

Presidential Election Mock Debate

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Activity Description: A school Presidential Election Mock Debate will be held utilizing student teams representing the ideas and platform stands of Hillary Clinton (Democrat) and Donald Trump (Republican). A student team could represent third party candidates as well (e.g. Gary Johnson-Libertarian). Student presidential candidate teams could range in size from two to four members. Students with a high interest in and knowledge of politics or current events should be selected to participate as members of the presidential candidate teams since they will represent and speak for the presidential candidates running in the 2016 election. For example, students could be selected from Young Democrats, Young Republicans, Debate, or Junior State extracurricular clubs or from classes like Advanced Placement American Government and Politics, Civics, Advanced Placement U.S. History, U.S. History, or a current issues elective. Students participating in the presidential candidate teams will utilize various forms of media to research presidential campaign issues and the candidates' position on the issues in order to prepare opening and closing remarks, as well as, responses to student generated questions during the whole school Presidential Election Mock Debate activity. Using the Question Formulation Technique (QFT) and using various forms of media to research presidential campaign issues and the candidates' position on the issues, students in a number of courses will generate questions for the presidential candidate student teams. While students in Advanced Placement American Government and Politics, Civics, Advanced Placement U.S. History, U.S. History, or current issues elective classes are the likely choices to generate questions, students in business classes could generate questions focused on the national business climate, unemployment rates, and economic growth. Students in science classes could generate questions focused on environmental end energy issues. On the day of the Presidential Election Mock Debate, presidential candidate student teams will be seated on a stage or in the front of the room for a town hall style debate. A moderator (likely an administrator or teacher) will enforce agreed upon debate parameters and students who generated questions in participating classes will ask questions of the presidential candidate student teams, who in turn, will respond as their assigned candidate would to the questions. Community leaders or teachers in the school could act as a panel of debate judges, ultimately determining which presidential candidate student team won the debate. A debriefing session could occur following the Presidential Election Mock Debate in smaller classroom settings, where students share which presidential candidate they believe will be successful on Election Day. To further encourage interdisciplinary involvement, students in a Video Production class or Journalism class could be invited to film the Presidential Election Mock Debate and produce a film narrative of the event, which could include brief interviews with students, candidates, teachers, administrators, and/or community leaders. The student produced film could be broadcast on a district television channel or website to further engage community members. Additionally, students in English Language Arts classes could be asked to write a journal reflection about their impressions of the presidential candidates' stands on issues, whom they would vote for and why if they had the opportunity to do so, and their overall thoughts on the electoral process. A mock student election could be held on Election Day in

which students vote for presidential, state, and local candidates using a Google Form. If students identify their demographic information (e.g, grade level) on the Google Form, students in math and statistics classes could analyze student voting results and identify which trends, if any, emerged in the student body.

Age Level: High School

Red, White & Blue Schools Rubric Connections:

- Electoral process taught in social studies classes uses innovative approaches and involves student-centered hands on learning.
- Electoral process is taught through active engagement and participation with school and community partners.
- Electoral process is taught in an interdisciplinary fashion, involving other disciplines beyond social studies, and whole school participation.
- Electoral process is taught by examining the process, candidate's views on issues, and their impact on daily lives.
- Electoral process is taught by utilizing various forms of media and outreach to communicate projects and learning.
- Students personal understanding of and participation in the electoral process grew.