

Expository  
Text

# The Race *for the* Presidency

by Mary Atkinson



Mc  
Graw  
Hill

PAIRED  
READ

Elementary School Lawmakers

## STRATEGIES & SKILLS

### Comprehension

**Strategy:** Reread

**Skill:** Author's Point of View

### Vocabulary Strategy

Prefixes

### Vocabulary

announced, candidates,  
convince, decision, elect,  
estimate, government,  
independent

### Content Standards

#### Social Studies

Civics and Government

Word count: 706\*\*

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\*\*The total word count is based on words in the running text and headings only. Numerals and words in captions, labels, diagrams, charts, and sidebars are not included.



**Essential Question**

How do people make government work?

# The Race *for the* Presidency

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# Introduction

Have you ever voted for a class president? If so, you probably know that students choose between two or more classmates. These people are the candidates. They want people to vote for them. They hang up posters. They give speeches. They promise to do good things if they win. On voting day, the one with the most votes wins.

Kelly Ca was a class president who gave a speech for President Obama in 2010.



The elections for the president of the United States are a bit like class elections. But they take much more time. Presidential elections are held every four years. The race for the presidency starts more than a year before the election.

## **WHO CAN BE PRESIDENT?**

The president must:

- ★ be at least 35 years old
- ★ be a natural born U.S. citizen
- ★ have lived in the U.S. for 14 or more years.

Theodore Roosevelt was only 42 when he became president.



## Chapter 1

# The Primary Campaign

The race for the presidency starts with special elections. These are called **primary elections**. Most candidates are part of a political party. In the United States, the two main parties are the Democrats and the Republicans. Voters choose candidates from each party to go on to the general election.

Some candidates stay **independent**. They do not belong to a party.

### THE TWO MAIN PARTIES

The Democratic Party has been around since 1828. It aims to give all workers equal opportunities and justice.

★ The Republican Party was started in 1854. The first Republicans were against slavery. Today, the party aims to protect peoples' rights.



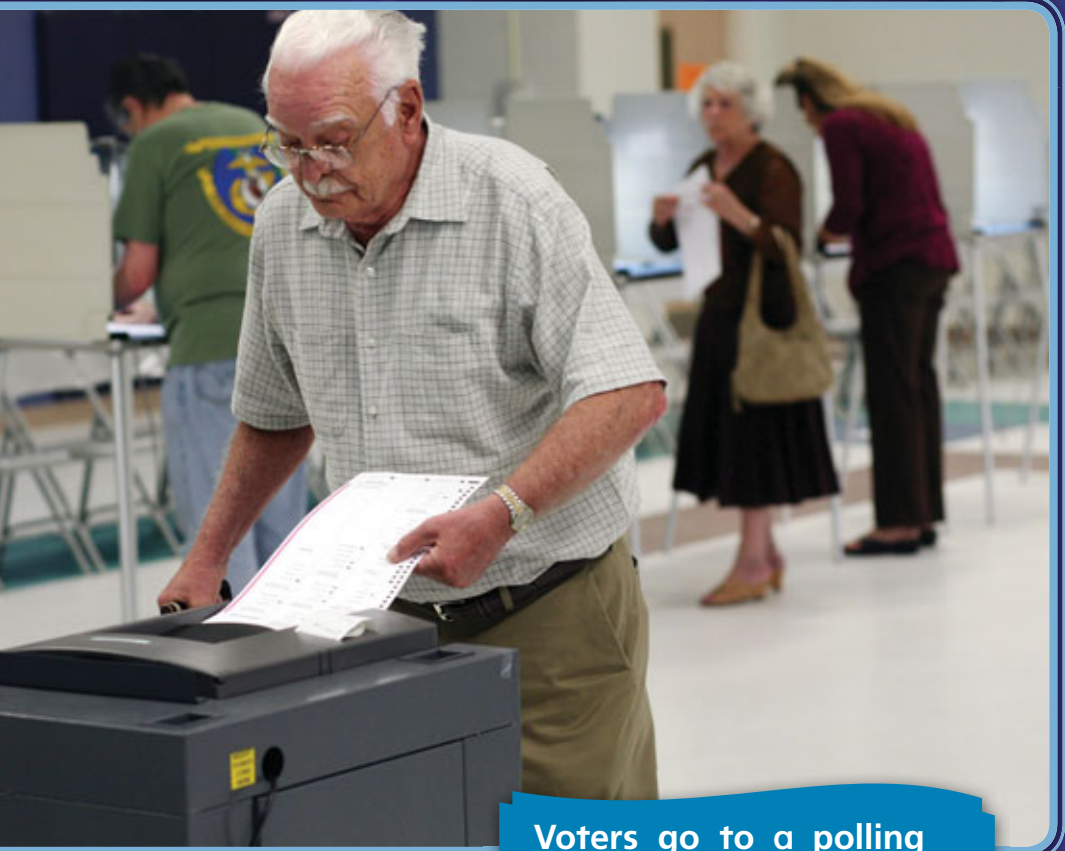


Each state has a primary election to pick the Republican candidate and the Democratic candidate they like. A few states don't hold primaries. The parties choose their candidates at a meeting called a **caucus**.

Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton talks to people outside a polling place in 2008.



During the primaries, the candidates try to convince people in their party to vote for them. They meet voters and talk about what they would do as president. Voters read newspapers and watch TV to figure out who to vote for.



Voters go to a polling place to cast their vote.

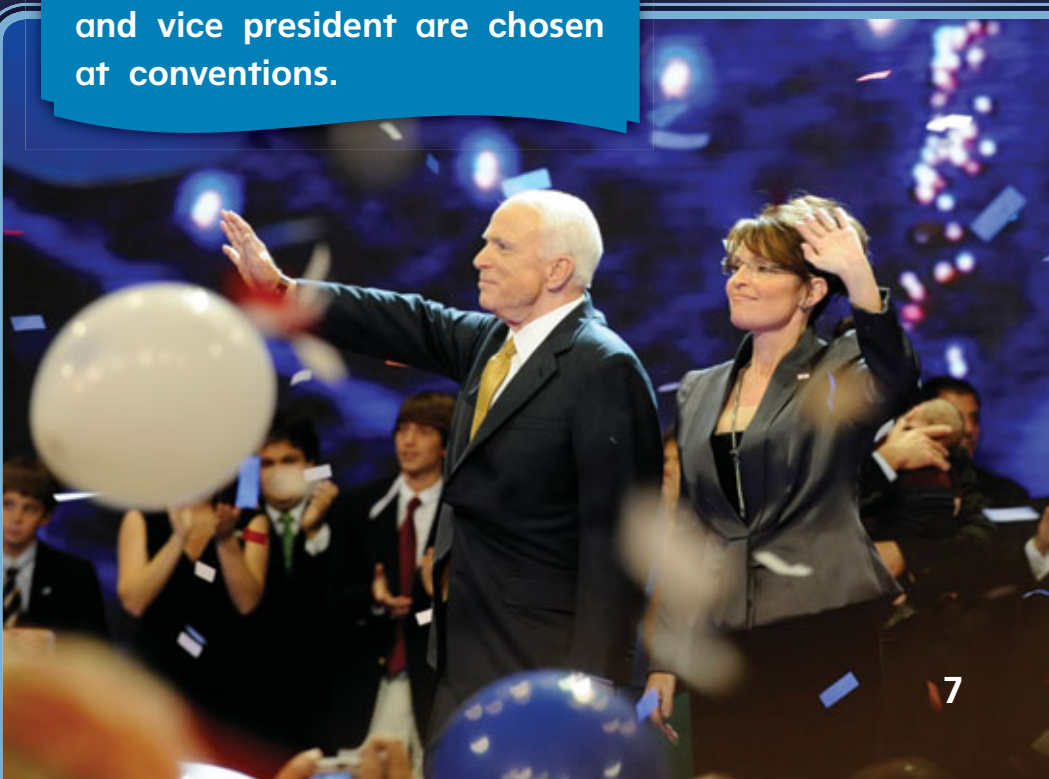


The two main parties each hold meetings after the primaries. These meetings are called conventions. Each party announces a candidate for president and vice president. There are speeches and parties. They talk about their ideas. They plan their **campaign**.

**STOP AND CHECK**

What are the primaries?

The candidates for president and vice president are chosen at conventions.



## Chapter 2

# The General Election

After the conventions, the campaigns begin. The Republican candidate and the Democratic candidate travel around the country. They want to convince as many people as they can to vote for them. Many people work for each campaign. They plan events and raise money.

2004 candidate John Kerry met the public as part of his campaign.



To win the election, the candidates need to know what kind of government people want. Candidates talk to people to find out their problems. They do research. They ask questions and collect the answers.



## CAMPAIGNS IN THE PAST

Candidates in the past couldn't zip across the country in planes or talk on television. They got noticed in other ways. Cross-country train journeys, known as whistle-stop tours, were popular.

