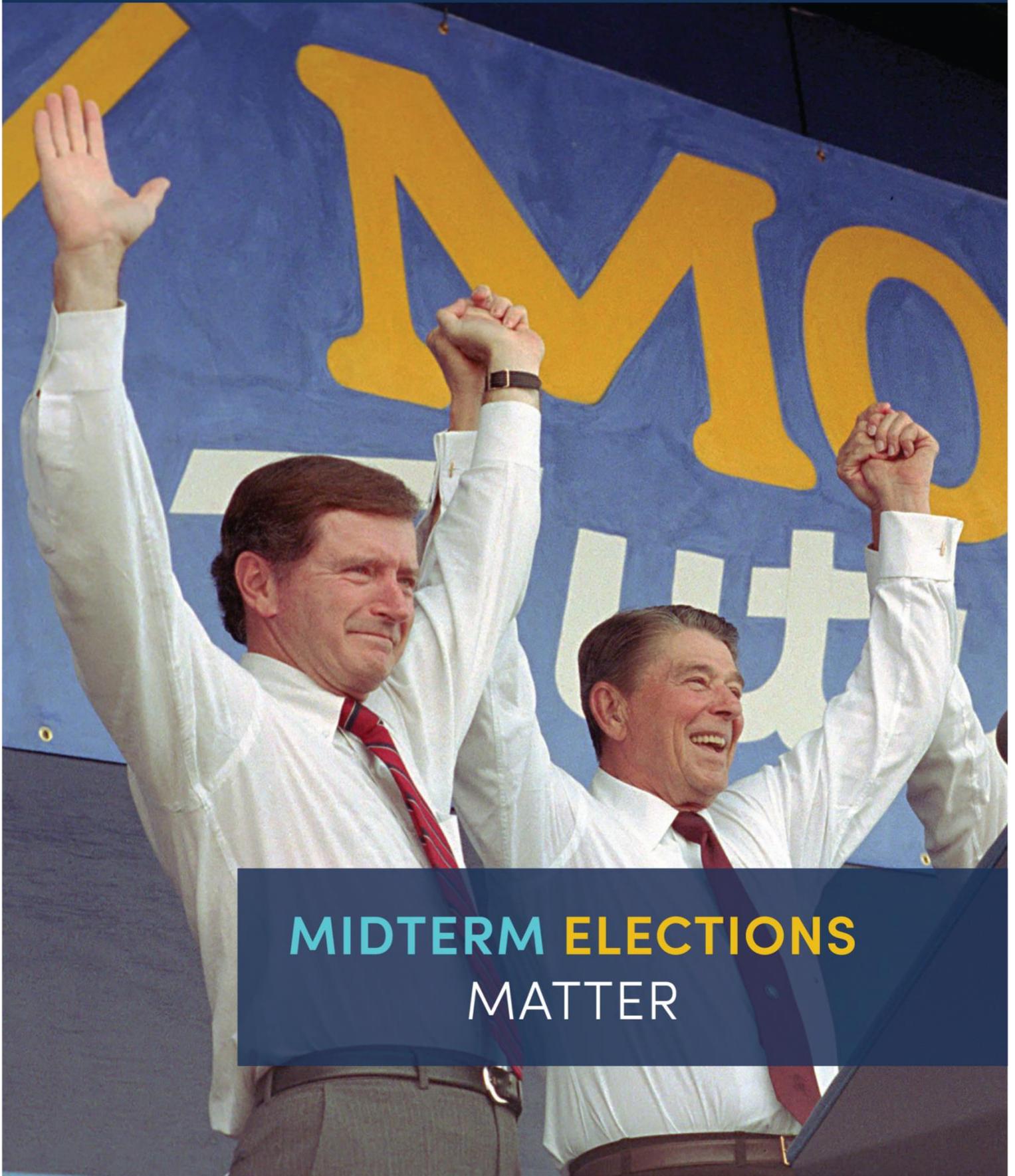




EDUCATION

8-12



MIDTERM ELECTIONS
MATTER



EDUCATION

Midterm Elections Matter

A Lesson for Secondary Students

Developed by

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Lesson Plan

In a 1988 radio address in which he discussed education, President Ronald Reagan said, “The education our children deserve is the kind no American should be deprived of, for it’s the basic instruction in what it means to be an American... Jefferson and the Founders believed a nation that governs itself, like ours, must rely upon an informed and engaged electorate.”

Overview

This lesson is intended to help students understand that midterm elections (whether they be for congressional candidates, governor, state representatives, or state initiatives) are equally as important as the presidential race every four years.

Objectives

Students will be able to (SWBAT):

- Understand the issues revolving around midterm elections and their traditionally low voter turnout.
- Develop an understanding of generally agreed upon political values and which of these values are most important to them and their fellow students.
- Understand their own political views, how they were shaped, and how they compare with others.
- Utilize research skills to develop ideas about political representation and the differences among congressional candidates and districts.
- Analyze primary source documents.

Skills

1. Analytical skills
2. Research skills
3. Digital Literacy

Classroom Procedures

This lesson is split into three sections that can either be completed together as a single lesson or can be split apart and done individually. Each section can take up to a full standard 50-minute class period to complete if all items and discussions are included.

At the back of the lesson is a collection of guides and primary source materials that can be used to help further student understanding. Also provided are examples of primary source documents from President Reagan’s 1966 California gubernatorial election, which took place in a midterm election year.

On the cover: President Reagan helps campaign for Representative Henson Moore in his run for U.S. Senate at Lafreniere Park in Metairie, Louisiana. 9/18/86. Courtesy of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

20 Things to Know About Midterm Elections

In no particular order.

1

When the nation was founded only white, male, property owners could vote in elections.

2

Four of the twenty-seven amendments to the Constitution have been about expanding who could vote.

3

Voter turnout for midterm elections averages about 39.3% but the turnout in the 2014 midterms were a 72-year record low at 35.9%.

4

The Constitution does not mention political parties. Even so, political parties began during President Washington's administration.

5

Unlike political parties in Europe, the parties in the U.S. don't have as much control over who runs for legislative office.

6

Voter turnout rates for primaries are always lower than general elections. For midterm primaries you can have as little as 25% of eligible voters turning out to vote.

7

Voters 18-29 years old turn out to vote at a rate 15-20% less than those voters 30 and older.

8

Midterm voters tend to be more partisan than general election voters so candidates for Congress try to appeal to more extreme positions to get elected.

9

All elections (even presidential and Congressional races) are run by the states and NOT the federal government. Voting rules/methods vary from state to state.

10

Election day is the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November in even numbered years. It will always fall between the 2nd and 8th of November.

11

Qualifications to be elected to the House: You have to be 25 years old, citizen of the United States for 7 years, resident of the state you represent.

12

Qualifications to be elected to the Senate: You have to be 30 years old, citizen of the United States for 9 years, resident of the state you represent.

13

It costs a lot of money to run for office. The Republican and Democrat candidates for Congress spent over \$1.6 BILLION in the 2014 midterm elections.

14

It is hard to unseat an incumbent member of Congress. Representatives are reelected over 90% of the time and Senators over 80% of the time.

15

Most of the money spent in presidential campaigns is for TV, radio, and internet political advertisements. In midterm years it tends to be for mailed advertisements.

16

Part of the leg-up that incumbent members of Congress get over their challengers is the 'Franking Privilege'. It allows them to send free mailings to their constituents.

17

While Congress as a whole has a horrible approval rating at 15%, most people tend to approve of their members of Congress at much higher rates.

18

Congressional candidates tend to run as 'outsiders' even when they have been in Congress for multiple terms. They run *for* Congress by running *against* it.

19

Many members of Congress see an 8-10% bump in additional votes received during their first re-election campaign. This is known as the 'Sophomore Surge'.

20

There is what is known as the 'Coattail Effect' where a congressional candidate rides the coattails of a popular presidential candidate into office. This effect is obviously not available during midterm elections.

Part One: American Political Culture & Values

Overview

Our Founding Fathers built America on a foundation of democracy, individualism, and liberty. These values have been expanded upon throughout our history, but they still hold true to today. Each election, we hear candidates speaking about the importance of American values. What are these values? Do they change? Are American values universal to all American citizens. To understand the American political system, we need to first identify these values and how they shape our nation's consciousness.

Lesson Essential Question: What do we believe as Americans?

Students will be able to:

- Define/describe the many facets of American political values through class discussion and journal writing.
- Evaluate the relative merits of the American political value system and judge the most important, providing evidence to support their judgement in both discussion as well as writing.
- Argue/discuss both their choices and those of their peer-group through whole-class as well as small group discussion.

