate speeches
Candidate debates

The Public Record

If a candidate has been in a public office before, there are records of how they voted. This information is gathered on nonpartisan (doesn't take sides) websites for voters to check out.

Positive: these sources tend to be the least biased and really useful for making comparisons

Negative: some candidates may not have a voting record, and comparison websites may not cover every election

Examples:
Nonpartisan voter websites
Candidates' voting records
Civic organizations

Candidate Evaluation

Step Three: Learn about leadership skills & qualifications. How can you tell someone will be a good leader or if they are qualified for the job? Here are two places to look and some questions to ask.
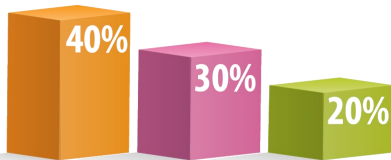
Background

- What kind of jobs have they held?
- Do they have a good reputation in your area?
- What kind of education do they have?
- Do they have any skeletons in their closets, or secrets, they want to keep hidden?

Campaign

- Do they speak to a variety of groups?
- Are they willing to participate in a debate?
- Do they answer hard questions, or dodge them?
- How do they act in press conferences?

Step Four: Find out what other people think. Hearing the opinions of others can help you clarify your own views on the candidates. Asking people you know about <u>what</u> they think and <u>why</u> they think it is helpful, but here are some other ways to learn about others' opinions that you may not have thought of.

Opinion polls show who is leading in the race at any one time and can influence voters. Where do these numbers come from? Look out for <u>how</u> and <u>where</u> the polls were taken. Good polls cover a large number of people and are done by neutral organizations.

Endorsements are a way for interest groups & organizations to give an official 'thumbs up' to a candidate. These can clue you in to the issues and groups that the candidate supports. Look at what these groups stand for and why they endorse the candidate.

Follow the money! How do the candidates pay for all those advertisements, mailings and travel? Most of the time **contributors** donate money to the campaign through fundraisers. The sources of money can influence how a candidate acts in office.

Step Five: Grade the Candidates and decide! After you have done all the research it is time to pull the information together. Here are some BIG questions you can use to help you make sense of it all.

- Which candidate's view on the issues do you agree with the most?
- Who ran the fairest campaign?
- Who will best represent me and serve my community?
- Which candidate showed the most knowledge on the issues?
- Which candidate has the leadership qualities you seek in a candidate?

Candidate Comparison

During the election season voters are flooded with messages for and by the candidates. Take a look at the messages form the two candidates and discover where they stand.

CANDIDATE STEVENS

Radio Advertisement

Announcer: Vote for change this election day! Candidate Stevens believes in bringing a new perspective to the office of president! His experience as the mayor of Hilltown gives Candidate Stevens insight into how a government should be run! He will balance our budget, improve schools and end US involvement in foreign wars.

Candidate: I am Candidate Stevens, and I approve of this message.

Personal Appearances

August 2

Met with supporters at a Little League ball park

August 30

Guest speaker at a workers' rally in Detroit

September 6

Environmental speech at a green energy plant

Voting Record

Should we increase public school funding? ✅

Should we increase taxes? ✅

Should we close our borders? ❌

Endorsements & Contributors

American Federation of Teachers (AFT)

Immigrant Rights Groups

CANDIDATE GARNER

Radio Advertisement

Announcer: A vote for Candidate Garner is a vote for progress! As a senator, Candidate Garner helped pass laws to lower taxes and protect our borders. She supported our troops fighting in our wars abroad. As president, she will limit government spending, support growing businesses, and limit our need for foreign oil.

Candidate: I am Candidate Garner, and I approve of this message.

Personal Appearances

August 17

Spoke at a dinner for small business owners.

September 11

Met with first responders in New York City

September 29

Held a town hall meeting in her home town

Voting Record

Should we increase taxes? ❌

Should more troops be sent to fight? ✅

Should we increase drilling for oil in the US? ✅

Endorsements & Contributors

National Rifle Association (NRA)

National Oil Companies

Candidate Evaluation

Name: _____

Compare the Candidates. Look at the information for each candidate and answer the questions.

1. Who would be most likely to support each of these issues? Write **S** for Stevens and **G** for Garner.

   ___ Reduce military involvement abroad

   ___ Explore for more oil in the U.S.

   ___ Increase teacher pay

   ___ Increase military spending

   ___ Add support for youth activities

   ___ Control immigration at our borders

   ___ Cut taxes

   ___ Find alternative energy sources

   ___ Increase workers' rights

   ___ Add support for business owners

2. Which candidate is more likely to appeal to parents with school-age kids?

   ❑ Stevens   ❑ Garner

Reason #1:   Reason #2:

