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**EACH LESSON CONTAINS:**

- Basic assignment which can be completed in approximately 20-30 minutes
- Teacher sheet
- Objectives
- Student sheet
- Detailed procedure
- Enrichment activities to supplement the basic lesson
- Assessment criteria
- Hard copies of all materials necessary to complete the basic assignment
- Links to web resources for enrichment activities
- Clearly identified links to Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Frameworks

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We are available to answer questions and provide **FREE** and **ONGOING** support. Please contact Debra Block, Director of Education, Norman B. Leventhal Map Center at the Boston Public Library, [dblock@bpl.org](mailto:dblock@bpl.org)

**Elections 2008**

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7. Were the online resources appropriate?
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9. We are always eager for feedback from teachers. Please tell us what worked best in these lessons. How might you improve them?
10. What kinds of lessons would you like us to create in the future?
11. Would you be interested in being one of our Pilot Teachers for our next Curriculum unit?

# EXPLORE THE CANDIDATES' lives



**LOCATION** World/US

**TIME PERIOD** Current Events

**GRADES** 8-12

## ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How have the candidates' lives affected their world view and political positions?

## OBJECTIVES

Students will construct a timeline of the candidates' lives.

Students will identify key places of candidates' lives on a world map.

Student will identify major events of candidate's lives and explore one in more detail.

Students will note similar and different experiences of the two candidates.

## ★ CURRICULUM STANDARDS

World History 1 and 2; United States History 1 and 2: Concepts and Skills

Interpret and construct timelines

The effects of geography on the history of civilizations and societies

The rise and continuing international influence of the United States

US History 2: 1877-2001

Contemporary America

Government Elective

Both John McCain and Barack Obama have lived several places in their lives. Has the path of their lives affected who they are and what they believe in? What adversity have they faced and how has this shaped their world view and policies?

### Procedure

1. See what information students know about the two candidates. Possible questions to prompt discussion:  
How old is each candidate?  
What job do they currently hold?  
Did they see anything about the convention on TV?  
Have they seen or heard the candidates speak?
2. Write the important details on the board.
3. Give class Student Sheet, World Map and Biographies for both candidates. They may work individually or in small groups.
4. Allow time to complete their work independently.
5. Discuss results. Post timelines and maps in your classroom.

**Time Allocation:** 20-30 minutes plus home work assignment for one evening

### Materials Needed

#### [World Map](#)

Biographies of Barack Obama and John McCain

Two different colored pencils or markers

Paper for timelines

### Assessment Criteria

- Did students identify the key events of the candidates' lives on their timelines?
- Did students identify the places where the candidates' have lived on their map?
- Did students note similarities and differences between the two candidates?
- Did students describe one event in the life of one of the candidates?

### Enrichment Activities

1. Have students read a newspaper article about the candidate and summarize what they have read.
2. Compare the biographies here with those at the candidates' official websites:  
[http://www.barackobama.com/learn/meet\\_barack.php](http://www.barackobama.com/learn/meet_barack.php)  
<http://www.johnmccain.com/About/>
3. Have students use the interactive timelines below to explore the candidates' lives more fully. Let them add these dates to their timeline and locations to the map.  
[http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2008/02/03/us/politics/20080203\\_MCCAIN\\_TIMELINE.html](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2008/02/03/us/politics/20080203_MCCAIN_TIMELINE.html)  
[http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2007/12/29/us/politics/20071229\\_OBAMA\\_TIMELINE.html](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2007/12/29/us/politics/20071229_OBAMA_TIMELINE.html)
4. Use Lesson 1 in conjunction with Lesson 2 to see the connections between events in the candidate's life and positions he holds.
5. Compare the key events in the candidates' lives with major events in US and/or World history.
6. There are a great many 'myths' about Barack Obama. Have the students explore these myths and explain why they continue despite being untrue. John McCain is a 'legend' for having survived 5 ½ years in a Prisoner of War camp. How has this shaped his political life and presidential campaign?

