

Tennessee Secretary of State

Civics Lesson Plans

Let the Campaign Begin!

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Grade Level: High School

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Introduction:

There are many elected offices in national, state, and local governments and also many issues of concern to the voters. In order for a candidate to successfully be elected to a particular office or for a citizen or interest group to promote a cause, it is important to determine how many votes are needed to win, and who the likely voters are and their concerns. It's also necessary to create and deliver a message to voters that will draw their support and excite them enough to turn out and vote! Political campaigns have changed throughout U.S. history because of election laws and new developments in technology. In this lesson students will analyze political campaigns of the past and present and perhaps try their hands at designing their own campaign materials. Let the race begin and may the best candidate (or issue) win!

Guiding Questions:

- What are the concerns of the voters in a particular political race?
- How does the candidate or party design a message to address the concerns of the voters?
- How does the candidate or party communicate the message and attract supporters?

Learning Objectives: In the course of the lesson, students will...

- Analyze historic campaign methods and materials.

- Draw conclusions about the effectiveness of particular approaches to promoting a candidate or issue.
- Have the opportunity to create materials to promote an imaginary candidate, issue, or party.

Curriculum Standards:

GC.27 Analyze appropriate textual evidence to evaluate the roles of polls and campaign advertising, and examine the controversies over campaign funding. (P)

GC.28 Describe the means that citizens use to participate in the political process (e.g., voting, campaigning, lobbying, filing a legal challenge, demonstrating, petitioning, picketing, and running for political office). (P)

GC.33 Describe the roles of broadcast, print, and electronic media, including the Internet, as means of communication in American politics. (P)

GC.34 Explain how public officials use the media to communicate with the citizenry and to shape public opinion. (P)

GC.38 Connect insights gained from appropriate information text to describe the obligations of civic-mindedness, including voting, being informed on civic issues, volunteering and performing public service, and serving in the military or alternative service. (P)

*See Extension Options and Modifications for Other Grades below to see how to adapt this lesson for your grade level.

Materials Needed:

- Information about 1840 Presidential Campaign
 - Summary of the Presidential Campaign of 1840: [“William Harrison: Campaigns and Elections” from the Miller Center at the University of Virginia.](#)
 - A picture of a parade from the 1840 Whig presidential campaign (see attachment)
 - A campaign poster from the 1840 Whig presidential campaign (see attachment)
 - A campaign button for William Henry Harrison, [Tennessee State Library and Archives](#) (see attachment)
 - “Tippecanoe and Tyler Too” song lyrics, [Library of Congress](#)

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- [Tools for Analyzing Primary Sources, Tennessee State Library and Archives](#)
- Campaign Literature from [Duke University's](#) collection of campaign memorabilia
 - [Stevenson](#)
 - [Dwight D. Eisenhower](#)
- Links to campaign commercials: [The Living Room Candidate – 1952 Eisenhower v. Stevenson](#)
- Access to www.4President.org

Background:

Political campaigns underwent a big change in the 1820's as most states dropped the requirement that voters must own property and expanded the franchise to include all white males over 21. Between 1828 and 1840, national political parties began to use new campaign trinkets and activities to attract and excite voters. Buttons, ribbons, scarves, songs, torch light rallies, and barbecues were all part of the new approach to campaigning for office. In the 20th century when women won the right to vote and new technologies in communication and entertainment appeared, political campaigns changed again. The 21st century has introduced social media into the political arena, and still, new campaign techniques are being introduced.

- [William Harrison: Campaigns and Elections](#), summary of events surrounding 1840 presidential campaign
- [Video Lecture](#): 19th Century Campaign and Election Tactics by Jon Grinspan. C-SPAN.
- [The Living Room Candidate – Presidential Campaign Commercials 1952-2012](#)
- [Presidential Campaign Slogans, since 1840](#)
- [Presidential Campaign Memorabilia from the Duke University Special Collections Library](#)

Lesson Activities:

Activity 1: The Campaign of 1840

1. Students may read or the teacher may summarize the events surrounding the campaign of Whig [William Henry Harrison in 1840](#). It was in this race that the Whigs copied many of the techniques for rallying voters that the Democrats had first developed to elect Andrew Jackson.

2. Students should examine campaign materials from this “log cabin and hard cider” campaign and draw conclusions about what the voters were concerned about and what they valued.
(See attachments: picture of parade, campaign poster, and campaign button). You may want to use the guide from the [Tennessee State Library and Archives](#) for help analyzing primary sources.
3. Students should read the lyrics (and potentially listen to) the song “Tippecanoe and Tyler Too.” What do the lyrics communicate about the candidate? What impressions does the song try to convey? Does the campaign seem to be more about issues or image?
4. Follow up: The Whigs used parades, rallies, songs, and even a big ball they rolled from town to town to drum up support for their candidate. Ask students to list examples what kind of events political campaigns use today and draw conclusions about which could be most effective.

