

Using NewsHour Extra Feature Stories

STORY

Upcoming Primaries Gain Importance as Candidates Vie for Delegates, 02/06/08

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/us/jan-june08/supertuesday_2-06.html

Estimated Time: One 45-minute class period with possible extension

Student Worksheet (reading comprehension and discussion questions without answers)

PROCEDURE

1. WARM UP

Use initiating questions to introduce the topic and find out how much your students know.

2. MAIN ACTIVITY

Have students read NewsHour Extra's feature story and answer the reading comprehension and discussion questions on the student handout.

3. DISCUSSION

Use discussion questions to encourage students to think about how the issues outlined in the story affect their lives and express and debate different opinions.

INITIATING QUESTIONS

1. What is "Super Tuesday"? What happened?

2. How do the Democrats and Republicans decide who should run for president?

3. Who are the main contenders to win the Republican and Democratic party nominations?

READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS – **Student Worksheet**

1. What was the outcome for each party after Super Tuesday's votes were tallied?

ANSWER

Among the Republicans, Senator John McCain from Arizona appeared to solidify his role as the front-runner, but still faces competition from resurgent former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee.

Former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney suspended his presidential bid Thursday, telling conservative leaders in Washington, "If I fight on in my campaign ... I would forestall the launch of a national campaign and frankly I'd be making it easier for Senator Clinton or Obama to win."

The picture on the Democratic side remained far murkier. New York Sen. Hillary Clinton won the popular vote in major states like California and New York, while Illinois Sen. Barack Obama won more states.

2. Who are the Republican candidates and where did they each do well Tuesday?

ANSWER

McCain's best showing was in the Northeast and along Route 66 from Illinois to California.

Romney did well in his home state of Massachusetts as well as in Western states and among voters who identified themselves as conservatives.

Finally, Huckabee, scored a series of surprisingly strong wins in the South, doing well in the so-called "Bible Belt."

3. Who are the Democratic candidates and what were their results after Tuesday's vote.

ANSWER

Senator Barack Obama won more states than rival Senator Hillary Clinton, but her campaign won a significant victory in California -- by far the nation's most populous state and the crown jewel of every national political race.

It remained to be seen who would get the larger delegate boost coming out of Super Tuesday but as of Wednesday, Clinton had earned 582 delegates, giving her a total of 843, and Obama won 562, for a total of 752. A Democratic candidate needs 2,025 to win the nomination.

4. What is a possible scenario that could impact the Democratic national convention this year?

ANSWER

Some Democratic watchers say it's possible that the party could get to the national convention without a clear nominee.

"Because of party reforms in the past and a close race for delegates this year, a nightmare scenario is building for the Democratic National Convention in August: It is easy to imagine that Barack Obama could get to Denver with more pledged delegates than Hillary Clinton, but that she could get the nomination based on the votes of the super delegates," Politico reported.

Super delegates are party officials, members of Congress and other high-ranking Democrats who are not selected in a primary or caucus and can vote for whomever they want at the convention.

5. What are exit polls?

ANSWER

Exit polls that ask voters to explain who they voted for and why revealed some trends across the nation.

6. What are some trends revealed by Super Tuesday exit polls?

ANSWER

Black and young voters overwhelmingly supported Obama, while women went for Clinton by large margins, the New York Times reported.

But white men -- who had largely voted for former Senator John Edwards before -- appeared to be heading to Obama's camp after his departure from the race.

On candidate qualities, Republicans who voted for McCain valued experience, leadership and the ability to beat Democrats in a general election. He was widely considered the best Republican to be commander in chief.

Romney dominated among people looking for a candidate who shared their conservative values and wanted a hard line against illegal immigrants.

In California, Democrats and Republicans reported the economy was the most important issue facing the country, with about 90 percent of Democrats characterizing it as not so good or poor; about 70 percent of Republicans said the same.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (more research might be needed)

1. Research the system for awarding national convention delegates for the Democratic and Republican parties. How are they similar and how are they different? When did the current rules come to be? According to historians and experts, what significant events impacted these changes.

You can use information from this NewsHour discussion with historians:

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/politics/jan-june08/historians_02-05.html

2. Look at the election in your state. Has your state voted in a primary or caucus yet? How do the results in your state compare to the current situation? If your state has not yet voted, how do you think your state will go in both parties?

State by state information: <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/vote2008/primaries/states/>

3. What makes this primary election cycle unique to those of the recent past? Look at what makes the candidates who are running in both parties unique. Why is this cycle continuing for a longer period of time without set nominees? What factors are influencing this race?

NewsHour Vote 2008: <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/vote2008/index.html>

Extension Activity

Have students write a 300-500 word essay on this topic providing clear examples. Send your completed editorial to NewsHour Extra (extra@newshour.org). Exceptional essays might be published on our Web site.