There are two men running for president of the United States: John McCain and Barack Obama. Each man has lived an interesting life. Use the information your teacher gives you to write a time line and locate the places they lived on a world map.

#### Assignment

1. Read the biography sheets about the two candidates.
2. Construct a timeline that identifies the important events in their lives.
3. Using the world map that your teacher gives you, label all of the places that John McCain and Barack Obama have lived.
4. Draw the paths of their lives.
5. Where have their lives crossed paths? Do they have any other things in common?
  
6. What has been different in the lives of the two candidates? How might these differences account for their current view of the world?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. For homework, select one place that one of the candidates has lived and find out what happened to him there. Write a brief summary of 4 to 5 sentences and include it on your timeline.

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## BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN MCCAIN

John Sidney McCain III was born on August 29, 1936, at Coco Solo Naval Air Station in the Panama Canal Zone.

McCain spent his childhood and adolescent years moving between naval bases in America and the Pacific. He attended Episcopal high School, a private preparatory boarding school in Alexandria, Virginia, graduating in 1954.

Following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, McCain graduated from the Naval Academy at Annapolis in 1958. He also graduated from flight school in 1960.

With the outbreak of the Vietnam War, McCain volunteered for combat duty and began flying carrier-based attack planes on low-altitude bombing runs against the North Vietnamese. On October 26, 1967, during his 23rd air mission, McCain's plane was shot down during a bombing run over the North Vietnamese capital of Hanoi. McCain eventually spent five and a half years in various prison camps, before he was finally released, along with other American POWs, on March 14, 1973.

His introduction to politics came in 1976, when he was assigned as the Navy's liaison to the U.S. Senate. In 1981, after marrying his second wife, Cindy Hensley, McCain retired from the Navy, and moved to Phoenix, Arizona. McCain was first elected to political office on November 2, 1982, easily winning a seat in the House of Representatives. In 1986, after the retirement of the longtime Arizona senator and prominent Republican Barry Goldwater, McCain won election to the U.S. Senate.

From 1987 to 1989, McCain underwent a federal investigation as a member of the "Keating Five," a group of senators who were accused of improperly intervening with federal regulators on behalf of Charles H. Keating Jr., a bank chairman whose Lincoln Savings & Loan Association eventually became one of the biggest failures in the savings and loan disasters of the late 1980s. He was eventually cleared of the charges, although investigators declared that he had exercised "poor judgment" by meeting with the regulators.

McCain weathered the scandal and won re-election to the Senate three times, each time with a solid majority. His reputation as a maverick politician with firm beliefs and a quick temper only increased, and many were impressed with his willingness to be extremely open with the public and the press. He has worked diligently in support of increased tobacco legislation and especially the reform of the campaign finance system, professing some more liberal views and generally proving to be more complex than merely a straight-ahead conservative.

He also emerged as a solid challenger to the frontrunner, Governor George W. Bush of Texas, for the Republican presidential nomination in 2000. Many people from both political parties found his straight talk refreshing. In the New Hampshire primary, McCain won by a surprisingly wide margin, largely bolstered by independent voters and cross-over Democrats. After a roller-coaster ride during the primaries--Bush won South Carolina, while McCain captured Michigan and Arizona--Bush emerged triumphant on "Super Tuesday" in early March 2000, winning New York and California, among a number of others. Though McCain won in most of the New England states, his large electoral deficit forced him to "suspend" his campaign indefinitely. On May 9, after holding out for two months, McCain formally endorsed Bush.

With Bush limited to two terms, McCain officially entered the 2008 presidential race on April 25, 2007, during an announcement in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

He officially received his party's nomination at the Republican Convention in Minneapolis.

<http://www.biography.com/featured-biography/john-mccain/bio2.jsp>



## BIOGRAPHY OF BARACK OBAMA

Barack Hussein Obama was born Aug. 4, 1961, in Honolulu, Hawaii. His father, Barack Obama, Sr., was born of Luo ethnicity in Nyanza Province, Kenya. Obama's mother, Ann Dunham, grew up in Wichita, Kansas. At the time of his birth, Obama's parents were students at the East–West Center of the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

Obama's parents separated when he was two years old and later divorced. His mother married Lolo Soetoro, another East–West Center student from Indonesia.