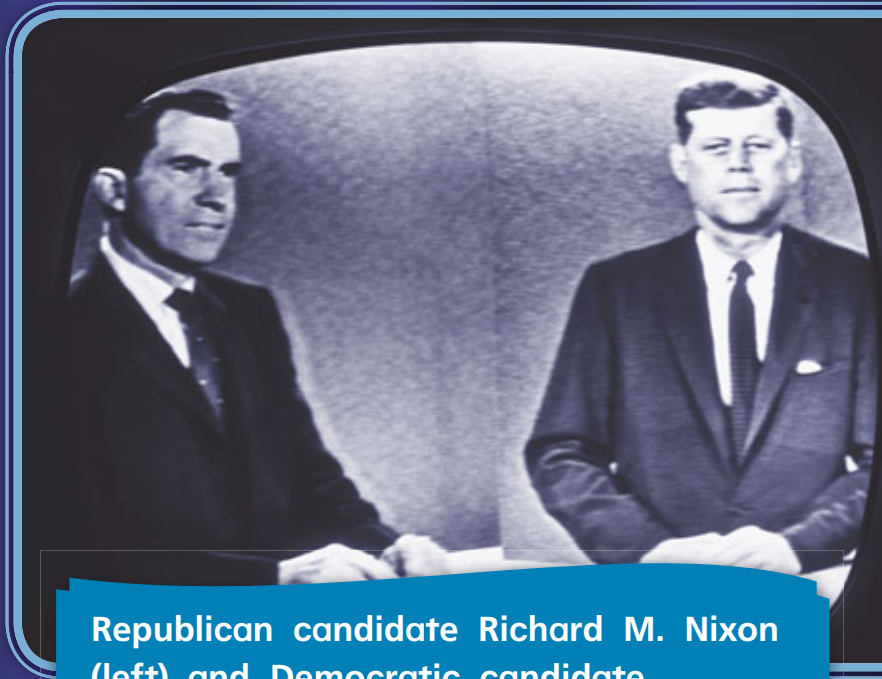




Candidates make promises about what they will do. Reporters and voters ask the candidates hard questions. They want to find out if the candidates' ideas will work. They want to know if there will be any problems if they elect a candidate.



In a debate in 2008, candidates Barack Obama (left) and John McCain both answered the questions of a plumber from Ohio.



Republican candidate Richard M. Nixon (left) and Democratic candidate John F. Kennedy debated on TV in 1960.

**Debates** are a good way to find out about candidates. The two candidates explain their own policies. They find mistakes in each other's policies. The debates are shown on TV. They can be exciting to watch. Most importantly, they help voters make a decision about how to vote.

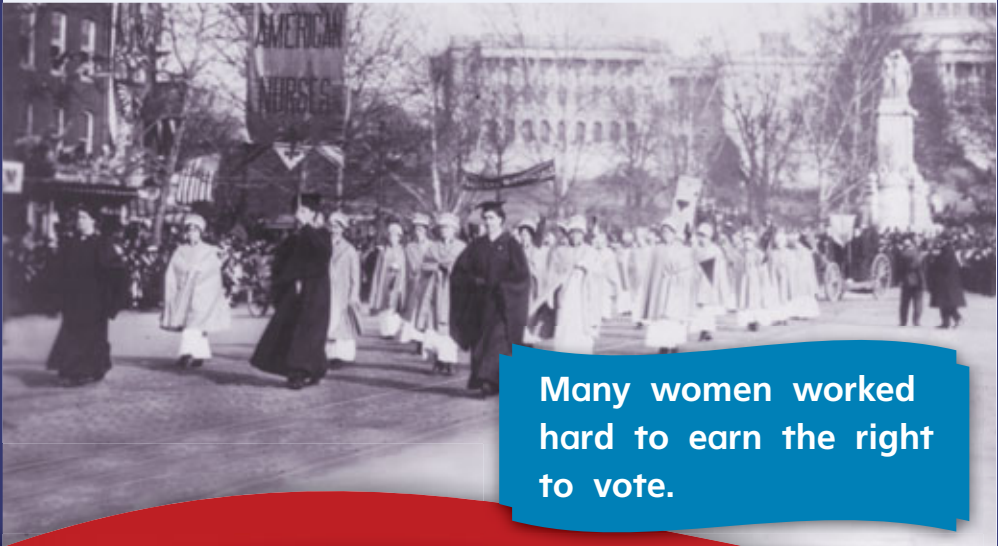
**STOP AND CHECK**

What do candidates do during a debate?

## Chapter 3

# Election Day

Election day is the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. Polling places are set up. Poll workers help voters. They make sure the election is fair.



Many women worked hard to earn the right to vote.

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### VOTING TIME LINE

1856

All white men over the age of 21 have the right to vote.