Materials

Copies of American Political Values Cards (either as whole sheets or individual cards)
Copies of Student Handout: American Political Values

Plan of Instruction

1. Have the following quotes on the board as students walk into class:
 - "Always vote for principle, though you may vote alone, and you may cherish the sweetest reflection that your vote is never lost." - John Q. Adams
 - "The ballot is stronger than the bullet." - Abraham Lincoln
 - "A man without a vote is a man without protection." - Lyndon B. Johnson
 - "The ignorance of one voter in a democracy impairs the security of all." - John F. Kennedy
 - "The right to vote is the crown jewel of American liberties and we will not see it diminished." - Ronald Reagan

Ask students to reflect on one of the quotes in their journals. What do American values mean to them? Do they agree with President Reagan's point of view?
2. Hand out copies of Student Handout: American Political Values to the students.
 - Individually the students should select the ten values that they feel are the most important to them and rank them from 1 - 10.
 - Once each student has selected their top ten, break the class up into an equal number of teams, with 4-5 students in each group. Each member of the team will share their top 5 values. Collectively, each group must now create a new list consisting of five values that mean the most to their group. There may be some disagreements. This is okay. Allow the students to work through this without much assistance.
 - Have a representative from each group come to the board and write down their group's top five values. Keep record of any trends.
 - Once all the values are listed on the board, explain to the students that, as a class, we must know vote on the top five American Values. Have each student write down their individual responses and then hand them in. Alternatively, you could create a digital word cloud using a program like Polleverywhere or Mentimeter to gather their responses.

3. Lead a discussion of this exercise with the class. Consider the following questions:
 - How did it feel to cross off the values? Was it hard? Were there some obvious choices?
 - Are there any values you think are missing from this list?
 - Are there any values that you don't think are actually American values?
 - What value was so important to you that it became non-negotiable?
 - How did you handle disagreements within your group?
 - How does voting and elections connect to what we value as Americans?

4. Have students write a personal reflection about this exercise on the back of the American Political Values worksheet.

American Political Values Cards

Freedom of Speech	Individualism
The right to communicate one’s opinions and ideas without fear of government retaliation or censorship. This protects you from the government, NOT others, your employer, the school administration, or your parent/guardian.	Belief in the primary importance of the individual and in the virtues of self-reliance and personal independence. Also advocates for freedom from government regulation in the pursuit of a person’s economic goals and that the interests of the individual should take precedence over the interests of the state or social group.
Freedom from Discrimination	Equal Opportunity
The right to be free from discrimination due to your age, gender, religion, race/color, sexual orientation, ethnicity, language, country of origin, or disability.	The belief that everyone should be given the ability to achieve whatever they wish without any barriers or preferences except those that are justified.
Patriotism	Majority Rule
The devoted love, support, and defense of one’s country. It can also be described as national loyalty.	A political principle providing that a majority usually constituted by fifty percent plus one of an organized group will have the power to make decisions binding upon the whole group.
Tolerance of Others	Minority Rights
The ability or willingness to tolerate something in other people, particularly the existence of opinions or behavior that one does not necessarily agree with.	The normal individual rights as applied to members of racial, ethnic, class, religious, linguistic or sexual minorities; and also the collective rights accorded to minority groups. Minority rights may also apply simply to individual rights of anyone who is not part of a majority decision.
Freedom of Religion	Capitalism
Freedom of religion or freedom of belief is a principle that supports the freedom of an individual or community, in public or private, to follow a religion or belief through teaching, practice, worship, and observance. It also includes the freedom to change one’s religion or belief.	A way of organizing an economy so that the things that are used to make and transport products (such as land, oil, factories, ships, etc.) are owned by individual people and companies rather than by the government.
Right to Bear Arms	Public Service
The right to own arms (handguns/rifles) for individual use and to bear these same arms both for personal protection and for use in a militia.	Something that is done to help people rather than to make a profit or the work that someone does as part of a government (the work done by public servants).

American Political Values Cards

Right to Private Property	Democracy
The right to acquire (by legal means), hold and use property (physical or intellectual) for use by a private entity (person or corporation). This is in contrast to public property which is for use by the public as a whole or collective property which is owned and used by a select group of people.	A government in which the supreme power belongs to the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodically held free elections.
Right to Vote	Freedom of the Press
The right to vote, especially in a political election (in favor of a proposed measure, candidate, or the like).	The right to publish newspapers, magazines, and other printed matter (has been understood to also include radio, TV, Internet) without governmental restriction. Subject only to the laws of libel (purposely lying about someone to hurt them), obscenity, sedition (plotting to illegally resist/overthrow the government), etc.
Equal Justice	Right to Protest
"...no State can deprive particular persons or classes of persons of equal and impartial justice under the law." The belief that every person deserves to be treated equally and fairly in a court of law.	Sometime use interchangeably with sometimes used interchangeably with the freedom of assembly or association, is the individual right or ability of people to come together and collectively express, promote, pursue, and defend their ideas.
Right to Privacy	Civilian Control of the Military
The right to privacy refers to the concept that one's personal information is protected from public scrutiny. Supreme Court Justice Brandeis called it "the right to be left alone."	The idea that places ultimate responsibility for a country's military decision-making in the hands of the civilian political leadership, rather than professional military officers. This refers to the control of when and where to utilize the military and not the conduct of military operations themselves.
Limited Government	Separation of Powers
The concept of limiting the powers available to the government by law and reserving the remaining powers to the people or other levels of government (which are limited in their own way). This is in contrast to an absolute monarch or dictator with no limits to their power.	The principle or system of vesting in separate branches the executive, legislative, and judicial powers of a government. This is one of the methods for helping to limit the powers of government, by preventing any one part of government from becoming too powerful.
Federalism	Rule of Law
A system of government in which entities such as States or provinces share power with a national government. This is another way of limiting the powers of government by giving some powers to one level of government and other power to another level of government.	The principle that all people and institutions are subject to and accountable to law that is fairly applied and enforced; the principle of government by law.

American Political Values

Directions: Circle the ten (10) Values that you feel are the most important to you.

Freedom of Speech	Equal Justice	Capitalism
Freedom from Discrimination	Right to Privacy	Public Service
Patriotism	Limited Government	Democracy
Tolerance of Others	Federalism	Freedom of the Press
Freedom of Religion	Individualism	Right to Protest
Right to Bear Arms	Equal Opportunity	Civilian Control of the Military
Right to Private Property	Majority Rule	Separation of Powers
Right to Vote	Minority Rights	Rule of Law

Break into teams. Team number: _____

Out of your top ten Values select the five your team thinks are most important and explain why these Values are so important.

1. _____:

2. _____:

3. _____:

4. _____:

5. _____:



Personal Reflection on American Political Values

Prompt: Which do you think is the most important political value and why? Which political values need other political values to work?

Part Two: Political Ideology (Typology)

Overview

Why do we believe the things we believe in? What shaped those beliefs? To truly understand our position in the American political system, we need to identify what we believe and who we really are. We also need to understand how we make decisions when it comes to political leaders. Rarely, if ever, will we agree 100% with anyone (let alone a politician), so how do we narrow down what is important to us so that we can finally choose? How does what we value factor into how we identify ourselves politically?

Essential Question: What political values do I believe and why?

Students will be able to:

- Define/describe the spectrum of political ideologies by drawing a graphic representation of the political spectrum.
- Recognize and identify those political values to which they subscribe through online assessment.
- Illustrate understanding of the choice-making process of the presidential elections system through in-class discussion.

Materials

Food items (or pictures of food items) for Making Choices Activity
 Copies of Student Handout: Political Soul Searching
 Copies of Student Handout: Political Typology
 Access to the internet via computer lab or personal devices.

Plan of Instruction

1. Write or project the following question on the board: ‘Why do I make the choices I make?’ Lead a quick discussion of the answers that the students give. Tell the class that they are going to take part in a little exercise to dig into their decision-making process.
 - You will need 16 different foods (or images of the foods) in 8 food pairs to complete this exercise. Each food should have an ‘opposite’ companion (e.g. Coke vs. Pepsi). A sample list follows, but feel free to choose your own. The important factor is that there is a progressively harder choice between the items as you go along. Early on, the choices should be relatively easy with little entrenched loyalty/preference leading to a very polarizing food that someone either likes or hates.

