



Monthly Lesson Plan:

Picking POTUS

Educator Guide

LESSON LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Chase the Race 2016 “Picking POTUS” lesson aims to prepare students in the following fashion:

- Students will be able to describe how the American President is selected.
- Students will evaluate to what extent the electoral process is democratic.
- Students will define American Democracy and the American “demos”

LESSON INQUIRY MAP

Is the American Election System Democratic?		
Chase the Race 2016, powered by Envision		
C3 Disciplinary Focus: Civics	C3 Inquiry Focus: Developing questions and planning inquiries	Content Topic: Presidential Elections
<p>C3 Focus Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D1.1.9-12 – Explain how a question reflects an enduring issue in the field. • D2.Civ.2.9-12 – Analyze the role of citizen in the U.S. political system, with attention to various theories of democracy, changes in Americans’ participation over time, and alternative models from other countries, past and present. • D3.1.9-12 – Gather relevant information from multiple sources representing a wide range of views while using the origin, authority, structure, context and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection. • D4.3.9-12 – Construct arguments using precise and knowledgeable claims with evidence from multiple sources while acknowledging counterclaims and evidentiary weaknesses. <p>CCSS ELA Anchor Standards Alignment: SL.9-12.1</p>		
Grade Level: 9-12	Resources: Picking POTUS Presentation	Time Required: 45 minutes to 60 minutes

LESSON OVERVIEW

Stage 1 - Desired Results		
<p style="text-align: center;">Alignment</p> <p>Envision Education Platform</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1A: Communication • 1B: Collaboration • 2D: Interpretation • 4E: Civic Literacy <p>C3 Framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D1.1.9-12 • D2.Civ.2.9-12 • D3.1.9-12 • D4.3.9-12 <p>CCSS Anchor Standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SL.9-12.1 	Transfer	
	<p><i>Students will be able to independently use their learning to...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate aspects of the American presidential selection process 	
	Meaning	
	<p style="text-align: center;">UNDERSTANDINGS</p> <p><i>Students will understand that...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democracy is complex • Democracy is evolving 	<p style="text-align: center;">ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is democracy? Who are the “demos”? • How does the American presidential selection process work? • Is the American presidential selection democratic?
	Acquisition	
<p><i>Students will know...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The definition of a democracy • The American presidential selection process 	<p><i>Students will be skilled at...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking a position and sharing why they support it 	
Stage 2 - Evidence		
Evaluative Criteria	Assessment Evidence	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurate defining of a democracy and demos • Identify the steps in the presidential selection process 	<p style="text-align: center;">PERFORMANCE TASK(S):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will work with their partners to discuss the essential questions • Students will hold thoughtful dialogue on the question: Is the American presidential selection democratic? 	
	<p style="text-align: center;">OTHER EVIDENCE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	
Stage 3 – Learning Plan		
<p><i>Summary of Key Learning Events and Instruction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will participate in a class discussion on democracy and how the American presidential process works • Students will collaborate with partners to research the presidential selection process and to formulate an opinion on the question: Is the American presidential selection process democratic? • Each group will share their thoughts on the question above, using information from the discussion or research • Optional Homework – Have students write two paragraphs on their individual position on the questions 		

PICKING POTUS

The U.S. President is sometimes referred to as “POTUS,” which stands for President of the United States. This lesson plan is based on three essential questions related to the selection of the U.S. President. The first two questions are designed to guide learning, and the third question gives students the opportunity to critically evaluate democracy and the American presidential selection system:

1. What is American democracy? Who are the American “demos”?
2. What is the path to the presidency?
3. Is the American presidential selection democratic?

Part 1: What is Democracy? Who are the American “demos”? (5 minutes)

- Ask students to brainstorm with a partner on the definition and elements of a democracy. (Slide 2)
- Have students share their thoughts on democracy. (Slide 3)
- Ask if anyone knows what “demos” means. (Slide 4)
 - Demos = Greek word for “the people”
- Who is able to vote in the U.S.? Has it always been this way? (Slide 5)
 - Review the definition of America democracy on slides 3-5 and ask students how that definition compares to their definition.

Part 2: What is the path to the presidency? (20 minutes)

- Ask the students to explain how we select the American President, discussing their response with a partner.
 - Use the video on slide 7 of the Picking POTUS presentation to highlight some of the steps it takes to elect a President. This video from the U.K. newspaper *The Telegraph* starts with the primaries and goes through Inauguration Day, using 2016 references:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zlk16F9ICTk>
 - Additional video options:
 - Using information specific to the 2012 election, the German company Explainity provides further detail on the process: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q-4Sfn ti-U>
 - Common Craft provides the following video that focuses on the electoral college: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ok VQ8I7g6I>
- After watching the videos, review the presentation for additional details:
 - Slide 8 – The Road to the White House
 - Events and steps in the process, from declaring candidacy to Inauguration Day
 - Slide 9 – Declaring Candidacy
 - Slide 10 – From Declaring to the Primaries
 - What candidates need to do to gain support

- Slide 11 – Primary or Caucus
 - Information about the primary elections and the difference between a primary and a caucus
- Slide 12 – Republican/Democrat National Conventions
 - Process for party nomination
 - Delegates and super delegates
- Slide 13 – Election Day
- Slide 14 – Electoral College
- Slide 15 – Inauguration

Part 3: Group Research (20 minutes)

- Students will work in groups to answer the question: Is the American presidential selection democratic?
 - Divide the students into groups of four, and give them time to do more research on their own about the American presidential process.
 - Using their own sources, as well as information from the videos and presentation, ask each group to create a 60-second position statement on the question and why they feel that way.

Part 4: Presentation (15 minutes)

- Have each group share their position on the question.
- Optional Homework – Have students write two paragraphs on their individual position on the question.