In 1967, the family moved to Jakarta, where Obama's half-sister Maya Soetoro–Ng was born. Obama attended schools in Jakarta, where classes were taught in the Indonesian language.

Four years later when Barack (commonly known throughout his early years as "Barry") was ten, he returned to Hawaii to live with his maternal grandparents, Madelyn and Stanley Dunham. He was enrolled in the fifth grade at the esteemed Punahou Academy, graduating with honors in 1979. He was only one of three black students at the school.

After high school, Obama studied at Occidental College in Los Angeles for two years. He then transferred to Columbia University in New York, graduating in 1983 with a degree in political science.

After working at Business International Corporation (a company that provided international business information to corporate clients) and NYPIRG, Obama moved to Chicago in 1985. There, he worked as a community organizer with low-income residents in Chicago's Roseland community and the Altgeld Gardens public housing development on the city's South Side.

Obama entered Harvard Law School in 1988. In February 1990, he was elected the first African–American editor of the Harvard Law Review. Obama graduated magna cum laude in 1991.

After law school, Obama returned to Chicago to practice as a civil rights lawyer, joining the firm of Miner, Barnhill & Galland. He also taught at the University of Chicago Law School.

Obama published an autobiography in 1995 *Dreams From My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*. And he won a Grammy for the audio version of the book.

Obama's advocacy work led him to run for the Illinois State Senate as a Democrat. He was elected in 1996 from the south side neighborhood of Hyde Park.

In 2000, Obama made an unsuccessful Democratic primary run for the U. S. House of Representatives seat held by four-term incumbent candidate Bobby Rush.

Following the 9/11 attacks, Obama was an early opponent of President George W. Bush's push to war with Iraq. Obama was still a state senator when he spoke against a resolution authorizing the use of force against Iraq during a rally at Chicago's Federal Plaza in October 2002.

That summer, he was invited to deliver the keynote speech in support of John Kerry at the 2004 Democratic National Convention in Boston.

In the November 2004 Illinois Senate election, Obama received 70% of the vote to Keyes's 27%.

His second book, *The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream*, was published in October 2006.

In February 2007, Obama made headlines when he announced his candidacy for the 2008 Democratic presidential nomination.

He officially received his party's nomination at their convention in Denver in August 2008.

Source: Excerpted from:

<http://www.biography.com/featured-biography/barack-obama/bio-print.html>

# WHAT ARE THE issues IN THIS ELECTION?



**LOCATION** US

**TIME PERIOD** Current Events

**GRADES** 8-12

## **ESSENTIAL QUESTION**

What are the important issues in this campaign and how does each candidate propose to address them?

## **OBJECTIVES**

Students will identify the major issues in this campaign.

Students will research each candidate's position on at least one issue.

Students will note any changes in the candidate's position.

## **★ CURRICULUM STANDARDS**

US History 1: Revolution to Reconstruction

Basic framework of democracy and concepts of American government

US History 2: 1877-2001

America's growing role in international relations

Contemporary America

Impact of sectionalism on American life and politics

History and Social Studies Concepts and Skills

Explain the basic function of the government in the US economy

Government Elective

This election is very important. There are many problems facing the nation and the next president will have to figure out how to solve them. Do John McCain and Barack Obama agree on what the problems are? How does a sense of the problem affect what they present as the appropriate approaches to solve these problems? To what extent has politics shaped their positions and caused them to shift their stances?