Table A	Table B
Potato Chips	Pretzel Sticks
Skittles	M & M’s
Oreos	Chips Ahoy
Oatmeal	Cereal
Coke	Diet Coke
Cool Ranch Doritos	Nacho Cheese Doritos
Tea	Coffee
Spam	Can of creamed spinach

2. Have two tables set up at the front of the room. Make sure it is relatively easy for students to move back and forth between the two tables. Tell students that as items are placed on the table, they should silently go to the side with the item(s) that they prefer the most. When making a choice on which table to be by the students should take into account the most recent items placed as well as the overall table 'package'. Tell them that they should remember that they would have to eat/drink all of the items that are a part of the group that they end up with (though they really won't do so).
3. Have all of the items hidden away in a box out of sight of the students and bring out each pair one at a time. Students will vote with their feet as the food items are brought out and the food packages are put together. As students move back and forth you will want to ask some of them why they either moved or stayed. When the table sets are complete, lead a discussion of the exercise. Some questions to consider are:
 - Did anyone stay at one table the entire time?
 - If you stayed at one table, do you like every item on your table?
 - Is there one particular item that made you prefer one table over another?
 - If you moved back and forth between the tables often, what made you choose your final table?
 - If the item you like most was moved to the other table, would you move with it? Why or why not?
 - What item do you dislike the most from the other table? If that item were moved to your table would that cause you to switch sides?
4. Have the students take their seats and lead a discussion of how this exercise could be compared to the process of picking political candidates. Some thoughts to consider would be that were most likely very few students that either liked or hated all the items on their table. Also, a few probably had some very strong feelings about one or two items on the tables. Some questions to consider here:
 - How does this exercise approximate the views of many citizens when they are considering presidential candidates? (Many people have to consider the entire package when choosing candidates but sometimes there are one or two things that are dealmakers/breakers.)
 - What do the tables approximate when considering the candidates? (They could be considered to be like a party platform/policy positions.)
 - Where did students develop their like/dislike for certain items? (Parents, religious/cultural rules, friends, etc. probably all had an impact on developing their tastes.)
5. Next, hand out copies of Student Handout: Political Soul Searching. Have students fill out the worksheet on their own without talking to anyone. This assignment is looking for prior knowledge, preconceived notions and introspection. When students have completed the front side, lead a discussion with the class and ask students to share their answers.
6. Hand out copies of the Political Typology sheet. To come up with a better picture of their political beliefs, have students take the Pew Research Center's Typology Test. Next, have students complete the www.isidewith.com quiz. Once students have completed the tests/worksheet, lead a discussion of the results. Were any students surprised by their results? If so, why?
7. For homework, give students additional copies of the Political Typology worksheet and have them take it home for parent(s)/guardian(s) to fill out. Ask students to discuss the results of their own tests as well as the results of the tests they took home with their parent/guardian.

Political Soul Searching

Directions: Fill out this sheet without speaking with anyone. From what you have heard from your family, friends, and the news, decide what you know about political parties and which party you belong to.

I believe that I am a Conservative Moderate Liberal Other: _____ because:

Most people I know who belong to a political party are:

- Democrats
- Republicans
- Other: _____

This is what I know about the two main political parties in the United States:

Democrats	Republicans

I think I belong to the _____ Party because:

Political Typology

Instructions: Take the following political ideology test online: www.people-press.org/quiz/political-typology/

According to the Pew Research Center 2014 Political Typology Test, what category do you fall into?

- Steadfast Conservatives
- Business Conservatives
- Young Outsiders
- Hard-Pressed Skeptics
- Next Generation Left
- Faith & Family Left
- Solid Liberals
- Bystanders

Read the description given to each group and decide/reflect upon whether you feel you fit in that category. As a class, let's reflect on the following questions:

- Do you believe that your test results were accurate? Why or Why not?
- How did it feel being asked to choose one of two opposing options?
- Did you wish you were given any other choices?
- Do political viewpoints follow this very black or white mentality or are there gray areas?

Now take the following political ideology test: www.isidewith.com/political-quiz/

Given the results of the tests you have completed, draw yourself on the political spectrum:

In your project journals, reflect on the following questions:

- What does this say about you politically?

- Are you surprised by the results? Why or why not?

- How do your results correlate (match) with your family's beliefs?

- What factors do you think influence your political views? Have any of your views changed over time? Why or why not?

- How do political views connect to elections? How do political views inspire action/ participation during elections? How might they cause one to decline to participate?

Part Three: Representation

Overview

As is pointed out all the time, the United States is not a democracy, it is a republic. We the people of the United States make our wishes known through our elected representatives. Those representatives are expected to understand and vote on an incredibly diverse number of issues that have far reaching impact. How can a relative handful of people in the House of Representatives and the Senate properly represent the 327+ million citizens of the United States? What is the demographic make-up of the current Congress? How does that compare to the nation as a whole?

Essential Question: What is needed to be an effective representative?

Students will be able to:

- Describe the current demographic composition of the 115th Congress and compare those demographics with those of the entire United States and those of the congressional district in which they live.
- Identify those population groups that are potentially under and over-represented in Congress and address the issues that may arise from either condition.
- Research and analyze the candidates and demographics of a chosen congressional district (other than the one in which they live) and compare/contrast this information with that from their own district.

Materials

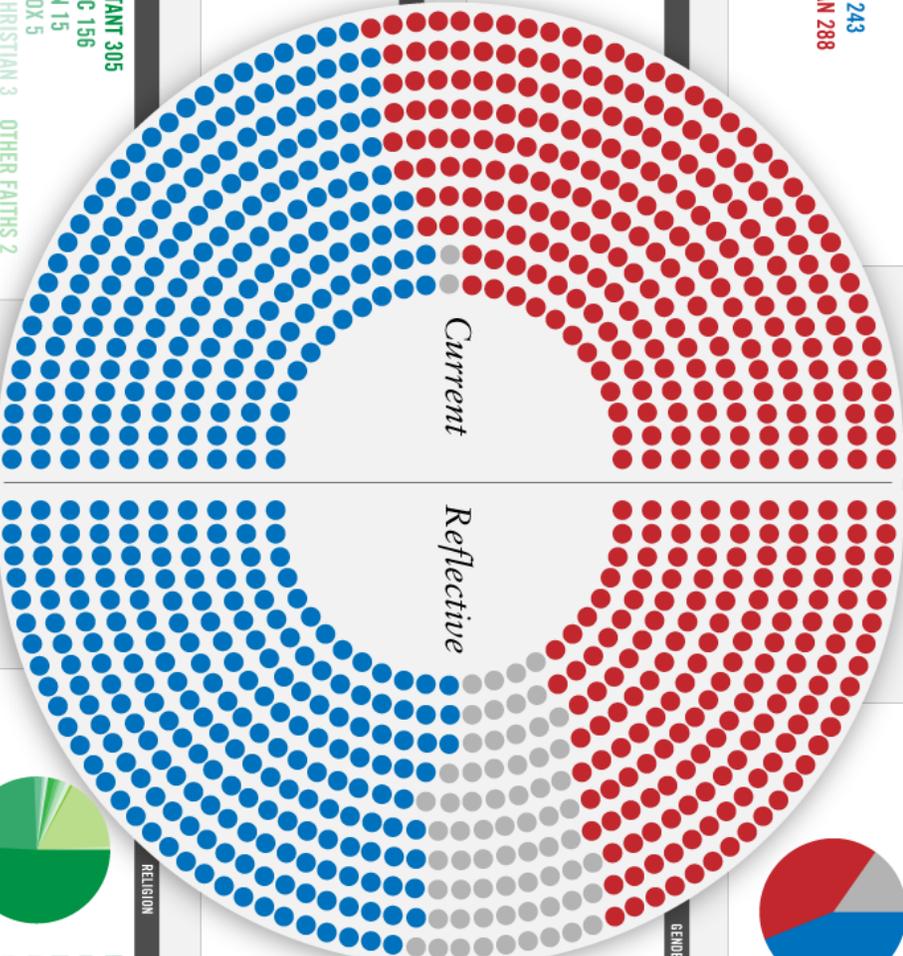
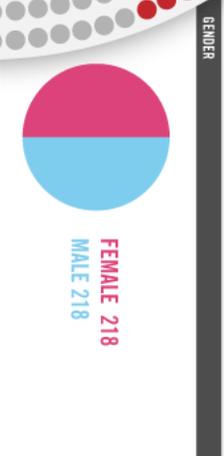
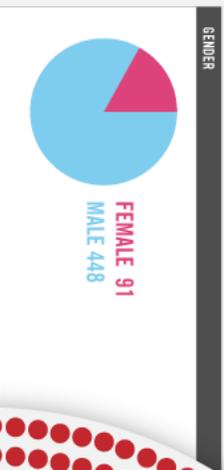
Copies/Projection Image of: This Is Not My Beautiful House infographic. **NOTE:** This data is from 2011.
Copies of Student Handout: Demographic Profile of the 115th Congress
Copies of Student Handout: Congressional Candidate Profile Sheet
Copies of Student Handout: Congressional District Profile Sheet

