



Citizens, Not Spectators

Lesson 2: Where Do the Candidates Stand?

Student Handout 1: Fact v. Fiction, Learning About the Issues

This activity has two parts. First, you will gather factual information about an issue that is important to you. In the second segment, you will try to determine where the presidential candidates stand on that issue. The information you gather in this activity will also be used in a subsequent lesson.

Part 1: Learning About the Issues

Step 1: The teacher will divide the class into small groups of three (triads). Your group will choose an issue that is important to it. You will then discuss the subcategories of that issue and come to a consensus about which one your group will work on.

Step 2: Once the triad has reached a consensus on an issue's subcategory, each of you should write down everything you know about it. You will be allotted 5–6 minutes to do this. Share with each other what you have written.

Step 3: In this step, your group will determine what it needs (and wants) to learn about its issue. Often, the issues are viewed as a problem. Here are some basic questions you should consider:

- Which branch of government has the authority to deal with this issue?
- What government agency has the authority to deal with this issue? Be sure to include both national and state agencies where applicable.
- What groups of people, i.e., age, race, gender, region of country, etc., are most affected by this issue?
- How widespread is the problem?
- How severe is the problem?
- Are there private entities that could deal with the situation?
- What possible remedies exist?
- What are some of the financial implications of the problem or its possible remedies?
- What are the short term and long term implications if this issue is not positively resolved?
- How does this issue affect you directly? Indirectly?

(You are not limited to these questions and, based on your topic, there may be others that you should consider. Confer with your teacher as you work through this step.)

Step 4: The group will need to research the questions from Step 3 and bring its responses to class. (Your teacher will let you know how much time you have to accomplish this.)

Step 5: Once you have completed the research, you will meet with your group members and share the information you have gathered. Compare the new information with your original thoughts on the subject. Take note of differences that might exist.

Step 6: Each group will share its information with the class.

Step 7: The teacher will lead the class in a discussion about its findings on the issues.

Part 2: Where Do the Presidential Candidates Stand?

Step 1: Within your triad, take a quick poll about where you believe the presidential candidates stand on your issue. Each student should write a sentence or two about why they think the candidate would take the particular position they attribute to them.

Step 2: Your teacher will share an outline of the “Issues Chart” that each group will help to complete. Your group will be given its portion to fill out. This chart will remain in the classroom and will be used in other lessons.

Step 3: Within your triad, each student will need to complete one of three tasks. Determine which member will be responsible to do the following tasks:

- a) Write the information about the issue into the chart
- b) Explore where President Obama stands on the issue
- c) Explore where Governor Romney stands on the issue

(The teacher will let you know how much time you have to complete these tasks.)

Step 4: Once the tasks are completed, the group needs to meet and share its findings about the candidates. Compare what each of you thought the candidates’ positions were with what you found their positions to actually be. Add this information to the chart.

Step 5: Each group will be given the opportunity to share its findings about the candidates’ positions with the class. As you share your findings, include whether or not the candidates’ positions matched your initial speculation. Be sure to hand in your completed piece of the chart.

Step 6: Your teacher will guide you in a discussion about the candidates’ positions.