

PACKAGING PRESIDENTS

TWO CENTURIES OF CAMPAIGNS & CANDIDATES



Discussion Questions

Note to Teachers: A student will not be able to answer **all** these questions while touring the exhibit. One question from each topic might be assigned to students as they go through the exhibit, or students might work in groups on one of the following sections.

Presidential Cartoons

1. How does the cartoonist portray any bias regarding the candidate?
2. Is there a clear message given by the cartoonist? Explain.
3. Do negative cartoons have more impact than positive cartoons? Explain why or why not.
4. How might the cartoon persuade the voter to choose either candidate?
5. How are components, symbols, functions and lines used by the cartoonist to convey humor and still depict the message?
6. Which is used most effectively in the cartoon: images, symbols, text, or labels? Explain your answer.
7. How are the cartoons from the past similar in style or very different from current political cartoons?

Job Requirements for the Presidency


1. What are the requirements to be president?
2. Where are they listed?
3. What is the reason for these requirements?
4. Other than the requirements listed, name some qualifications that you believe would be beneficial to a president.
5. How do campaign strategists attempt to present the qualifications to be president their campaign advertisements? Are some strategies more effective than others?
6. What do you think is the most important qualification to be president?
7. Currently a foreign-born person cannot run for president. Is this a good rule or should it be changed? Explain your answer.

Presidential Appearances: Image vs. Realty

1. Does creating a certain image of a candidate deceive the voter, or is it putting the candidate in the best light? Explain your thoughts.
2. Can a photograph affect your view of the candidate? How so?
3. How does a staged or spontaneous photograph of a candidate affect a voter's perception?
4. How might a candidate's apparel and/or style affect his or her image?
5. Is Hollywood more effective in promoting a candidate's image than actual campaign managers? Explain why or why not.
6. Is it more important that a candidate have a good personality? Which personality traits help a candidate? Which traits might hinder them?

Campaign Buttons and Banners

1. What medium (banners, buttons, flags, leaflets, commercials, etc.) best allows a candidate to convey his or her message?
2. How did newspapers portray the candidates in the past? Is there a difference today?
3. Compare and contrast the sound bytes on today's news to the lengthy speeches of the past?

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4. Are the banners and broadsides of past campaigns similar to today's campaign posters? How so?
 5. Looking at the entire exhibit, are there parallels between much of the advertising to today's campaigns? Explain your answer.
 6. What type of campaign material or format has the greatest impact on you and why?

Campaign Issues

1. Many issues in presidential campaigns remain the same from past campaigns to the present.
 - economy
 - social reform
 - foreign policy
 - wartime vs. peacetime
 - isolationism vs. intervention
 - scandals and corruption
 - vague issues vs. specific issues

Find specific examples of how these issues played out in past presidential campaigns. How have these issues been portrayed in past campaigns compared to present campaigns?

Presidential Debates

1. How have the debates between presidential candidates changed from the past to today's debates on television?
2. Why is there so much emphasis on visual impact rather than message?
3. Explain how Lincoln might fare today in a televised debate.
4. What other past presidents have done well on television? Why do you think that is?
5. Do you think it is important to be good looking to be a presidential candidate today? Why or why not?
6. Have changes in campaign formats and methods allowed for an accurate view of the candidates' knowledge, grasp of the issues, and ability to do the job? In other words, are voters better informed today than in the past? Explain your answer.
7. Why were there no televised debates in the 1964, 1968, and 1972 presidential elections?

Graphic Art of Campaigning

1. How do the techniques of filmmaking, including script, visuals, editing, and performance make television commercials successful?
2. Give an example of how a candidate's campaign themes are put into images that work well in a television ad?
3. How can a television ad bring forth emotions and either inspire support or cast doubt about a candidate?
4. How are the strategies and messages the same even though the methods of campaigners are different?
5. How has the Internet changed the use of advertising and presenting a candidate's image? How so?