3. There are several sources of information to help voters compare candidates:

   A. Radio or Television Ad   B. Personal Appearances   C. Voting Record   D. Endorsements

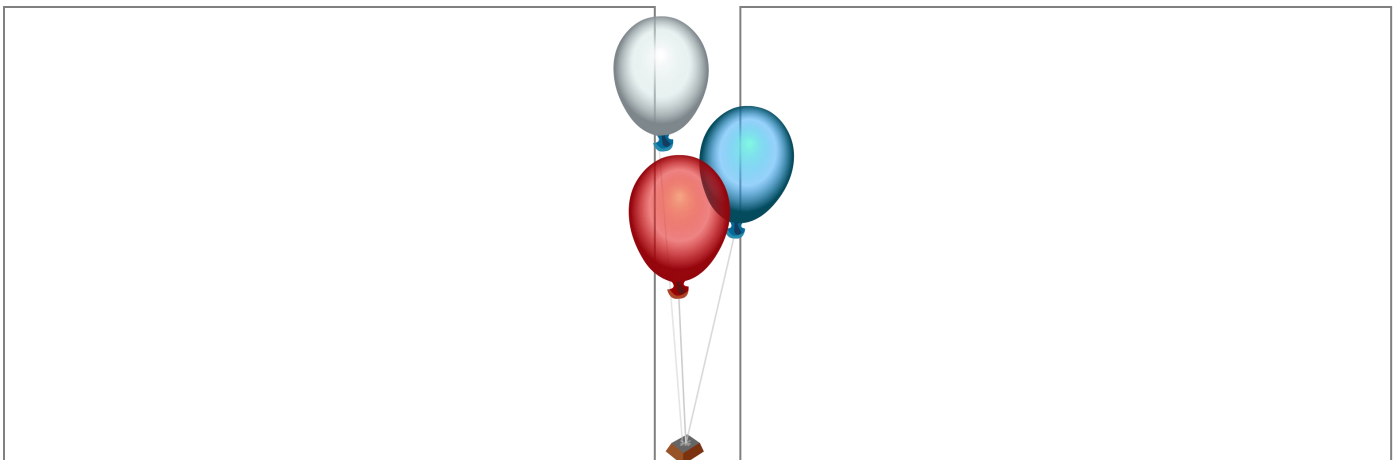 | Which source lets you... (circle all that apply for each one) |
   |---|
   | A B C D   1) Hear the candidate's own thoughts and views |
   | A B C D   2) See how the candidate performed in the past |
   | A B C D   3) Learn what types of groups believe the candidate will support their cause |
   | A B C D   4) See how the candidate might vote in the future |
   | A B C D   5) See factual evidence about which issues the candidate has supported |
   | A B C D   6) Hear a one-sided view of the candidate |

   The <u>least</u> helpful source is probably _____ because _____
   _____
   _____.

   The <u>most</u> helpful source is probably _____ because _____
   _____
   _____.

4. Based on what you have learned about the two candidates, create a campaign poster for each. Be sure to include their name, what they support, some images and maybe even a slogan!
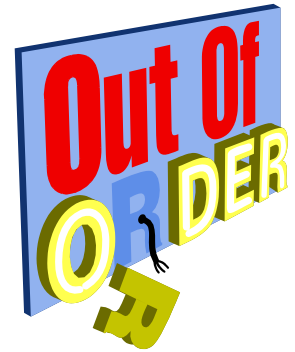
Candidate Evaluation

Name: _____

Vocabulary. select the correct word to complete each sentence.

A) endorsements
B) opinion polls
C) issues
D) contributors
E) nonpartisan

___1. During a debate, candidates discuss their views on various _____.

___2. One way to see how other people plan on voting is to check out the most recent _____.

___3. Fundraising dinners try to raise money from _____ to use in the candidates' campaigns.

___4. The League of Women Voters is an example of a _____ organization, one that does not support one political party over another.

___5. Candidates seek _____ from large organizations, celebrities and other big name companies.

The Steps. Put the steps you have learned about in the correct order!

_____ Find out what other people think.

_____ Research the candidates' positions on the issues.

_____ Grade the candidates and decide!

_____ Learn about the candidates' leadership skills and qualifications.

_____ What do you think about things?

Resources. Match the information with the source! (Each source will have more than one piece of Information.)

The Candidate	The Media	The Public Record

A) Evening news story on the upcoming election

B) Page on a candidate's website that talks about the candidate's qualifications and skills

C) Record of a candidate's voting history when he or she was in office

D) Prime-time television debate between the top two candidates

E) Postcard from the candidate's campaign team outlining where the candidate stands on the issues

F) You get the chance to speak to a candidate at a town hall meeting and ask a few questions

G) Visit a nonpartisan website that compares the two leading candidates before an election

H) The candidates are interviewed on a very popular morning talk show

Candidate Evaluation

Name:

Now that you know what it takes to evaluate a candidate, jump in and use that knowledge!
Read each speech and do the following:

☐ Circle (qualifications)
☐ Cross out ~~unnecessary facts~~
☐ Underline promises

Candidate 1:
What are his qualifications?

What promises did he make? (Put a ☆ next to the ones that he might be able to deliver.)

My fellow Americans, I speak to you today about why you should elect me as your next president. To start things off, I want you to know that I love puppies! They are the best kind of pets and everyone should have one. I promise to give every child in the United States a puppy of their very own!

As the president, I would use my experience as a city mayor to lead the country. Being a mayor required me to be a good speaker, honest and good at listening to the needs of the public. I know how to run a city– so how much harder could it be to run a country?

I graduated top of my class and went to one of the best colleges in the country. I have three kids and they love me a whole lot. My favorite

Welcome, everyone! I am here today to talk to you about why I think I would make the best president ever. I studied government in college, and really understand all of the jobs that the president is required to do. I have served in the Senate for the last six years and all of my fellow senators love me. They even threw me a surprise birthday party last year!

If elected, I promise to do the following: outlaw all yucky foods that kids hate, require teachers to assign video games for homework, and decrease taxes. I also plan on claiming the moon for the United States so no other country can go there.

Before I was elected to be a senator, I worked as a teacher and learned to be creative, patient, and to

Candidate 2:
What are her qualifications?

What promises did she make? (Put a ☆ next to the ones that she might be able to deliver.)

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