

2.1 Lesson Plan: Changing Media, Changing Campaigns

Overview

Students explore how media technologies have played a role in presidential campaigns throughout history. After assessing the timeline illustrating the history of media in presidential campaigns on the :30 Second Candidate Web site (www.pbs.org/30secondcandidate), students research how media has been used in the 2000, 2004 and 2008 elections. They determine key events to be placed into a timeline. Compiling information, photos, and videos of media use during those campaign years, students create a timeline of the changing media technologies used in these elections using Xtimeline (www.xtimeline.com) or a similar Web 2.0 timeline tool. If you like, students can create a timeline using more traditional means (Word, PowerPoint, paper) as an alternative.

Key Skills

NCSS Civic Ideas and Practices Expectations: Make decisions and solve problems as they locate, research, analyze, organize, synthesize, evaluate, and apply information about selected civic issues (past and present) in key primary and secondary sources

McREL Language Arts Standards: Understand the complex web of influences that media exert on society as a whole (e.g., shaping various governmental, social, and cultural norms; influence on the democratic process; influence on beliefs, lifestyles, and understanding of relationships and culture; examining how the role of media and technology shape viewers' perceptions of reality)

ISTE NETS Standards: 1c: Creativity and Innovation: use models and simulations to explore complex systems and issues; **4c:** Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Decision Making: collect and analyze data to identify solutions and/or make informed decisions; **1b:** Creativity and Innovation: create original works as a means of personal or group expression

Grades 7–12

Time Estimate Four 45-minute periods, or two periods with homework

Required Resources Computers with Internet access

Preparation

Prior to teaching this lesson, bookmark all of the Web sites used in the lesson on each computer in your classroom, or upload all links to an online bookmarking tool such as del.icio.us (del.icio.us). Preview all of the Web sites used in the lesson to make certain that they are appropriate for your students. Make copies of Worksheet 2.1 for all students.

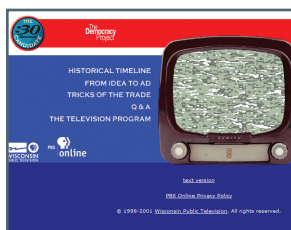
Visit Xtimeline.com (www.xtimeline.com)—or a similar tool—and sign up for a free account. You can sign up for one account and username that the entire class uses, or each student can create an account and be listed as an “editor” on your timeline. Create a timeline for the class to work on titled “New Media in Presidential Campaigns.”

Procedure

- 1. Activate prior knowledge.** Invite students to share their earliest memories of U.S. presidential campaigns. Discuss: What do you remember about campaigns from the past? What media sources (e.g., newspapers, magazines, Web sites, TV programs) did you and your families use to find out about the candidates and issues?
- 2. Introduce the lesson.** Explain that students will be examining how the role of media technologies can influence presidential campaigns. Ask them to think about how media technologies have evolved throughout history, from print, to photographs, to film and radio, television, cell phones and the Internet. They should consider how media might influence: (1) how politicians communicate with the public; (2) how people get information; (3) how journalists tell stories about campaigns, candidates and issues; and (4) how the public can communicate with and about the candidates.
- 3. Learn about key moments in previous presidential campaigns.** Divide students into groups of 3–5. Hand out **Worksheet 2.1**. Ask students to visit the historical timeline on the :30 Second Candidate site (www.pbs.org/30secondcandidate/timeline) and answer questions on the worksheet. Discuss the answers in class, focusing on how media has influenced the campaigns. Note to students that this timeline ends at 1998, and foreshadow that they will be asked to extend the timeline up to the present day.
- 4. Gather information for an updated timeline.** Assign each group to research either the 2000, 2004 or 2008 presidential campaign. Explain to students they will be creating a timeline featuring key historical moments and uses of media in those campaigns. In groups, students conduct research online to explore what media technologies were available during their assigned time periods – and how such media were used in those presidential campaigns. First, students should find out the basics of the campaign (who the candidates were, what the race was like, the outcome of the campaign, etc.). They should then focus on how media was used in those campaigns. Students should collect photos and video clips to illustrate their findings—and keep track of where they find all of their information.
Encourage students to discuss the following questions in their small groups.
(Alternatively, you can have them write down their answers and use these as an assessment tool.)
Discuss: What were the popular forms of media for these campaigns? What were advertisements like, and how/where did people receive them? How did people receive news about the campaign? How did people communicate with each other about the candidates? How did people communicate with the candidates?
- 5. Create an online timeline.** Students pinpoint at least 5 key historical moments (by year, or by date, if possible) that demonstrate the use of media in these campaigns and create a short paragraph for each to enter into the XTimeline. Students can embed photos and videos within the timeline, but XTimeline requests that they cite the source of these photos and videos. (Depending on timeframe, this work can be assigned as homework.)

For students who have trouble finding information, you may wish to recommend the following online resources:

- Bill Moyers Journal: Politics 2.0
www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/12072007/profile.html
This article explains the importance of social media in the 2008 election.



Featured Web Site
:30 Second Candidate

Name:

Date:

Class:

Worksheet 2.1 The Role of Media in Presidential Campaigns

Instructions: How have media technologies influenced presidential campaigns throughout history? Explore the timeline on *The :30 Second Candidate* (www.pbs.org/30secondcandidate/timeline) and answer the following questions. For each question, be sure to note the year.

1. Who was the first president to appear on television?
What was his usual medium of addressing the public, and why might his publicists have preferred this medium for him?
2. Explain the significance of the “Eisenhower Answers America” campaign.
Who is Rosser Reeves, and how did he play a part in this campaign? How did it change the use of television in presidential campaigns?
3. How was television used in the Nixon–Kennedy presidential campaign?
What were the implications?
4. Who was the famous “Daisy” ad created for, and why?
What was its impact?
5. Who appeared in ads wearing a work shirt on his farm?
What was the purpose of appearing as an outsider?
6. Who bought blocks of network television time to address voters, and what was the result?
7. What is the purpose of photo “morphing” of candidates?
When did it become popular?
8. Explain how Bill Clinton used ads to compare his agenda to Bob Dole’s position.