Plan of Instruction

1. Hand out or project the infographic 'This Is Not My Beautiful House' and discuss the disparity between the composition of Congress and that of the United States in 2011. Ask students if Congress should mirror the composition of the population as a whole.
2. Hand out copies of Student Handout: Demographic Profile of the 115th Congress and have them individually or in small groups, analyze the data in the table and answer the questions on the back. Students should discuss their answers in small groups or as a class.
3. Hand out copies of Student Handout: Congressional Candidate Profile Sheet and have them select a congressional district other than the one in which they live and different from any other student in the class. Have them research one of the candidates for the House seat in that district and answer the questions that follow.
4. Hand out copies of Student Handout: Congressional District Profile Sheet. Have students research the demographics of their chosen district and fill in the data table. Next, they should answer the questions at the bottom of the page about this district and their chosen candidate. Finally, they should research the demographics of the congressional district in which they live and answer the questions about the upcoming election after filling out the data table.
5. Lead a discussion with the entire class about what they have learned about American representative democracy. Some questions to consider asking are:
 - Could we use technology to make the United States more democratic with all voting age citizens weighing in on issues? Why or why not?
 - We have been hearing a lot about gerrymandering, what is it and why is it such an important issue?
 - Is it ok to gerrymander a district to ensure minority groups have representatives in Congress? Why or why not?
 - Is it fair that some smaller states have a disproportionate voice in Congress?

THIS IS NOT MY BEAUTIFUL HOUSE

America is getting more and more diverse—for instance, our Hispanic population grew by 43 percent in the past decade alone—but you'd never be able to tell it by looking at our Congress. Here's what the House and Senate look like today, alongside what they would look like if they were demographically representative of our nation. Spoiler alert: There's not a lot of color on the Hill.



Demographic Profile of the 115th Congress

Demographic Categories	House of Representatives	Senate	General Population (July 2017 Census Update)
Party Association:			
Democrats	194	51	35%
Republicans	241	47	27%
Independents	0	2	36%
Median Age:			
	57.8	61.8	37.9
Gender:			
Men	80.5%	78%	49.2%
Women	19.5% (85)	22% (22)	50.8%
Education (college)			
BA Degree or higher	94.1%	100%	30.3
Religion:			
			<i>USRL Survey</i>
Protestants	55% (241)	58% (58)	48%
Catholics	33% (144)	24% (24)	22%
Jews	5% (22)	8% (8)	1.7%
Mormon	1.6% (7)	6% (6)	2%
Buddhists	.5% (2)	1% (1)	0.7%
Muslims	.5% (2)	0% (0)	0.6%
Other / None	4.4%	3%	5% / 19.6%
Ethnicity:			
Whites	76.5%	89%	61.3%
Hispanic/Latino	9% (41)	5% (5)	17.8%
African Americans	11% (46)	3% (3)	13.3%
Asian Americans	3% (15)	3% (3)	5.9%
Native Americans	.5% (2)	0%	1.3%
Military Service:			
	18% (78)	19% (19)	6%
Occupation:			
			2017 BLS Labor Force Stats
Lawyers	39% (168)	50% (50)	0.4%
Businesspersons	41% (179)	29% (29)	7.8%
Public Officials	45% (194)	44% (44)	NA
Educators	18% (79)	20% (20)	2%
Length of Service			
	9.4 yrs. (4.7 terms)	10.1 yrs. (1.7 terms)	N/A

Questions for Discussion – Use the data on the previous page to answer the following questions and discuss your answers with your fellow students.

1. Identify at least six characteristics of a typical representative in the 115th Congress based on the data above.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

2. List three groups of people who might have reason to question whether or not the Congress adequately represents their interests. Explain each.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

3. Identify and explain several differences between the make-up of Congress and the general public.

4. How important is it to elect someone of the same statistical profile as the majority in the district in order to gain good representation? Provide pros and cons.

5. Can a Representative or Senator be a good representative of their constituents if they don't share most (or many) of the same demographics?

6. Is there anything that can be done to ensure that members of Congress better represent the demographics of their districts? Should we even try?

Congressional Candidate Profile Sheet

Instructions: Fill out the profile for your candidate. Try to find as much of the information as possible.

STATE: _____

DISTRICT: _____

Name: _____

Political Party: _____

Place of Birth: _____

Age/Date of Birth: _____

Spouse: _____

Children: _____

Education: _____

Religion: _____

Ethnicity: _____

Political Experience: _____

Work Experience: _____

Hometown: _____

Other Information: _____

Picture of candidate here.

Begin research on your candidate at:

[https://ballotpedia.org/List_of_candidates_running_in_U.S. Congress elections, 2018](https://ballotpedia.org/List_of_candidates_running_in_U.S._Congress_elections,_2018)

and explain your candidate's position on five (5) of the following issues:

Crime & Justice

Health Care, Abortion, & End of Life Issues

Economy & Taxes

Immigration

Education

Military & War on Terror

Elections

Race

Energy

Science & Environment

Foreign Policy

Sex & Gender

Guns/Second Amendment



Candidate’s Position on Issues:

Issue	Position

Questions About Your Candidate:

1. What benefits/experience do they say they can bring to their district if they are elected/re-elected?

2. Would you say this candidate’s position on the five issues you selected is shared by most of the people in their district or are they advocating for change?

3. What characteristics of you candidate do you believe would make them a good member of Congress? What characteristics might make them a poor member of Congress?

Congressional District Profile Sheet

Instructions: Go to <https://www.census.gov/mycd/> and look up the Census profile for your selected district and fill out the information in the chart. Once this is complete, answer the questions following the chart.

Demographic Categories	District Demographics	Demographic Categories	District Demographics
Party Association:		Ethnicity:	
Democrats		Whites	
Republicans		Hispanic/Latino	
Independents		African Americans	
Median Age:		Asian Americans	
		Native Americans	
Gender:		Military Service:	
Men			
Women		Occupations:	
Education (college)			
BA Degree or higher			
Religion:			
Protestants			
Catholics			
Jews		Other Demographics	
Mormon			
Buddhists			
Muslims			
Other / None			

Questions About Your Candidate’s District:

1. Is this candidate’s district considered to be a ‘safe’ district (meaning that they have a very good chance of being reelected), or is it considered a ‘marginal’ district (meaning they have a serious challenger either from their own party or another party)?

_____ Safe District

_____ Marginal District

2. How did this district vote in the last presidential election? Is it expected to swing to the other party after this election or stay the same? Why?

3. What are the primary issues facing this district today?

Congressional District Profile Sheet

Instructions: Go to <https://www.census.gov/mycd/> and look up the Census profile for the district **where you live** and fill out the information in the chart. Once this is complete, answer the questions following the chart.

Demographic Categories	District Demographics	Demographic Categories	District Demographics
Party Association:		Ethnicity:	
Democrats		Whites	
Republicans		Hispanic/Latino	
Independents		African Americans	
Median Age:		Asian Americans	
		Native Americans	
Gender:		Military Service:	
Men			
Women		Occupations:	
Education (college)			
BA Degree or higher			
Religion:			
Protestants			
Catholics			
Jews		Other Demographics	
Mormon			
Buddhists			
Muslims			
Other / None			

Questions About Your Congressional District:

1. Is the incumbent candidate for your district 'safe' or do they have a serious challenger for this election?

2. How did your district vote in the last presidential election? Is it expected to swing to the other party after this election? Why or why not.

3. How does your congressional district compare to the one you selected to research?

4. What are the primary issues facing your area today? How do they compare to your selected district?

Part Four: Primary Source Analysis

Overview

Politics has changed dramatically in the 52 years since President Reagan first ran for governor in 1966. This lesson contains some of the campaign materials from that successful first run. Materials such as these and a whirlwind tour of the state helped propel Ronald Reagan to two terms as Governor and set the stage for his subsequent runs for president in 1976 (challenging Gerald Ford for the nomination) and 1980/84.

Essential Question: Could Ronald Reagan be elected California governor in the political environment of 2018?

