

## Using NewsHour Extra Feature Stories

### STORY

#### **Iranian Presidential Election Erupts in Protest, 06/16/2009**

[http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/world/ian-june09/iran\\_06-16.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/world/ian-june09/iran_06-16.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. Where is Iran? What countries border it?**

**2. What is an Islamic Republic?**

**3. What is a democracy?**

READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS – [Student Worksheet](#)

**1. Why are there protests in the streets of Tehran, Iran?**

#### ANSWER

Hundreds of thousands of students and moderates rallied in the capital Tehran after the government declared victory for Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad over pro-reform leader Mir Hossein Mousavi.

**2. What has been Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's response? Why is that important?**

#### ANSWER

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei ordered the government's influential group of clerics, the Guardian Council, to investigate the charges and perform a partial recount on the votes. Khamenei actually wields the most power.

**3. What has been the U.S. government response?**

#### ANSWER

Not wanting to mar the possibility of negotiations with Iran's leadership, the U.S. government has remained quiet regarding the controversy. Vice president Biden said he did not wish to take sides.

**4. What percentage of Iranian voters cast ballots on election day?**

#### ANSWER

Iranian citizens turned out in record numbers, with 85 percent of Iran's 46.2 million voters casting ballots according to the Associated Press.

**5. Who is President Ahmadinejad's base support?**

**ANSWER**

President Ahmadinejad received nearly 63 percent of the vote with significant support from working-class and rural Iranians.

**6. Why is it ironic that the opposition leader, Mr. Mousavi is a reform candidate?**

**ANSWER**

Some Iranian citizens had been growing increasingly unhappy with President Ahmadinejad's politically repressive actions as president but Mr. Mousavi had actually executed many political prisoners as prime minister during the Islamic revolution.

**7. Why did the Iranian government limit some technologies during the election? What was the result?**

**ANSWER**

In an effort to clampdown on would-be protest organizers, the Iranian government began cutting off text-messaging services on election day. Cell phone providers and access to certain Web sites like Facebook and Twitter have also been blocked.

But many Iranian citizens, using proxy servers still used Twitter and Facebook to blog and post photos from the protests in real time. Twitter even announced that it would delay scheduled maintenance so as not to impede upon the elections.

**8. When did Iran become an Islamic Republic?**

**ANSWER**

In 1979, Iran became an Islamic republic after religious fundamentalists overthrew the Western-backed Shah, in what is known as the Islamic Revolution.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (more research might be needed)

**1. Does it surprise you that so many people would march in the streets over elections? Why or why not? Do you think that the same could happen in the United States?**

**2. Does the vote outcome surprise you? Why or why not?**

**3. There are accusations of vote tampering; do you think this happens in most elections?**

**4. Mr. Mousavi was a hard liner when he was prime minister, do you think that he should be able to call himself a reformer now? Why or why not?**

**5. From what you know of the candidates, who would you vote for?**

**6. In the United States we have an Electoral College so elections are not a strict vote count; do you think this is a good idea? What might be some pros and cons of this system compared with Iran's?**

**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.