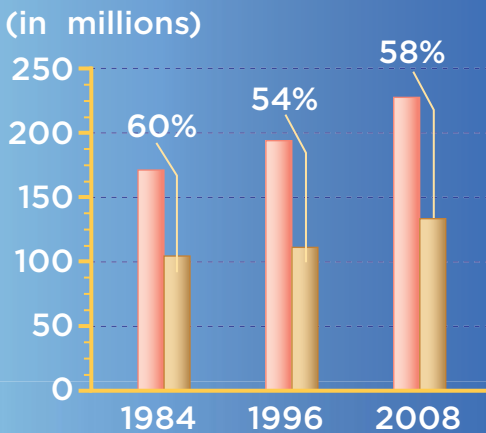
1870

African American men age 21 or older gain the right to vote.



Election day is exciting. Who will win? The results for each state are shown on TV. People estimate the final vote. Maps show which states gain a Democratic win, and which gain a Republican win. Finally the winners are announced.

### Voting in Presidential Elections



- People who registered to vote
- People who voted

This graph shows the percentage of registered voters that voted in three different elections.

1920

Women age 21 or older gain the right to vote.

Today

Most U.S. citizens age 18 or older have voting rights.

It is usually on January 20 that the new or re-elected president is sworn in. This day is known as Inauguration Day. The ceremony takes place at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. It is the beginning of the president's term in office.



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On January 20, 2009, Barack Obama took the Oath of Office. He became the 44th President of the United States.

**STOP AND CHECK**

What happens on election day?

# Respond to Reading

## Summarize

Summarize the information in this book. Use your Point of View Chart to help you.

Details

↓

Point of View

## Text Evidence

1. How do you know that this book is nonfiction? **Genre**
2. How does the author feel about election day? **Author's Point of View**
3. What does the word *re-elected* on page 14 mean? **Prefixes**
4. Write about why the author thinks the candidate debates are important. **Write About Reading**

## Compare Texts

Read about how students changed a law.

# Elementary School Lawmakers

In 2006 a group of third and fourth graders wanted to change the law. The students wanted to make the pumpkin the official state fruit of New Hampshire. They had found out that pumpkins grew throughout the state.

Every October the people of Keene, New Hampshire, hold a pumpkin festival.



Peter Allen was a state representative. He had liked the students' research. He had put up a bill asking that the pumpkin become the state fruit. The students had spoken in support of their idea.

The class had reached out to other students. They asked them to send postcards supporting the bill. In March, their bill had passed the House vote. In April, it needed to pass the Senate vote.

### **VEGETABLE OR FRUIT?**

Is a pumpkin a fruit or a vegetable? A fruit is the part of the plant with seeds. A vegetable is any other part of a plant that we eat. Pumpkins contain pumpkin seeds so they are fruits.



Senator Robert Boyce wanted the strawberry to be the state fruit. The students were unsure which way the vote would go. Finally, the senators voted. They voted twenty-three to one for the pumpkin. The students had become lawmakers.

## **NEW HAMPSHIRE LAW**

### **CHAPTER 3: STATE EMBLEMS, FLAG, ETC.**

#### **Section 3:24 State Fruit.**

**3:24 State Fruit.** – The pumpkin is hereby designated as the official state fruit of New Hampshire.



## **Make Connections**

Do people know what the result will be when they vote for a bill? **Essential Question**

What do presidential candidates do to get votes? Did the students do the same things to get people to vote for the pumpkin? **Text to Text**



# Glossary

**campaign** (*kam-PAYN*) a set of activities to help get somebody elected (*page 7*)

**caucus** (*KAW-kus*) a meeting to choose candidates that is only open to members of the party (*page 5*)

**debates** (*di-BAYTS*) organized discussions between people (*page 11*)

**independent** (*in-duh-PEN-duhnt*) a person who does not belong to any party (*page 4*)

**primary elections** (*PRIGH-me-ree i-LEK-shunz*) elections for party members to choose candidates (*page 4*)

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# Focus on Social Studies

**Purpose** To see how surveys can be used for campaigning.

## What to Do

**Step 1** → Make a list of colors (or fruits, or some other item). Ask each person to choose their favorite.

.....

**Step 2** → Write the number of people that chose each item.

.....

**Step 3** → Make a "Vote for..." poster for the second most popular item.

.....

**Step 4** → Have a vote between the first and second most popular items.

**Conclusion** Which item did you think would be the most popular? How did your ideas change?

# Thinkmark

## The Topic

What is this book mostly about?

## Sequence of Information

In what order does the author give us the information in the book?

## Conclusions

What are the most important things you learned from this book?

## Author's Purpose

Why do you think the author wrote *The Race for the Presidency*?

## Make Connections

How are presidential elections like elections for class president?