

Student Worksheet

DIRECTIONS

Read the following news story and answer the reading comprehension and discussion questions. Use additional paper if necessary.

STORY

Obama Cabinet Picks Create Open Senate Seats, and Controversy,

12/16/08

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/us/july-dec08/senate_12-16.html

READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Who is Rod Blagojevich?

2. How do states fill their open Senate seats?

3. Why are there open Senate seats in Illinois, New York, Delaware and Colorado?

4. How were senators chosen before 1913?

5. Who is Caroline Kennedy?

6. What does Thomas Mann think will happen because of the Blagojevich scandal?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (more research might be needed)

1. Do you think Caroline Kennedy should replace Hillary Clinton?

2. Do you think Rod Blagojevich knew what he was doing was wrong or did he see it as politics as usual? Why do you think Illinois has such a problem with political corruption? Do you think corruption breeds corruption? What does it take to break a cycle of political corruption?

3. Do you think governors should choose who should fill an open Senate seat? If not, how should open Senate seats be filled?

4. What experiences or qualifications make a good senator? Why?

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.