Students will be able to:

Materials

- Copies of Ronald Reagan Campaign Brochure (4 Pages)
- Copies of Ronald Reagan: Speaks out on the issues – Crime
- Copies of Ronald Reagan: Speaks out on the issues – Public Welfare
- Copies of Ronald Reagan: Speaks out on the issues – Education

Plan of Instruction

Hand out copies of the primary source documents either individually to students to evaluate as a whole collection or as specific pieces and then have them jigsaw the collection together in small groups.

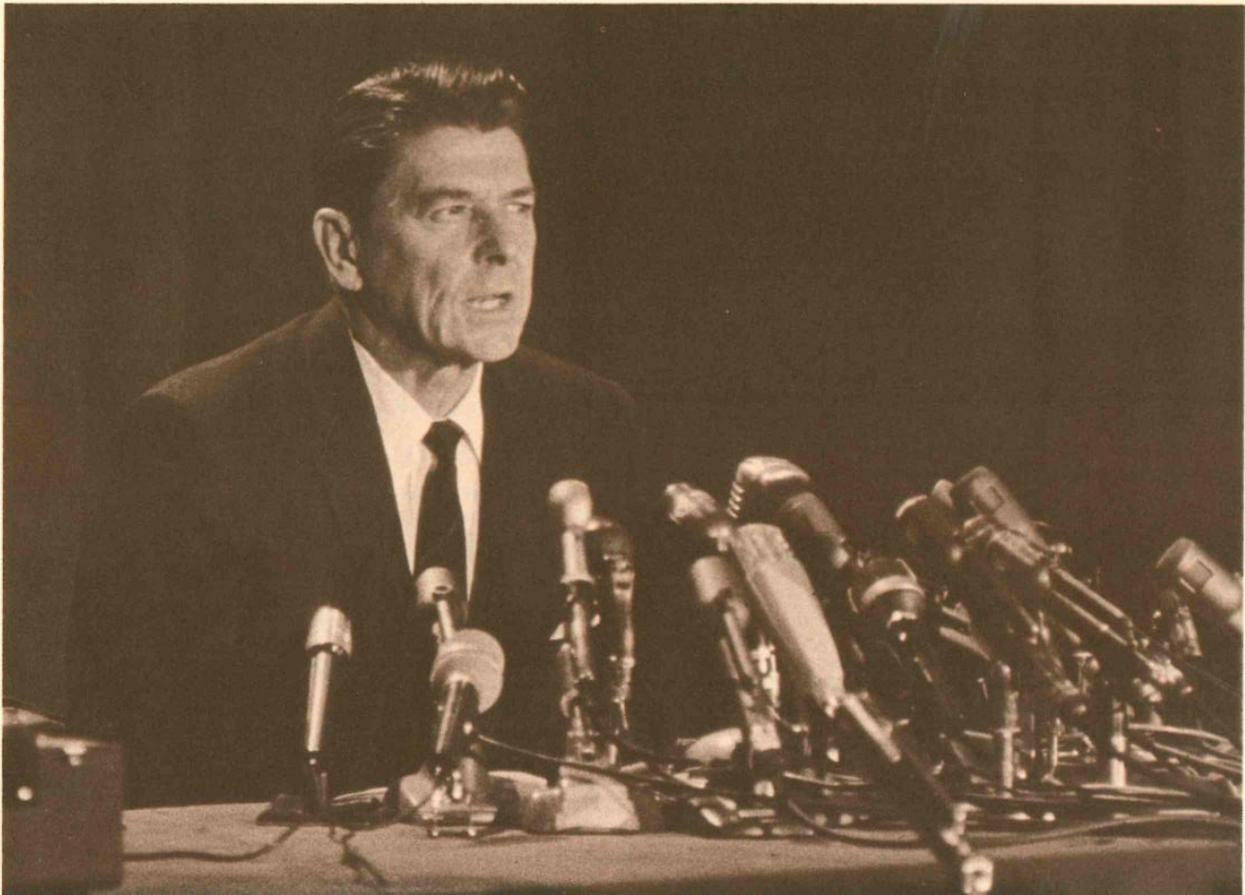
Students should evaluate the policy positions and compare them to the current Republican candidates in the 2018 California gubernatorial race. How do they compare to the Democratic candidates?

If you wish for students to do some more historical research, you can have them investigate the positions of then Governor Pat Brown (the father of current governor Edmund Gerald "Jerry" Brown Jr.).

Lead a class discussion of the results of research and analysis. Could Ronald Reagan win the gubernatorial race today? Why or why not?



Ronald REAGAN



"His varied activities through the years show him to be a calmly deliberative, eminently humane person. He arrived at his mature conviction about public affairs not impetuously, not by rote, but by a confluence of some tempering experiences, much serious research, and a large reservoir of common sense."

GEORGE N. CROCKER, SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER, JANUARY 9, 1966



If there are men in government capable of running the nation's business better than it is now being run, you would long since have hired them away from government. Those who place their faith in government planning would point to the present prosperity as proof that government intervention in these recent decades has been helpful to business.

It is no such thing.

It is only proof of the great virility of the free enterprise system that it has been able to survive the nit-picking, the harassment, the meaningless regulations, and the regressive taxation, but it is not a virility that can survive forever. First, let us recognize that additional purchasing power and, hence, prosperity, is not created by re-distributing earnings on hand, but by increasing production. One of the basic laws of economics – not guaranteed to help anyone in an English class, but definitely the basis of all economics – is the rules 'There ain't no such thing as free lunch.'

RONALD REAGAN

RONALD REAGAN SPEAKS TO THE ISSUES

EDUCATION:

Our educational system should be the best in the nation, but today its higher echelons are in danger of being destroyed by an anarchistic minority. Our university administrators must be responsive to our demands to enforce a code of decency, common sense and dedication to the high and noble educative purpose of a university.

CRIME:

California's crime rate is appallingly high. While 9% of the people in America live in California, 17% of all crimes take place here. Legislation is needed to permit local ordinances that will restore police flexibility and power in making arrests. Judges must be appointed on the basis of ability, not political service, and legislation is required to assure this in the future.

BUREAUCRACY AND TAXATION:

A big brother government can solve many problems for the people. It's doubtful that we'll like the price it charges; ever increasing power over us and ever decreasing individual freedom. Governmental agencies in California have increased four times as fast as population and total expenses are up 10 times as much, and we still have a \$250 million deficit. The first order of business in Sacramento should involve an all-out effort to utilize tax monies as effectively as possible; to eliminate waste, with an eye toward decreasing the total tax amounts we all must pay.

INDUSTRY:

More jobs are the principal weapons in reducing crime rates and welfare costs. Unemployment in this State is almost 40% higher than in the rest of the nation. Industry is finding it more attractive to locate elsewhere. We must strive to build an attractive industrial climate that will create more jobs; this can be made possible only by an administration in Sacramento that has faith in a free economy and private enterprise.

WELFARE:

Welfare aid should clearly be aimed at restoring self sufficiency. A creative society mobilizing the business and industrial community to pinpoint who is unemployed, where and why, and then how to make a place for them in our protective free economy, can fight a war on poverty 1,000 times more effectively than government.

THE CREATIVE SOCIETY:

A great society must be a free society, and to be truly great and really free, it must be creative, calling on the genius and power of its people. I propose we set up a state-wide program to mobilize the full creative abilities of its people, with the government providing the leadership, working to secure the maximum return of our tax money to the state for effective, local administration. All programs I will propose will be ones which do not increase our own bureaucracy, result in more centralization of power, or unbalance the budget. There is no problem we cannot solve by a cooperative effort using government and the full creative talent of all our people.

ANTI-COMMUNIST BATTLE

"That Ronald Reagan evolved into a hard-hitting, effective anti-Communist was confirmed by testimony before the House Committee on Un-American Activities. Testifying on Communist maneuvers to capture Hollywood, Actor Sterling Hayden was asked what stopped them. His answer: 'We ran into a one-man battalion named Ronnie Reagan.'"



Ronald Reagan is, first of all, a family man — the proud father of four children — Maureen, Michael, Patti and Ronnie, Jr. He is seen with his wife, Nancy, and their at home youngsters Ronnie and Patti.



MEET *Nancy Reagan*

As the daughter of one of the world's great neurosurgeons, Dr. Loyal Davis, Nancy shared the stimulating association of the scientific world. As a pretty and popular debutante, she enjoyed the fun of campus life, attending exclusive girls Latin School and graduating from Smith as a theater arts major.

"I have always known what was important to me.

And when I met Ronnie 14 years ago, I knew that our marriage was the role I wanted most. As a housewife and mother, I have been richly awarded."