Activity 2: Analyzing and Comparing the Campaign Techniques of 1952/1956

1. Television ads were first used in 1952. Choose two (or more) ads to show from the [Presidential Campaign of 1956](#) (in which Tennessean Estes Kefauver ran as Vice President). Ask students to identify what issues were important to the voters that year.
2. Compare these ads to the lyrics from “Tippecanoe and Tyler Too.” How have concerns changed?
3. Now ask students to examine some of the [Dwight D. Eisenhower](#) and [Adlai Stevenson](#) campaign material from 1952 and 1956 from the [archive at Duke University](#).
 - a. What conclusions can they draw about constituents’ concerns?
 - b. What can they conclude about the 1950’s from the use of campaign advertising on the packages of cigarettes?
 - c. How do the campaign materials of the 1950’s differ from those of the 1840’s?
 - d. How did TV ads change the way candidates campaigned?
4. Invite students to use [4President.org](#) to compare and contrast historical campaigns.
 - a. How have campaign literature and TV ads changed over the last few decades?
 - b. Are people concerned about the same types of issues?
 - c. How has the introduction of social media changed campaigns?

Conclusion:

Ironically, as the methods of reaching voters have increased, voter turnout percentages at elections have decreased from their highs in the 19th century. (See Grinspan [lecture](#) for background.) Have students explore the relationship between how campaigns have evolved and falling voter turnout.

- What can political parties and candidates do today to create the campaigns they need to turn out voters at the polls?
- How can citizens be convinced to register to vote and to exercise their right to vote?

Extension Options:

- Campaigning for Ideas
 - Not all political campaigns involve electing someone to office. In the summer of 1920, members of the Tennessee General Assembly were called into special session to consider ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment that would give women the right to vote. There are various resources to use on that subject:
 - Tennessee State Library and Archives, [Women's Suffrage in Tennessee](#)
 - Tennessee State Museum, [Becoming the "Perfect 36": The Vote for the Vote, August 18, 1920, Tennessee House Chamber](#)
 - Library of Congress, [Tactics and Techniques of the National Woman's Party Suffrage Campaign](#)
 - Encourage students to research other historical issue campaigns in Tennessee.
- Invite a speaker to the class who has run a campaign to share their experiences with the class.
- Have students analyze the current campaigns for the Presidency and compare and contrast them to historical campaigns.
- Create your own campaign. See details below.

Students can produce their own campaign in a number of different ways. Teachers may have students divide into groups and choose issues from current political races from the candidates' web sites, from particular events or causes in history, or even from current issues of concern in their communities. The point of any campaign is to arouse public

interest on the issues and to design a means to address such issues that will move people to take action. You could choose from among the following scenarios:

- Visit the websites of the major political parties for a particular race and list the positions on the issues on slips of paper. Divide the class into two or more small groups and have them draw at random at least 3 issues around which to build their political party and campaign. Once they have their issues, they may be required to produce 3 or more of the following:
 - Choose a name for their party and create a mascot (like the Democrat donkey or Republican elephant) and a slogan that captures the essence of their party. Create the ideal candidate for your party.
 - Create posters or mailers that could be used to persuade voters about the issues.
 - Create buttons, ribbons, or badges to be worn in support of the issue, candidate, or party.
 - Decide whose endorsements the candidate or issue would need (other elected officials or interest groups).
 - Create a 30 second radio/TV ad that could be used to support the candidate and one of the issues.
 - Create a cheer or song that could be used at a political rally.
 - Play the role of the candidate (or someone endorsing the candidate) and deliver a speech at a political rally to and convince citizens of the need to support the issues by voting.
 - Design a social media strategy, creating at least 6 tweets or posts that could be posted about the campaign issues.
- Choose an era from history and design a campaign for an issue using any or all of the elements above.
 - One example could be the issue of the first Bank of the United States that was created by Alexander Hamilton. The dissension over it created the first political parties: the Federalists and the Democratic Republicans. Have students design a campaign in favor or against the bank.
 - Any debatable issue in history could be a topic for a campaign. For example, students could be required to produce TV spots or tweets for a historic issue. This lesson examines the use of typical campaign arguments and techniques in the historic election of 1864.

- Choose an issue in the school or community and design a campaign to stir up interest. Use any of the campaign elements above to persuade people to contact their elected officials to take action on the issue. Supporters in favor or against the issue might also develop a list of “talking points” that could be used to promote their position.

