

Becoming US President

Objective:

Students will learn about the process to become president from launching a campaign to Inauguration Day by tracking candidates.

Students will:

- engage with the election process
 - enhance research skills
 - learn to track a long-term event through the news
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Resources/Materials:

- 2020election.procon.org
 - “[How to Become US President](#)” ProCon.org resource
 - [Presidential Election History](#) ProCon.org resource
 - [fec.gov](https://www.fec.gov) (for candidate statements of candidacy)
 - regular access to print or online news sources
 - internet connection
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Preparation:

- Teachers may want to eliminate or add questions based on availability of outside information or classroom time constraints.
 - Decide whether to limit the activity to the two major parties or include third parties.
 - Teachers may want to provide news sources to students in class, or students may be asked to bring in news articles as homework. Students may also track candidates via the candidates’ social media accounts.
 - This activity may be completed in small groups, or as an entire class. As written, the assignment may be too large for one student to complete individually.
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Activity:

1. Have students review the “How to Become US President” resource at 2020election.procon.org and discuss the steps to becoming president.
2. Students should track all candidates because candidates will drop out as the process moves forward. If completing this activity close to or after the election, teachers may choose to include all the candidates who were covered by ProCon.org or just the parties’ official nominees.

Have students track some or all of the below items:

- a. Which candidates have met the eligibility criteria to be president?
- b. When did the candidate begin preparing their campaign (testing the waters)?
- c. When and where did the candidate declare their candidacy?
- d. Find the candidate’s FEC application.
- e. Track highlights of the candidate’s campaign.
- f. Track the candidate through the party primary process.
- g. When did candidates drop out of the race, and what reasons did they state for suspending their campaigns?
- h. Who endorsed various candidates and what value did that add to a campaign?
- i. Who is the nominee for each party?
- j. Track the highlights of the party nominee from the party convention to the general election.
- k. Who won the general election? What were the electoral college and popular vote counts? Have students review the Presidential Election History resource to identify which candidates won the electoral vote despite not getting the most popular votes.
- l. On what date will the president be inaugurated?
- m. Optional: Have students research how the transition between presidential administrations works.

Evaluation:

1. Research skills
2. Ability to use appropriate news sources