The Power Of Persuasion
An Internet WebQuest: Influencing the 2008 US Presidential Election

created by Mr. Yorke
Sharon Springs Central School Library

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Introduction:

In completing this WebQuest you and your peers will learn the issues surrounding the 2008 United States' Presidential election, the craft of persuasion, and how to use technology and research to endorse the candidate who you think is most qualified to lead the United States for the next four years. You will conduct extensive research on the candidates and the issues surrounding the 2008 US Presidential election to make an educated decision as to which candidate is best suited for the job. In addition, you will work on the craft of persuasion and try to convince others to vote for your candidate of choice. In the end, you will exercise the legitimate political power you have, as you publish your work on the Internet and thus influence the opinions of the voting public.

The Task:

You will use the links provided as well as other resources (library, reliable online resources, etc) to become experts on the issues surround the 2008 US Presidential election. Then you will use this expertise to construct an editorial based on 1 - 5 key issues, a speech supporting your candidate of choice, and a short commercial endorsing your candidate of choice. Each of you will research issues that are part of this election, and then compare and contrast the candidates' stances on these issues. Based upon what each of you explored, each will have a different point of view about your candidate of choice. When we study these issues you will find there is usually a lot more to a topic than we originally thought.

In the following WebQuest, you will use the power of teamwork to learn all about the 2008 election. Each person on your team will become an expert on the issues and candidates in the 2008 US Presidential election, and then you will come together at the end to share and get a better understanding of the topic as a whole.

 By completing this WebQuest, you should achieve the following goals:

1. develop an understanding about the study of politics;
2. use the power of the Internet for advanced exploration;
3. learn information about key aspects of the 2008 US Presidential Election;
4. formulate and support an opinion following the conventions of writing research-based editorials;
5. publish an editorial on-line or in print.
6. compose and perform a political speech endorsing a candidate, based on a deep understanding of the issues and candidates' stances on the issues; and

7. create and publish a multimedia commercial endorsing your candidate of choice based on one or more issues.

The Process:

The first step in this process is to determine the most important issue surrounding the 2008 Presidential election. This will require that you use the sites I have provided below, as well as any sites you find in your searches to choose 1-5 issues that you feel are of particular interest to young voters (18 - 25 years of age).

- The central international issues, domestic issues, economic Issues, and social issues that are central to the 2008 US Presidential Election.
- The 2008 US Presidential candidates and their views on today's important issues.
- The 2008 US Presidential election issues and the candidate positions on these issues.

The second step is to define the 5 issues that you feel are important and explain why they are important (you should be specific to the age group you are trying to persuade). Complete this by downloading and filling in the chart provide below.

- Issues and Their Importance Chart

The third step is to find which candidate endorses the same opinions you do concerning the 5 issues you had defined. You will accomplish this by using the sites I have provided. Complete this by visiting the links provided below and the chart.

- Senator John McCain's Website
- Senator Barack Obama's Website
- Aligning Political Beliefs with Candidates Chart

The fourth step is to write a 2-4 page editorial focused on 1-3 of the issues you have determined to be central to the 2008 US Presidential election. You will use this editorial as an opportunity to support the candidate that best matches your opinion on the aforementioned issue(s). This paper must be written in MLA format.

- Establishing An Argument
- Steps to Writing an Editorial
- Avoid Plagiarism
- Cite Your Sources

The fifth step is to go through the revision process with peers, and then publish your article to the Internet.

- A Guide to Proofreading
- Peer Revision

The sixth step is to write and deliver a 5-10 minute speech endorsing one of the Presidential candidates based on 3-5 of the issues you have determined to be central to this election. (Note: this portion of the assignment will be video recorded).

The seventh step is to use the technology available to you to create a video commercial endorsing your candidate of choice. This commercial will then be published to the Internet.

NOTE:

1. Remember to include the URL of the pages you take information from, so you can return to those pages and properly cite them.
2. Focus what you have learned throughout this process into one main opinion that will act as the thesis behind your editorial, speech, and commercial.

Rubrics:

- [Editorial Rubric](#)
- [Speech Rubric](#)
- [Commercial Rubric](#)

Additional Resources:

- [Republican Party](#)
- [Democratic Party](#)

Conclusion

So is an elephant smooth, rough, soft, or hard? Well, when you're blindfolded and only looking at one part, it's easy to come up with an answer that may not be completely right. It's the same for understanding a topic as broad or complex as political issues: when you only see part of the picture, you only know part of the picture. Now you all know a lot more. Nice work. You should be proud of yourselves! How can you use what you've learned to see beyond the black and white of a topic and into the grayer areas? What other parts of politics can still be explored? Remember, learning never stops.