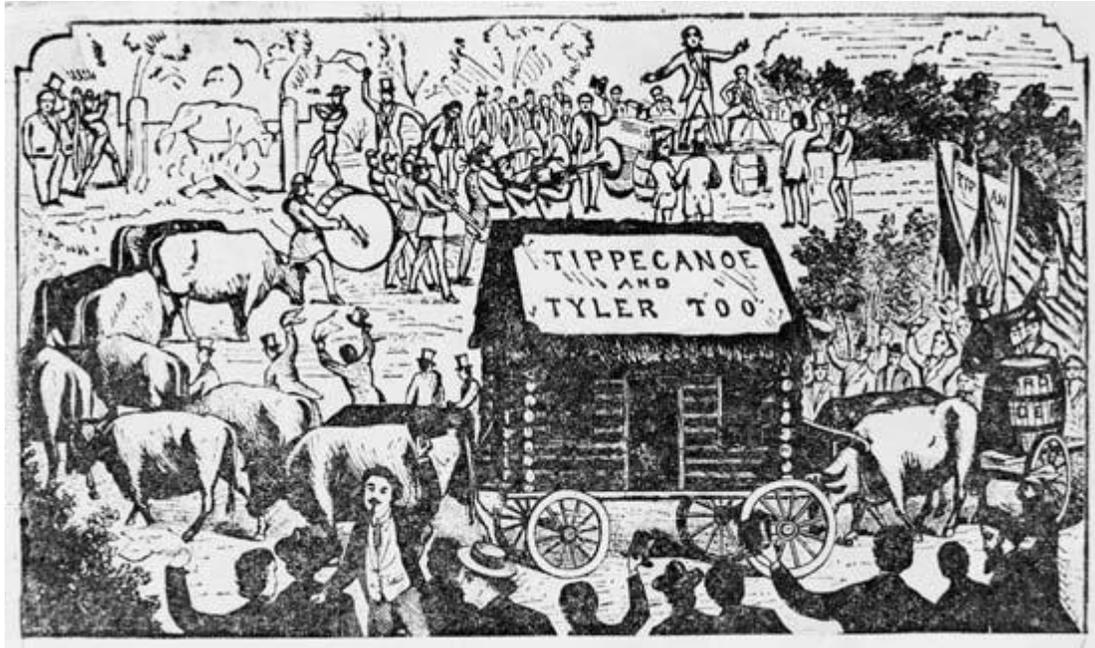
Assessment of the Campaign Project: Teachers should address the following aspects when developing a rubric.

- Does the product reflect an understanding of the issues?
- Is the design of the product appropriate for the party/candidate/issue?
- Is the product persuasive?
- Does the product reflect effort? Creativity?

Modifications for Other Grades:

US History & 8th Grade American History

- Like this lesson looked at the campaigns of 1840 and 1952/1956, have students analyze other historic elections and compare them to today’s campaign techniques.
- Take an issue that was debated in history and have student create campaign materials for each side of the debate.
- Analyze a historical movement and their use of campaign techniques such as women’s suffrage or the civil rights movement.



Source: Whig Party: Tyler. Photograph. Britannica Online for Kids. <<http://kids.britannica.com/comptons/art-183274>>.

HARRISON! AND **REFORM!!**

TO THE LOG



CABIN BOYS.

You are, one and all, invited to attend a meeting of the
friends of

Harrison & Reform,

At the OLD COURT ROOM, (Riley's Building.)

**On Saturday Evening next,
AT HALF PAST SEVEN,**

To perfect the Arrangements necessary for the

Springfield Convention;

And also to attend to other important business.

10
Citizens of Upper Alton, of Madison county, and all
other LOG CABIN BOYS, are particularly invited to be
present.

Alton, May 19, 1840.

J. A. NOBLE,
Sec'y Com. of Arrange.

Log Cabin Boys campaign event poster

CREDIT: "Harrison! and reform!!" Alton (no first name; no lifespan). One page paper flyer, 1840. Library of Congress, Printed Ephemera Collection: Broad­sides, leaflets, and pamphlets from America and Europe . (No Reproduction Number.) Digital ID: rbpe 01601000 <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.rbc/rbpe.01601000>.



1840 presidential campaign button for William Henry Harrison

Campaign medallion for Major General William Henry Harrison, during the presidential election of 1840. The front of the medallion says he was "born February 8, 1773." The reverse of the medallion says "The People's Choice in the Year 1840" and features a log cabin. That he was born in a log cabin was a hallmark of Harrison's "Tippecanoe & Tyler Too" campaign. According to the donor, it was found in a box belonging to Benjamin Brasell, a Spanish-American War veteran.

Source: Tennessee State Library & Archives, click [here](#) for link.