Nancy adds, "But I believe now more than ever, people must get involved in politics. We need good men not afraid to speak out. Even as a movie personality, Ronnie spoke out."



**A TRULY QUALIFIED PATRIOT
AND CITIZEN-POLITICIAN**

“The founding fathers of this country were not professional politicians,” Ronald Reagan has observed. “They were citizen-politicians. California has been marked more than any other in the Union by the election of citizen-politicians as Governors. I believe it is the civic duty of people to make their talents available to help solve the state’s problems that baffle professional politicians. General Eisenhower said, ‘We question whether political experience automatically resulted in a backlog of statesmen or just resulted in a number of people who were adept at political maneuvering.’”



Ron and Nancy take time out from their busy schedule for a moment of relaxation among the animals they love.

**BIOGRAPHY of
RONALD REAGAN**

EDUCATION:

Degree in Economics and Sociology, Eureka College, 1932 ▪ President of Student Body ▪ Varsity Football 3 years ▪ Captain, swimming team ▪ Worked way through college.

MILITARY SERVICE:

Active duty World War II, 1942-46 ▪ Discharged as Captain, Air Force.

OCCUPATION:

Radio sports announcer and editor; broadcast big league baseball, Big Ten and Notre Dame football ▪ Motion Pictures, Warner Brothers, Universal, free lance; 50 pictures ▪ Player, production supervisor, General Electric Theater TV 8 years ▪ Member, Board of Directors, International Holding Co. and Coastal Life Insurance Co.

PUBLIC SERVICE:

President, Screen Actors Guild, 6 terms ▪ President, Motion Picture Industry Council, 2 terms ▪ Board of Directors, Screen Actors Guild, 14 years ▪ Board of Directors, Motion Picture Industry Council, 10 years ▪ Represented motion picture industry (31 unions and all management groups) before House Ways and Means Committee on

tax matters affecting industry ▪ Member, Board of Directors, Committee on Fundamental Education ▪ Board of Trustees, St. John’s Hospital.

AWARDS:

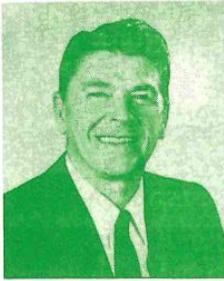
Humanitarian Award, National Conference of Christians and Jews, 1962 ▪ Father of the Year, (motion picture industry) by National Fathers Day Committee, 1957 ▪ Award of Honor, California Home for Aged, 1953 ▪ American National Red Cross, Distinguished Service, 1959 ▪ National Safety Council Public Interest Award, 1954 ▪ Citation for Distinguished Service, 35th Army Division Association. ▪ Member, Navajo Clan ▪ American Heritage Award (San Fernando Valley Business and Professional Association) ▪ Orange Empire Council Citizenship Award, 1964 ▪ Hollywood Citizenship Award, 1956, by Hollywood Foreign Press ▪ City of Hope “Torch of Life” Award for Humanitarian Service ▪ Award for American Newspaper Guild ▪ Helms Commemorative Medalion presented to distinguished sportsmen and athletic leaders ▪ Two Freedom Foundation Awards, 1960 and 1962, for “Outstanding achievement in bringing about better understanding of the American way of life.” ▪ UAW-CIO honorary Gold Membership card ▪ American Legion – untiring efforts and patriotic devotion in fostering and perpetuating American principles, May, 1965 ▪ Americanism Award, American Legion.

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ORANGE COUNTY REAGAN FOR GOVERNOR COMMITTEE

1711 North Main St., Santa Ana, California • Phone: 547-8225

Alan C. Stoneman, Chairman

**Ronald Reagan**

.....SPEAKS OUT ON THE ISSUES.....

CRIME

California, with 9% of the nation's population, has 17% of the nation's crime. It costs the average family of four a minimum of \$ 1,000.00 a year.

Our skyrocketing crime rate dates from certain judicial rulings that took much of the law enforcement authority away from local police and left them handicapped in their efforts to protect the law-abiding citizen from the increasingly insolent criminal element.

As Governor, I will:

1. Take positive action to restore to the cities and counties their rights to enact local ordinances designed to meet local law enforcement problems.
2. Support and work for a plan to take the appointment of judges out of politics.
3. Call on the legislature to re-enact those key crime prevention bills passed overwhelmingly by the legislature at its last session but vetoed by the Governor. When re-enacted, I will sign these measures into law.
4. Ask legislative support in an effort to end the growing flood of smut and pornography aimed primarily at degrading our young people.
5. Recommend legislation aimed at curbing the growing use of narcotics, hallucinatory drugs and pep pills, especially in schools and on campuses.

It will be my purpose to see that California's streets and neighborhoods become safe again.



Ronald Reagan

.....SPEAKS OUT ON THE ISSUES.....

PUBLIC WELFARE

I strongly support welfare programs designed to provide the permanently disabled, the aged and the infirm, with not only the necessities of life, but also some of the comforts with which can make life worth living.

Another area of welfare has to do with those who are in need of temporary help until they can regain their rightful places in our productive economy. It is here that we have, too often, strayed from welfare's original purpose. We frequently perpetuate poverty by making welfare a way of life rather than by using it to help people back to productive jobs.

As Governor, I will:

1. Propose a commission to redefine welfare's goals and recommend appropriate legislation.
2. Explore every avenue whereby, through state, business, labor cooperation, the business climate can be improved and thousands of new jobs provided.
3. Seek to provide useful employment in our public institutions, or training for as many welfare recipients as possible in order to give them the self-respect which comes from useful service and to hasten the day when they can take their places in California's productive economy.



Citizens Committee To Elect **RONALD REAGAN GOVERNOR**
NEWS RELEASE...

RONALD REAGAN SPEAKS OUT ON THE ISSUES

#3 EDUCATION

Education is the bulwark of freedom. Removed too far from parental influence, it can become the tool of tyranny.

Local control of education is basic to the traditions of America. Only with local control can Americans be assured that their children will receive the finest education possible, with safeguards against ideological or political indoctrination.

Financial support of our state's school system was once evenly divided between the local communities and the state. Today, the state's share has fallen to 35%.

As Governor, I will:

- * Work to increase the state's contributions to local school districts in order to relieve the growing burden on local property taxpayers.
- * Seek appropriate ways to help local school districts attract and keep good teachers.
- * Call for legislation to put unification of local school districts on a voluntary--not compulsory--basis.
- * Work to assure the teaching profession a position of dignity and respect, and to restore to our educational system the teaching of the traditional concepts of individual responsibility and good citizenship.
- * Explore every modern technique and technology in education that could lead to giving the taxpayer more for his educational dollar.

With such a program and plan of action we can work toward the Creative Educational System that Californians need and deserve.

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Lesson Appendix

Teacher/Student Resources

The following items are for your use to help students conduct their research and to add primary-source documents to your lesson if you so desire.

Checking Your Sources

Use this checklist to evaluate the information sources you discover as a result of performing a search.

Check the items in each of the following categories:

Purpose

- What is the purpose or motivation for the source? (E.g., educational, commercial, entertainment, or promotional.)
- Is it trying to sell you something? How easy is it to differentiate advertisement from content in the source?
- Based on your knowledge, is the information fact, opinion, or propaganda?
- Who is the intended audience for the information, and how is this fact reflected in the organization and presentation of the material?

Authority

- Is the author identifiable?
- What is the author's background? (E.g., experience, credentials, and occupation, and has he or she published anything else on the topic?)
- Does the author cite his or her sources?

Currency

- When was the resource last updated or revised, and how often is it updated?

Reliability

How stable does the resource seem to be? The resource's dependability (particularly in the case of Web sites) is important if it is going to be cited as a source or recommended for use by others.

- For Web sites, do most of the links on the page work?
- From your evaluation of currency and authority, do you think the resource will be there the next time you visit it?

Coverage

- What information is included or omitted?
- Is the resource completed or under construction?

These are not the only criteria you will need to look at. Depending on what your professor has asked you for and on your research needs, you may need to look for certain kinds of material. In academic research in particular, your professor may ask you to find scholarly, peer-reviewed, or primary sources.

Student Source Reference Guide

The following list of websites can help you in your research but it is not all-inclusive and you should look for additional sites that can further your research. The sites listed are in no particular order (with the exception of the Presidential Libraries) and no inference should be made from the inclusion/exclusion of any site or its order in the listing.