### Procedure

1. Brainstorm about problems the country is currently facing. List any issues they identify on the board. Probe further. For whom are these issues? Are they spread evenly or equitably across American society? Some questions to prompt discussion: Is everyone worried about health care? Gas prices? Illegal immigrants? What causes the variation in these concerns?
2. For each problem they identify, try to generate possible solutions. What do they worry about the most?
3. What do they know about the two candidates' position on any of these issues? Again write responses on the board.
4. Divide the class into groups and assign each group one of the issues to explore. Starting with the candidates' own websites as well as a more 'neutral' source, have each group explore the candidate's position on one of the following issues:
  - The War in Iraq
  - National Security and Defense
  - The Economy
  - Energy and the Environment
  - Education
  - Immigration
  - Health CareYou may choose to look at additional or different issues, depending on time and interest.
5. Give out Student Sheet.
6. Allow each group to present its findings.

### Time Allocation:

30-40 minutes plus time out of class to look at websites. Time to share results depending on presentation format.

### Materials Needed

Access to websites such as

<http://www.johnmccain.com/Informing/Issues/>

<http://www.barackobama.com/issues/>

<http://elections.nytimes.com/2008/president/issues/immigration.html>

<http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/issues/index.html>

### Assessment Criteria

Did the student identify the major issues in this campaign?

Did the student research each candidate's position on at least one issue?

Did the student note any changes in the candidate's position?

### Enrichment Activities

1. Look at each candidate's biography to see if his life experiences shaped how he arrived at his solution to the problem. Biographies can be found at:  
<http://www.biography.com/featured-biography/barack-obama/index.jsp>  
<http://www.biography.com/featured-biography/john-mccain/bio2.jsp>
2. Have the students watch the candidates speak about the various issues. For a list of speeches and video clips, as well as the clips themselves, go to:  
[http://maps.google.com/help/maps/elections/#obama\\_videos](http://maps.google.com/help/maps/elections/#obama_videos)  
[http://maps.google.com/help/maps/elections/#mccain\\_videos](http://maps.google.com/help/maps/elections/#mccain_videos)
3. Does either candidate vary his message based on where or to whom he is speaking? Using these websites, compare the candidates against themselves.  
[http://maps.google.com/help/maps/elections/#obama\\_videos](http://maps.google.com/help/maps/elections/#obama_videos)  
[http://maps.google.com/help/maps/elections/#mccain\\_videos](http://maps.google.com/help/maps/elections/#mccain_videos)
4. Divide the class in half. Have one side represent Barack Obama and the other John McCain. Have each group prepare to debate the major issues in this campaign. For more information on each candidate's position, go to:  
<http://www.johnmccain.com/Informing/Issues/>  
<http://www.barackobama.com/issues/>
5. Have students look at the candidates' ads to see how they present their position on the issues. Examples of ads can be found at:  
<http://projects.washingtonpost.com/politicalads/candidates/barack-obama/>  
<http://projects.washingtonpost.com/politicalads/candidates/john-mccain/>
6. Place the candidates in history. After learning their positions, have the student prepare their debate points on historical topics such as:  
The Immigration Quota Legislation of 1921 and 1924  
The Annexation of the Philippines after the Spanish American War  
The Alien and Sedition Acts (1790s)  
The Alien, Sedition and Espionage Acts (World War One)  
The Sherman Anti-Trust Act (1890)

There are two men running for president of the United States: John McCain and Barack Obama. Each man has strong ideas about how to solve the problems our nation faces. But do they agree on what the problems are? How does their understanding of the problems shape their solutions to them?

The following are all issues in this campaign:

- The War in Iraq
- National Security and Defense
- The Economy
- Energy and the Environment
- Education
- Immigration
- Health Care

Starting with each candidate's website, find out their official position on one of these issues or another approved by your teacher.

<http://www.johnmccain.com/Informing/Issues/>

<http://www.barackobama.com/issues/>

Using less 'partisan' sources, see if you can elaborate on these positions.

<http://elections.nytimes.com/2008/president/issues/immigration.html>

<http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/issues/index.html>

Has either candidate changed his position over time? Why?

Briefly summarize the issue you researched and both candidates' positions. Be prepared to present your findings to the class.

# Track

## THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND RESULTS



**LOCATION** US

**TIME PERIOD** Current Events

**GRADES** 8-12

### ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Do the candidates' travels affect the election results?

### OBJECTIVES

Students will follow the campaigning of the candidates until November 4, 2008.

