

1908 Election

Essential Question: What can citizens and politicians do to come up with new ideas to move America forward and what correlations can be made to the current election this year?

Lead up: We have just finished looking at the Industrial Revolution, Gilded Age, affects of Immigration and Populism. We looked at how the disparity between the rich and poor grew, causing a great stratification in wealth. We looked at the Election of 1876 and the Compromise of 1877 that followed, thereby effectively ending Reconstruction in the US. Just as significant, the corrupt political machines such as Tammany Hall, created from this forever changed how politicians vie for office. What lasting affects would these have? What affects would these have on the election of 1908?

Mission:

It's November 1908. Ol' Teddy has lived up to his promise to not run for president for a third term. The two candidates: William Howard Taft and William Jennings Bryan. As a class, you are going to re-enact the election of 1908. The roles are broken down as follows:

Teddy Roosevelt – 2 people
William Howard Taft - 3 people
William Jennings Bryan – 3 people

Farmers – 8 people
Wealthy Elite – 3 people
Immigrant Population – 7 people

Tasks:

1. Get into groups
2. Research your own groups perspective/message/political stance and or needs
3. “Speed dating” Interview session
4. Outline speech/rough draft
5. Finalize draft – get approved by Mr. Chester
6. Election day
7. Reflection Essay

Details:

***FOR THIS ACTIVITY TO WORK PROPERLY AND BE FUN, YOU MUST DO RESEARCH!!!! YOU MUST BE ABLE TO REPRESENT YOUR SIDE ACCURATELY, SUPPORTING YOUR ARGUMENTS WITH SOLID FACTS!!**

Teddy Roosevelt Group

You are Theodore Roosevelt and have one job: get William Howard Taft elected. How are you going to persuade people that Taft is the one to become president? Food? Bribery? Lie about the opponent? You need a convincing argument before you proceed to the next step. You are allowed to talk to different groups in the room reminding those voters why Taft would be a good candidate.

At the beginning of the elections, you will get 3 minutes to explain why Taft is the best candidate. Why is Taft a good candidate? What arguments will you make? What is the role of your reputation as President at the time? Why do you, Teddy Roosevelt WANT Taft to be President? Are these positions that are underlying your (Roosevelt's personal) motivations or ones that you (Roosevelt) will use to support Taft as the only possible choice?

Checklist:

Task	Finished	Date
Research what is going on in America at the time		
Research plan for America and what needs to change		
Arguments and points supporting Taft		
Question for each group of people represented (3 total)		
Outline of speech		
Rough Draft of speech		
Final Draft of speech approved by Mr. Chester		

William Howard Taft/William Jennings Bryan

You want to be president. Your job is to campaign for yourself (as a group). Think of each of you as 1/3 representation of the president elect you are campaigning for. How are you going to persuade people? Campaign buttons? Food? Bribery? Your group will have 5-7 minutes to present in front of the class explaining: your campaign position, your plan help the people of the US, why you want to be president, why you will be good, if you want to: why the other candidate is bad or ill equipped to fill the office.

Things to remember:

Which political party you are a part of?

What your platform issues are?

What is happening in the US at the time?

What the people are thinking?

You may use any technology in the room (smart board, sound system for a song, etc) to present your case

Checklist:

Task	Finished	Date
Research goals America		
Research plan for America		
Arguments and points for speech		
Question for each group of people represented (3 total)		
Outline of speech		
Rough Draft of speech		
Final Draft of speech approved by Mr. Chester		

Farmers/Wealthy Elite/Immigrants

Your job is to listen to the candidates and figure out which one is going to best serve you as president. Your group must also think up 2 questions (one for the Taft group and one for the Bryan group) which you will ask after each president presents his case. You need to research what life was like for the group you are representing. Where did you live? What were your struggles? What were you looking for in a candidate? How would a president help your life?

Checklist:

Task	Finished	Date
Research the life of: a typical person living the life you are representing		

Research what you are wanting a candidate to do to help your life		
Write 3 questions for each candidate to be asked in the speed dating round, including 3 for Roosevelt		
Write two questions for each candidate to be asked on Election Day		

THE ESSAY

The culmination of this project will result in an individual, two-part essay with each part being worth 50 points. What you write depends on which group you are in so see below for what you are to write on.

Taft/Bryan/Roosevelt

The first part of the essay you are to write about what your position was as part of the team you were on. What were the strengths of your candidate? What did your candidate believe and why? What people were most willing to vote for your candidate and why? What people were least willing to vote for your candidate and why? What were the weaknesses in your opponent and why were they weaknesses? The second part of your essay is your opinion. Do you think your candidate was right? Would you have voted for him: why or why not? Do you believe your candidate was the best representative for the US given what was going on during the early decade of the 20th century?

Farmers/Wealthy Elite/Immigrants

The first part of the essay will be why you (as a member of whatever group you are in) voted for the candidate you did. You must explain your position (economically, where you live in the US, what your every day life is like), and why you are attracted to the candidate you voted for. What issues were raised that really got you on their side? How would this candidate benefit you? **REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE SOMEONE FROM THE EARLY 1900'S NOT YOUR PRESENT SELF!!!** Also, what didn't you like about the other candidate? How would they not represent you? The second part of your essay is your opinion. Which candidate would you have voted for and why? Which candidate do you believe was the best representative for the US given what was going on during the early decade of the 20th century?

Friday 3/30 – introduce project, get into groups, start brainstorming ideas/assign roles in groups

Monday 4/9 – 1. research in groups on computers (you'll have 15 minutes with computers so come prepared with what you want to look for)
 2. prepare for "speed dating" interviews on Tuesday
 3. write questions to ask (as candidates write questions for

constituents, as constituents write questions for candidates)

- Tuesday 4/10** – 1. “speed dating” interviews
- a. the room will be separated into 3 sections (one for each candidate including Roosevelt) and each constituent group will get 7 minutes to ask questions and “grill” the candidates on their position as well as what they will do to help the group you are representing
3. write outline/rough draft of speech for election day

- Wednesday 4/11** – 1. Finalize draft of speech
2. Each candidate will get 3 minutes to explain their position to the constituents as a precursor to what they are going to say the following day

- Thursday 4/12** – 1. Election day
- 5 minutes – arrival and prepare teams for presentations
 - 3 minutes – Teddy Roosevelt group presentation
 - 5-7 minutes – Taft presentation
 - 5-7 minutes – Bryan presentation
 - 10 minutes – questions from the Farmers/Wealthy Elite/Immigrants
 - 3 minutes – groups confer on whom they are voting for (Roosevelt group may go around promoting Taft)
 - 2 minutes – voting
 - time remaining – discussion/reflection

Suggestion for places to do research:

1. American Pageant chs. 27 and 28 pgs 626-678
2. American Vision chs. 17b and 18 pgs 527-566
3. Internet
4. Primary document research
5. Political cartoons
6. Yellow journalism

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU GET TO CLASS ON TIME!!!! PLEASE COME TO CLASS PREPARED TO GET TO WORK IMMEDIATELY!