	Pros	Cons
Non-Partisan Groups	Fact-based and direct.	Very rarely is there any analysis or commentary so the reader is forced to do all of the work. Polling data often requires reader to dig for methodology and significance.
www.procon.org		
www.factcheck.org		
www.politifact.com		
http://lwv.org (League of Women Voters)		
www.realclearpolitics.com		
www.vote411.org		
www.pollingreport.com		
www.opensecrets.org		
http://votesmart.org		
https://ballotpedia.org/		
	Pros	Cons
Presidential Libraries	Extensive information on each presidential administration. Each site has a variety of primary and secondary source documents in addition to large collections of photos, videos, and audio files.	While some materials have been curated and have some explanatory information to go along with them, most pieces do not have any information to accompany them with the exception of a simple descriptor.
www.hoover.archives.gov/		
www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/		
www.trumanlibrary.org/		
www.eisenhower.archives.gov/		
www.jfklibrary.org/		
www.lbjlibrary.org/		
www.nixonlibrary.gov/index.php		
www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov/		
www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/		
https://reaganlibrary.archives.gov/		
http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/		
www.clintonlibrary.gov/		
www.georgewbushlibrary.smu.edu/		
www.obamalibrary.gov/		
	Pros	Cons
U.S. Government Sites	A wealth of information on a wide variety of topics.	Due to the extensive collection of information, it may be difficult to locate needed information quickly or easily (if at all).
www.archives.gov		
www.loc.gov		
www.whitehouse.gov/1600		
https://kids.usa.gov/index.shtml		
www.usa.gov/		
www.fec.gov		

	Pros	Cons
News Media	Broad coverage of the election and most try to remain as neutral as possible. Be sure to note whether you are referencing an article or information from the journalistic side or the opinion side. Most sites point out opinion pieces but you can't always count on that.	Some media outlets are clearly partisan and take sides. Depending on the type of outlet (print, 24-hour news, website), the stories can vary considerably in depth and analysis.
www.cnn.com		
www.foxnews.com		
www.msnbc.com		
www.nytimes.com		
www.washingtonpost.com		
www.politico.com		
www.wsj.com		
www.latimes.com		
www.nbcnews.com		
www.cbsnews.com		
www.reuters.com		
www.usatoday.com		
http://abcnews.go.com		
www.time.com		
www.newsweek.com		
www.allsides.com/		
	Pros	Cons
Blogs	Lots of different points of view and levels of analysis. Some of the biggest blogs follow the same journalistic rules as the media outlets.	The dividing line between opinion and fact is often blurred. Many blogs are partisan in nature. Most do not follow the common rules of journalism.
http://fivethirtyeight.com		
www.dailykos.com		
http://talkingpointsmemo.com		
www.redstate.com		
www.huffingtonpost.com		
	Pros	Cons
Interest Groups	Very focused on specific issues and easy for readers to make decisions on candidates based on their views on those issues.	Often lacking nuance and detail on the positions held by different politicians. Can focus too much on voting record and not the reason for certain votes.
www.aarp.com		
www.sierraclub.com		
www.nra.com		
http://www.feminist.org		
www.uschamber.com		
www.aclu.org		
https://fedsoc.org		
www.prochoiceamerica.org		
www.nrlc.org/site		
https://now.org/now		
http://interfaithalliance.org/		
www.hrc.com (Human Rights Campaign)		

Detecting Bias, Spin, & Logical Fallacies, Oh My!

How to Detect Bias

The media has a lot of power when it comes to ‘setting the agenda’ and defining options. By providing a lot of coverage for an issue or a candidate, they can drive discussion to focus on those topics almost exclusively. When the media only focuses on one or two solutions to a problem or issue they often make it seem like those are the ONLY solutions and very little time is given to any equally viable solutions. It is important that you are able to identify elements of bias in media and to look for additional information when you detect it.

- **Who are the sources?**

Be aware of the sources that a media outlet uses on a regular basis. In order to give as complete of a picture as possible, they should be citing sources from a wide range of outlets. Are they only reporting from sources in government? Do they cite sources from only one side of an argument or are they weighted towards one side or the other? If they only focus on one source, they aren’t reporting but instead are just a megaphone for that source.

- **From whose point of view is the news reported?**

When reporting on an issue or policy does the media outlet talk to those affected by the problem or policy or only to government officials or others not directly impacted by the issue/policy? For example, when a city announces that it is closing a homeless shelter, does it only talk to city officials or does it also talk to the homeless population that utilized that shelter? When discussing an economic downturn does the media outlet focus on the impact of only one segment of society (business owners/shareholders, labor unions, or the public)?

- **Are there double standards?**

Are some people/groups held to one standard while another group is held to a completely different standard? Are criminals from one segment of society described as ‘hardened criminals’ while those from another segment are described as having been ‘led astray’? Does a think tank that has liberal backing have its backing called out while the conservative think tank does not?

- **Do stereotypes skew coverage?**

Does coverage of an issue use stereotypes when discussing individuals/groups? Are people/groups described by racial, sexual, ethnic, or religious stereotypes? Remember, stereotypes can be positive and not just negative.

- **Is the language loaded?**

Words shape ideas. Is a person described as a terrorist/criminal or freedom fighter/Robin Hood? Is a program described in language that is used by only supporters or detractors? Is the program called an affirmative action or racial preference program? Is a government subsidy called ‘corporate welfare’ or is it ‘helping to maintain competitiveness’? How something is described has an effect on how it is perceived and supported by the public.

- **Do the headlines and stories match?**

Does the headline ‘cherry-pick’ one single item or quote that does not reflect the actual tone or content of the article? Is the headline inflammatory or hyped and intended more for ‘click-bait’ (getting readers to click on the story) than an actual representation of the article’s content?

- **What is emphasized?**

What stories are put ‘above the fold’ or at the top of the hour? What stories are buried or not covered at all?

- **What photos are used?**

Does the photo/video that goes along with a story show a person or a group in an unflattering light? Is the photo/video framed in such a way as to make a person seem nicer or in a more positive light? An image is worth a thousand words, and often times those words are more impactful than the actual words used in the story.

- **How are numbers and statistics used?**

Does the article frame the argument as ‘almost 30% of people support this policy’ or is it framed as ‘over 70% of people are against the policy’? Also, remember that statistics don’t ever **prove** anything; they represent the results of a study and are limited by the structure of that study.

Detecting Bias, Spin, & Logical Fallacies, Oh My!

How to Detect Spin

Spin Control or Spin is defined as: the activity of trying to control the way something (such as an important event) is described to the public in order to influence what people think about it. Spin is a form of propaganda that is intended to shape people's opinions. It is often times considered to be part of public relations and individuals that are gifted at creating and presenting it are sometimes called 'spin doctors' or 'spinmeisters'.

- **Cherry Picking**

This is done by selectively presenting facts and quotes that support a certain position. For example, a pharmaceutical company could pick and choose trials where their product shows a positive effect, ignoring the unsuccessful trials, or a politician's staff could handpick speech quotations from past years which appear to show his or her support for a certain position.

- **Non-Denial Denial**

This is when a seemingly straight forward denial is not really one when you really look at it carefully. Typically, words or legal definitions are used that can have multiple meanings and therefore could be argued to mean anything. An example could be a criminal saying, 'I am not a thief at heart.' No, but they may be one in fact.

- **Non-Apology Apology**

"Mistakes were made" is commonly used by a speaker acknowledging that a situation was managed poorly but without accepting any responsibility for themselves, the organization they represent, nor does it place blame on anyone else. An actual apology is direct, "I made mistakes" or "John Doe made mistakes", and shows some level of remorse. The word "mistakes" also does not imply intent and leaves the door open for something to be an accident and not actually the fault of anyone. Another example is an 'if apology'. This is where someone apologizes 'if they offended anyone'. Again, it doesn't take any real responsibility or actually identify someone hurt by the words or actions.

- **Avoiding the Question**

This is where a direct question is either not acknowledged, or if it is acknowledged it is not actually answered. It can also be redirected back to the person asking the question by saying 'you tell me'. This puts the person asking the question on the spot and allows the person avoiding the question to attack the answer or the wording while still avoiding their own answer. The person avoiding the question can also attack the question itself saying that it is 'not-factual', 'biased', or 'taken out of context'. This redirects the conversation to the merits of the question and not the answer.

- **Burying the Story**

This is done by taking news that is unfavorable and announcing it at a time when it is believed that the media will focus on other news. Many times, bad news is announced after the cutoff time for the evening news on a Friday afternoon so that it won't be covered until Monday at the earliest by the major networks. It is hoped that by Monday, some other news will have come out that will overshadow the new from Friday. Another way to bury the story is to put a really bad piece of news in with a lot of bad news or with a lot of good news in the hope that it is drowned out.