Students will chart the candidates' campaign stops by state.

Students will identify those states that are important to the election.

Students will track the results of the election on November 4, 2008.

### ★ CURRICULUM STANDARDS

US History 1: Revolution to Reconstruction

Framework of American democracy and concepts of government

US History 2:1877-2001

The origins and impact of sectionalism on American life and politics

Concepts and Skills:

Interpret and construct charts and graphs that show quantitative information

Government Elective

The candidates travel a great deal during the campaign. What influences where they go and how often they visit certain places? Why are some locations avoided and others visited several times? These questions are relevant not only for the candidate but also for the money the campaign spends. As a way to introduce the realities of presidential campaigns in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, students will keep track of the candidate's campaign stops from now until the election. Tallying the election results will be a good way to see if their visits made a difference.

### Procedure

1. Introduce the two candidates and their activities on the campaign trail. What do they see as the candidates' goals in campaigning? Try to solicit answers that focus on the importance of meeting the voters, explaining their policies, trying to convince people that they will be a good president.
2. Provide students with the State Population and Electoral Votes Chart. Based on that information alone, where would they expect the candidates to campaign?
3. Tell the students they will keep track of where the candidates actually go each day. The students will take turns finding out where the candidates are and report back to the class. They should be able to get this daily information from one of the following places: a newspaper, the evening news, or the web. The candidates' websites usually tell where they are each day:  
<http://www.johnmccain.com>  
<http://www.barackobama.com>  
You can also keep track of the candidates at the following website:  
[http://maps.google.com/help/maps/elections/#campaign\\_trail](http://maps.google.com/help/maps/elections/#campaign_trail)
4. Have the student whose assignment it is report to the class where each candidate was the previous day.
5. Have students keep track of the candidates' travels. They may mark the number of visits to each state on the blank electoral map or use the State Population and Electoral Votes Chart.
6. A few times before the election, have the students check their charts/maps and complete Part I of the Student Sheet. Discuss their results and what might explain the patterns they notice.
7. On November 3, have students complete Part II of the Student Sheet.
8. For homework on November 4, have student complete Part III of the Student Sheet.

### Time Allocation

20 minutes to introduce lesson

Daily update

5 minutes for periodic check-ins (Part I Student Sheet)

20 minutes to complete Part II of the Student Sheet on November 3, 2008

Follow up after November 4—time will depend on actual election results!!

### Materials Needed

Transparency of Map with each state's electoral votes [also available at:

[http://www.netstate.com/states/maps/images/usa\\_electoral\\_votes04-08.gif](http://www.netstate.com/states/maps/images/usa_electoral_votes04-08.gif)]

Hard copy of Map with each state's electoral votes

State Population and Electoral Votes Chart



### Assessment Criteria

- Did the students keep a record of the candidates' campaign stops?
- Did the students note the number of visits to key areas?
- Did the students identify those states that were most important in this election?
- Did the students track the results of the election?

### Enrichment Activities

1. Track the travels of Cindy McCain and Michelle Obama.
2. Track the travels of the vice presidential candidates, Joe Biden and Sarah Palin.
3. Using the following website, have student predict whom they think will win the election.  
<http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/electoral-college/calculator.html>
4. Track the candidates' fundraising using one of the following two websites:  
<http://maps.google.com/help/maps/elections/#fundrace>  
<http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/map/>  
Compare the number of campaign visits with the money raised in each state.  
Compare the results with the money raised raised in each state.
5. Does either candidate vary his message based on where or to whom he is speaking?  
Using these websites, compare the candidates against themselves.  
[http://maps.google.com/help/maps/elections/#obama\\_videos](http://maps.google.com/help/maps/elections/#obama_videos)  
[http://maps.google.com/help/maps/elections/#mccain\\_videos](http://maps.google.com/help/maps/elections/#mccain_videos)

Your class will be keeping track of where the candidates go between now and Election Day, November 4, 2008. Keep your records up to date.