- **Misdirection and Diversion**

Sometimes information harmful to an organization or group is leaked anonymously to the media and then the group can frame the reporting of the news as an attack. This makes the original group seem more sympathetic in the eyes of the public. A group may also leak false information that is actually worse than the actual facts and therefore make it seem that there is a lot of false information out there and that what is true is actually not all that bad 'in the grand scheme of things'.

Detecting Bias, Spin, & Logical Fallacies, Oh My!

How to Detect Logical Fallacies

Logical fallacies are errors in reasoning that will undermine the logic of an argument. Fallacies can be either illegitimate arguments or irrelevant points, and are often utilized because the person making them lacks evidence that supports their claim. You should avoid using logical fallacies in your own arguments and watch for them (and call them out) when used in the arguments of others.

- **Slippery Slope**

Concludes that if A happens, then eventually Z will happen. So, if we don't want Z to occur, A must not be allowed to occur either. Example: *'If we ban hover boards because they are dangerous, eventually the government will ban all toys, so we should not ban hover boards.'* In this example, the author is equating banning Hummers with banning all cars, which is not the same thing.

- **False Cause**

A conclusion that assumes that if 'A' occurred after 'B' then 'B' must have caused 'A.' Example: *'I drank bottled water and now I am sick, so the water must have made me sick.'* This assumes that everything is directly caused by the thing preceding it. This person could have eaten some bad food that morning and was just now showing the signs of food poisoning. Correlation does not prove causation!

- **Genetic Fallacy**

Equating the value of an idea, argument, or a product with where it comes from or from whom. Example: *'We all know that John Doe is a convicted criminal, so we should look at his claim with some suspicion.'* Just because someone or something has been wrong in the past, does not make everything from that source wrong.

- **Begging the Question**

The conclusion that the writer should prove is validated within the claim. Example: *'Dangerous and scary nuclear power should be banned.'* Just stating that nuclear power is dangerous and scary does not prove your argument. The argument is made by providing proof that nuclear power is in fact dangerous and scary.

- **Circular Argument**

Restating the argument rather than actually proving it. Example: *'I am a good communicator because I speak effectively.'* Both good communicator and speaking effectively describe the same thing. Instead a person should give examples like, 'I make good use of humor when speaking in front of groups.'

- **Either/Or**

Oversimplification of an argument by reducing it to only two sides or choices. Example: *'We can either stop using fossil fuels or destroy the earth.'* This example only allows two dramatically different options with no room in between for a range of options, many of which may be completely realistic options.

- **Ad Hominem**

An attack on the character of a person rather than his or her opinions or arguments. Example: *'My opponent's opinion is completely wrong because he is lazy and mean.'* This person's opponent may be lazy or mean but that doesn't mean that their argument lacks merits.

- **Ad Populum**

An emotional appeal that speaks to positive (such as patriotism, religion, democracy) or negative (such as terrorism or fascism) concepts rather than the real issue at hand. Example: *'Real, red-blooded Americans know that Senator Doe is the best choice for President.'* This argument ties being a good American with supporting Senator Doe's campaign for president and if you disagree, you must not be a good American.

- **Red Herring**

Misleading or distracting from the primary argument by offering up an unrelated argument. Example: *'Coal power plants may generate a lot of pollution, but if they close how will coal miners feed their families.'* The argument is shifted from trying to come up with solutions to pollution from coal factories to the economic impact of closing coal power plants. The jobs issue for coal miners may be important, but it does not address the primary discussion.

- **Straw Man**

Oversimplification of an opponent's viewpoint and then attacking that hollow argument. Example: *'My opponent supports raising the minimum wage and hurting small business owners.'* This makes it seem like their opponent only supports raising the minimum wage to hurt small business owners and not that they have several reasons why raising the minimum wage might be a good idea. They may even have ways to help small businesses.
- **Moral Equivalence**

Compares minor misdeeds with major atrocities. Example: *'The politician who wrote this legislation is as bad as Stalin!'* The chance of any legislator writing a piece of legislation that is equivalent to Stalin starving millions of Soviet citizens is remote. It is an unfair and incorrect argument.
- **Anecdotal**

Occurs when someone disregards or diminishes some fact or argument by stating that they have not experienced that in their own lives. Example: *'It may be true that smoking is bad for you, but my grandfather smoked two packs a day and lived to 101, so it can't be that bad.'* There are a lot of factors that impact a person's lifespan so saying that an argument is weak or wrong just because it doesn't seem to apply in their anecdotal case, is wrong.
- **Bandwagon**

The number of people that believe something does not increase (or decrease) the validity of an argument. Example: *'Millions of people believe in astrology so there obviously must be something to it.'* A billion people may believe that the world is flat but that doesn't make it true.
- **Turn Around**

When a person is accused (rightly) of having committed a logical fallacy, instead of correcting their own fallacy and shoring up their argument, they instead point out a logical fallacy on the part of their opponent. Example: *'Oh yeah? Well, you used anecdotal evidence earlier in this conversation.'* Their opponent may have committed that logical fallacy earlier, and it should have been called out then, but that doesn't excuse this person from making one now.
- **Burden of Proof**

Putting the requirement of proof on the shoulders of the person trying to disprove a statement not on the person making the positive statement. Example: *'You can't prove to me that Santa Clause doesn't exist, so he must exist.'* The burden of proof always lies with the person making the positive claim not those who don't agree. This is why in a criminal court case the government that accuses you of a crime must prove that you did something, not that you must prove that you didn't.
- **Middle Ground**

Claims that the middle between two different claims is the most correct. Example: *Becky says that vaccinations cause autism. Sarah says that the scientific evidence says that is not. Robert says that it is most likely true that vaccinations cause some autism.* Sometimes the truth does lie in the middle between two points but that is not always the case.
- **Appeal to Authority**

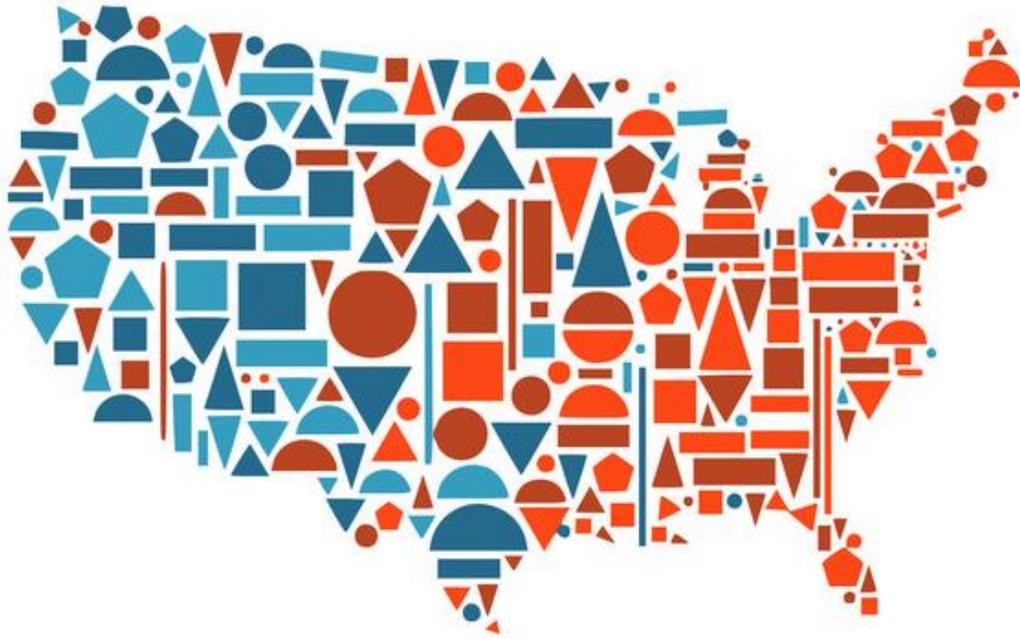
Calling on the authority of a supposed 'expert' to prove their point. Example: *'Dr. Smith says that washing your hands is not important when trying to prevent the spread of the flu.'* Just because someone has some authority on a topic, that doesn't mean that they are always correct.
- **Incredulity**

Just because you can't understand an argument and its reasoning, does not make it false. Example: *'I can't see how if the Earth is spinning as fast as scientist say it is, that we don't go flying off into space. The Earth must actually be standing still and everything revolves around it.'* Not understanding the Law of Gravity does not negate its existence.

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