**Part I: Check in every few weeks**

Keep a record of where the candidates have been.  
Which states have both candidates been to?

Which states have neither McCain nor Obama been to?

Which states has just McCain gone to? Which states has just Obama gone to?

Look at the State Population and Electoral Votes Chart. Which states have the largest number of people/electoral votes? Has either candidate visited these states? How might you explain their campaign travels?

**Part II: November 3, 2008**

Using either your election map or State Population and Electoral Votes Chart, record the number of visits to each state.  
Graph or chart your results.

What patterns do you notice in terms of how often or rarely each candidate went to each state?

**Part III: Election Results**

After the election is over, color in each state, using a different color for the two candidates. Also use the State Population and Electoral Votes Chart to add up the number of Electoral Votes each candidate has received.

Go back and look at your graph or chart from Part II.

Look at the 3 states that Senator Obama visited most often. Did he win those states?

Look at the 3 states that Senator McCain visited the least. Did he lose those states?

Distribution of 2004 and 2008 Electoral Votes - Votes are allocated based on the 2000 Census.

Total Electoral Vote: 538; Majority Needed to Elect: 270



## State Population and Electoral Votes Chart

Rank	State or District	Population based on 2000 census	Share of US Population	Number of electoral votes	Rank	State or District	Population based on 2000 census	Share of US Population	Number of electoral votes
1	California	33,871,648	12.04%	55	27	Oklahoma	3,450,654	1.23%	7
2	Texas	20,851,820	7.41%	34	28	Oregon	3,421,399	1.22%	7
3	New York	18,976,457	6.74%	31	29	Connecticut	3,405,565	1.21%	7
4	Florida	15,982,378	5.68%	27	30	Iowa	2,926,324	1.04%	7
5	Illinois	12,419,293	4.41%	21	31	Mississippi	2,844,658	1.01%	6
6	Pennsylvania	12,281,054	4.36%	21	32	Kansas	2,688,418	0.96%	6
7	Ohio	11,353,140	4.03%	20	33	Arkansas	2,673,400	0.95%	6
8	Michigan	9,938,444	3.53%	17	34	Utah	2,233,169	0.79%	5
9	New Jersey	8,414,350	2.99%	15	35	Nevada	1,998,257	0.71%	5
10	Georgia	8,186,453	2.91%	15	36	New Mexico	1,819,046	0.65%	5
11	North Carolina	8,049,313	2.86%	15	37	West Virginia	1,808,344	0.64%	5
12	Virginia	7,078,515	2.52%	13	38	Nebraska	1,711,263	0.61%	5
13	Massachusetts	6,349,097	2.26%	12	39	Idaho	1,293,953	0.46%	4
14	Indiana	6,080,485	2.16%	11	40	Maine	1,274,923	0.45%	4
15	Washington	5,894,121	2.09%	11	41	New Hampshire	1,235,786	0.44%	4
16	Tennessee	5,689,283	2.02%	11	42	Hawaii	1,211,537	0.43%	4
17	Missouri	5,595,211	1.99%	11	43	Rhode Island	1,048,319	0.37%	4
18	Wisconsin	5,363,675	1.91%	10	44	Montana	902,195	0.32%	3
19	Maryland	5,296,486	1.88%	10	45	Delaware	783,600	0.28%	3
20	Arizona	5,130,632	1.82%	10	46	South Dakota	754,844	0.27%	3
21	Minnesota	4,919,479	1.75%	10	47	North Dakota	642,200	0.23%	3
22	Louisiana	4,468,976	1.59%	9	48	Alaska	626,932	0.22%	3
23	Alabama	4,447,100	1.58%	9	49	Vermont	608,827	0.22%	3
24	Colorado	4,301,261	1.53%	9	50	District of Columbia	572,059	0.20%	3
25	Kentucky	4,041,769	1.44%	8	51	Wyoming	493,782	0.18%	3
26	South Carolina	4,012,012	1.43%	8					